



Spring 2021

## Senior Interviews Regarding the Covid-19 Pandemic

Stephanie Whang

## Interview Response of Amelia Gregorio, Senior

1. What was your initial reaction to the college's plans to have remote classes for two weeks following Spring Break?

It's so hard for me to remember my initial feelings about the 2 week break from school because everything seemed to snowball after that. Within a matter of days it went from two weeks to "you need to leave campus". I think it first hit me how serious things were getting was when my water polo season was cancelled. From then on I knew it wasn't going to be just two weeks, but obviously I had no idea it would last over a year either!

2. How did having classes completely online impact your plans for your senior year? How did COVID-19 impact your plans for after graduating?

I tried to not let having classes online alter my plans for senior year too much, but it inevitably has. I still live in Whittier in an apartment and some of my friends, which has been immensely helpful for my mental health. However, athletics were cancelled again this year, which means that I was unable to have a senior season. This has been really hard for me, because it was such a large part of my time here at Whittier. One of the most significant changes has been the online format, which has definitely impacted the education that I've been receiving this past year. In terms of post-graduation, I've again tried to continue to make plans in spite of Covid. I am currently planning on working for a non-profit in Seattle, which was not something I would have expected to be doing last year! However, since Covid has impacted the job market I've become much more open minded in terms of opportunities.

3. What positive experiences have you gotten out of online schooling, if any?

The only positive experience that I've gotten from online schooling is the flexibility that it gives my schedule. I'm able to do more things that I like which has been really nice, but other than that, I'm not a fan of being online!

4. How do you think remote learning for your senior classes changed your performance, enjoyment, and engagement with your studies?

While online learning hasn't really impacted by performance academically, it has definitely impacted my engagement and enjoyment in some courses. I think some professors have adapted very well to the online platform, which has made class as engaging and enjoyable as it can be, however others have struggled in successfully transferring their in-person curricula to an online one. I have been very pleasantly surprised at how much I still enjoyed many of my classes, and that has made it much easier to be able to log on everyday and stare at a screen!

5. Any supplemental information that you would like to share, or that you think is important to the recording of your experience.

While professors have genuinely been trying their best during the pandemic, I found that I was extremely disappointed in the way the administration handled communicating with students. From October until March seniors had no update on any possible plans for graduation, until the announcement that it would be fully online was placed at the end of an email regarding next year's plans. This made me feel as though the school was simply moving onto Fall 2021, without adequately addressing how much students gave up this past year and without celebrating the achievements of the seniors. I am very happy that students pushed back and urged the school to progress with the new L.A. County guidelines so that a small, safe ceremony can occur in May.

## Interview Response of Gage Proctor, Senior

1. What was your initial reaction to the college's plans to have remote classes for two weeks following Spring Break?

Initially, I was a little excited because it felt like we got a three-week Spring Break, you know? But after I started thinking about what a remote class would look like, I got a bit concerned since some of my professors at the time didn't have the best reputation with technology in class. That's not to mention I was unsure where I'd even be after Spring Break and if it would have adequate WiFi access. Other than that, I think I was pretty optimistic, too. I mean, hindsight is 20/20 and all so back then I really did think we'd just be back on campus after those two weeks with, like, mask requirements for classes and all.

2. How did having classes completely online impact your plans for your senior year? How did COVID-19 impact your plans for after graduating?

I was so ready to set up my dorm exactly right for senior year lmao. Like, I had finally figured out over three years the perfect set-up to get good vibes and all that so, not gonna lie, I felt kind of disappointed haha. I guess senior year felt a little unfulfilling. Since I didn't know I wouldn't be going back to campus, I didn't really do all the stuff I wanted. I mean, it's hard to go from having all that freedom to doing classes at home. I was planning to hang out with friends, maybe go to a party, spend the weekend in Uptown. I had routines that I had to drop, which left me feeling pretty weird.

Regarding my post-graduation plans, though, nothing has really changed. I already planned to come back home after I graduated so already being here is kind of nice. Granted, I'll have to get all my stuff from a friend's place in California but still. Where I am right now (in my room, sitting on the floor, typing on the little coffee table I use as a desk) is where I would've been for those first 6 months or so after graduation so you could say I'm already ahead of the game.

3. What positive experiences have you gotten out of online schooling, if any?

This is gonna sound wild but I've actually gotten more confident in my appearance lmao. I mean, I have to stare at my little Zoom square every single day, you know? Eventually, you stop seeing the things you dislike and start noticing the stuff that's pretty cute. I wrote a whole essay about this, too, actually; how Zoom is like the pool of water for the modern-day Narcissus and how that isn't a bad thing because we should all be loving ourselves a little more than we already do.

4. How do you think remote learning for your senior classes changed your performance, enjoyment, and engagement with your studies?

I don't think much changed for me performance-wise. I mean, I've always done my work in my room so that's stayed the same and the quality of my work hasn't really gone down. Enjoyment, hmm, part of what made some of my classes fun was physically being there and looking forward to getting coffee from the Spot afterward and mentally making plans on which friend to message for lunch so it's gone down in that sense. I think engagement has been changed the most. I kind of hate how Zoom allows you to turn off the camera and how everyone in some of my classes would do that. Makes it super awkward for me because then I feel bad for the professor having to talk to The Void so I always keep my camera on but that also means I'm the most noticeable one which means I'm called on more. So, like, more engagement with professors and less with students is the short story there.

5. Please provide any supplemental information that you would like to share, or that you think is important to the recording of your experience. This can be personal or academic.

As much as I would have preferred to be on campus for my senior year, I don't think I'd go back and change anything. I mean, I got to spend more time with my family in the first month of

being home than I did my entire junior year. I didn't overly miss them while I was at college but I was missing a lot. My sister fu■■ing grew like three inches, my dad finally figured out how to not kill a garden, my relationship with my mom is definitely better now than it was before. We communicate easier after a few past arguments and I don't think that would've happened if I hadn't been home. As shitty and stress-inducing as the year was, it gave me the opportunity to actually spend time with my family and learn who they'd become in the three years I was at college. Also, I get to see my girlfriend more often now than if I were at college. She's in Louisiana and it's a lot easier to get there from Texas than California. She's amazing, wonderful, stunning, I love her. Back to the point, though, I got a huge silver lining from spending my senior year at home and that's something I'm truly grateful for.

## Interview Response of Hakim Williams, Senior

1. What was your initial reaction to the college's plans to have remote classes for two weeks following Spring Break?

To be honest I knew it was going to happen but I thought after two weeks we would've come back to campus but eventually they decided not to.

2. How did having classes completely online impact your plans for your senior year? How did COVID-19 impact your plans for after graduating?

Having online classes had an impact on me big time because the plans I had for myself academically but things ended up getting pushed back. Then with COVID the plan for me was to continue to play football after graduation but things got pushed back and I eventually gave all my worries up to God.

3. What positive experiences have you gotten out of online schooling, if any?

Some of the positive things I gotten was being able to build up a relationship with God and how with him in my life I've been able to appreciate things for what they are and not complain about the little not the big things in life.

4. How do you think remote learning for your senior classes changed your performance, enjoyment, and engagement with your studies?

It definitely changed the experience because we didn't get to do activities like previous years before Covid. Then when it came to classes it's awkward because we don't really get that person to person interaction so it's definitely awkward.

5. Please provide any supplemental information that you would like to share, or that you think is important to the recording of your experience. This can be personal or academic.

With my experience, from personal to academic, unfortunately God has a different plan for me so i have to come back for one more semester.