



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE POST COVID ERA:

Series I

School Name: Cal Poly Pomona
Year: Junior
Major: Business
GPA: 3.4

Q: What exactly is missing from the college experience now that you know students aren't really allowed to go on campus and they aren't allowed to meet up with any other students or like meet up with friends and so on and so forth. I just wanted to ask you from a personal perspective as far as your college experience has gone, what is missing from your experience as far as a social and academic standpoint?

So social I definitely just feel disconnected from school, I feel like even before covid-19 I didn't really have a lot of friends at school. Like it's kind of hard to make friends in college especially if you go to a commuter school. So now it's online, it's like essentially you can't make friends. It's just, it's an odd feeling to reach out to someone, you can't really study with people, you can't really talk to them. It's really awkward and it's uncomfortable to reach out because you don't know what the person essentially looks like. It's like reaching out to someone and you don't know if they're approachable or if they feel the same way. Yeah, so socially too you know, you would just go to classes to see people, you would feel really comfortable seeing other people there. I guess like in an academic way you can't connect to your professors cuz you have to email them, they're busy and they're answering as many people as they can. It's just like a "you're on your own" type of feeling and you just gotta push through it like you got to motivate yourself because it's just a really independent type of situation where it's just you. I know everyone else is trying the best they can, especially professors and all that but it's just like, you really are on your own.

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Q: Yeah I can only imagine how disconnected everybody is. So I know that you said that you're not really able to talk to your classmates in the same sense as if you were in person. At this point, have you tried talking to your classmates as far as reaching out to them? Is there a way to do that through the online meetings that you have?

Q: Yeah I can only imagine how disconnected everybody is. So I know that you said that you're not really able to talk to your classmates in the same sense as if you were in person. At this point, have you tried talking to your classmates as far as reaching out to them? Is there a way to do that through the online meetings that you have?

Yes, so we have Zoom meetings and Google Hangouts and all that, but even then you can opt. to just have a blank screen or whatever like a black screen. You can also chat with people but it's not really like a one-on-one type of situation, it's like everybody just kind of talks. Or they'll ask a question like "Oh what did the professor say? What did I miss out on?" kind of not really in a friendly or approachable way you know? People are just doing it for their own benefits. Also, we use Blackboard at my campus and so there's like a discussion board and everyone can have a discussion that just the students can see and the professor can't, and it's linked to each student's email. So some people will be like "oh anybody want to study?" but I don't know if they get replies or responses you know.

Q: I can only imagine how awkward that must be

Yeah yeah because you don't know the person at all. All you see is their email and their name and that's about it.

Q: There's a different dynamic between when you see the person when you go to your classes versus, you know, I know I have a blank screen right now, but I can imagine how it is when it's like 10 or so people are also doing that.

Yeah, it's weird it's kind of like you're talking to yourself in a way, it's like an odd feeling you know.

Q: Have you had any problems as far as you know, meeting with counselors or any other Professional Services at school, like getting transcripts and things like that?

I haven't really used those resources honestly, but I have talked to my counselor through email and they really encourage, you know if you have any questions, just try to figure it out on your own first through websites or whatever. If it's kind of a more personal or urgent type of question you have or a request, then you can reach out to them directly and try to set up like a zoom meeting but they're very stretched so it's more of a like "if it's urgent they'll give you the time of day" but if not, then try to figure it out if you can.

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Q: And how is it as far as reaching out to your teachers in that same manner?

So teachers, some of them that I've had, do Zoom hours so they'll do an hour every other day that they'll dedicate to any questions that any students have. They can go on there and collaborate if they need any help or any type of questions. Basically, they do Zoom meetings but that's mainly more for math types of situations so they can show you how to get it done. But for other subjects, it's kind of more through email. Some of them do like Zoom or whatnot, but it's more of an email or you just contact them and just wait a few days. You know it really just depends on the professors cuz some of them are more outdated and they don't really know how to use you know like Blackboard, and some of them don't even know how to really email. Honestly, it's just a learning process for them as much as it is for us.

Q: Oh wow, sounds like a really stressful environment.

Yeah, it really is.

Q: So right now how would you say that remote learning has been different from the in-person learning experience?

So I guess like remote is just very much like you're relying on any textbooks and any materials that you have in your hands, like tangible materials. I really teach myself out of textbooks and you know I also like to try to use YouTube and Quizlet. I use flashcards and whatnot whereas if we were in class, you know you can just talk to the person who's right next to you and try to figure it out. Also, you physically see the professor doing it on their own. You know I feel like I'm very visual especially, I learn better seeing other people doing it, so for me, I feel like I have to put extra time in teaching myself, so it's just way harder because you have to teach yourself pretty much everything. A lot of professors do a video and they pre-record themselves in the lecture, but even then it's like the videos are kind of bad quality, you can't really hear, there are technical issues. It's just a really weird situation. It's definitely hard. It's harder than it should be. It's just so much pressure on yourself because you can only do so much you know. We're students, we're not professors.

Q: So now that you're at home, how do you spend your time in between classes? Do you just spend it studying, because I feel like it's different when you actually get to go on to campus and go to spaces where you can study, relax, and things like that. How is that different for you now?

I spend my free time trying to study, doing as much as I can. It's also kind of hard because you're at home. Essentially we're not supposed to leave the house because of the pandemic so it's kind of like all there is to do is study and be on

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your own and it just gets boring you know and it's just overwhelming. I try to give myself enough time to study, you know. During my free time I just kind of find myself relaxing and kind of forgetting about school, and then I get myself back into the mindset of "okay I'm going to focus on this" but since I am at home, home to me is kind of more like a getaway from school. It feels kind of weird putting those two together you know cuz like I have to do what I would have done at school at home so the environment doesn't really mix. I don't really have my own quiet space and it's not like the same type of vibe I get like at a campus. Now I'm kind of mixing my life with school and I don't really have my own place so it's kind of hard.

Q: So you know now that the college experience is different and I mean in terms of like you can't really go to parties, football games, you know whatever there is to do. What about that do you miss and in addition to that, what do you do in your free time now that you can't really live that quote on quote "college lifestyle"?

Personally, I wouldn't really engage in that whole going to any type of basketball games or any type of parties essentially because that's not really my lifestyle, but I would always go to the campus rec location. It's like a gym and a pool, and you could play sports there. I would go there at least once a day, sometimes twice a day so that I definitely miss it. But I would actually meet people through there who were working out and people are just really friendly there so I just miss doing that for sure, but now I just go on walks on my own, trying to keep a healthy lifestyle. I would actually go to a few campus events but more like the student body type of situation, not really outside of campus and that was really fun. We would do little workshops and stuff and that was really fun, or they would have speeches and you would just go, so that type of stuff I definitely miss. You know socializing with people, getting to know them, or even like networking or just talking to people and seeing what you guys could collaborate on or finding similar interests and you know you can't really do that at home. So with the whole pandemic, I just feel like it's kind of a me and my own type of situation.



It's just a really weird situation. It's definitely hard. It's harder than it should be. It's just so much pressure on yourself because you can only do so much you know. We're students, we're not professors.