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10-19-2020

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Recommended Citation

Bachofer, David, "Stay At Home Students Attending 'Zoom University'" (2020). *The Spectator Online*. 377.
<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/377>

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Stay at Home Students Attending ‘Zoom University’

David Bachofer, Volunteer Reporter

With universities shifting into online learning, students have adjusted to the idea of virtual classes. When schools initially shut down nationwide, online learning was brought to the table, and in March of 2020, Seattle University halted in-person classes as COVID-19 began to spread.

As the 2020 academic year approached, many universities opted for reopening online, attempting to create safe environments for students to continue in their academic endeavors. With at-home and on-campus accommodations deemed acceptable for Fall Quarter 2020, Seattle U has been relying on Zoom for the vast majority of its classes since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Zachary Andrews, a third-year political science major, listed benefits and drawbacks to staying at home.

“I’m living with my parents back at home in the Tacoma area because it isn’t worth it financially to move to Seattle when there aren’t any in-person classes,” Andrews said. “Although I would love my own place, being able to see and live with friends, it doesn’t make sense to be spending upwards of \$700 or \$800 to be sitting somewhere else.”

Money seems to be one of the largest deterrents for returning to campus or the surrounding area. Despite this, students carried positive outlooks and found some comfort in their new situations.

“I will say though, as distracting as it can be, it’s nice to be home,” Andrews said. “I have my pets, my family and home cooked meals.”

However, not all students ended up living back home with parents. Katie Tunis, a creative writing major and second-year student, is currently a short commute from Seattle. She explained how things felt different for her this year.

“I live about 10 minutes away from campus. It feels about the same as when I lived further away from campus,” Tunis said. “I think that if I were able to see people on campus it would be different, but that’s not really an option right now, so it feels about the same.”

Tunis also explained newfound difficulties with her current living situation.

“I’ve struggled to fulfil my need to socialize more than I’ve struggled with classes. I don’t know many of my neighbors, mostly because I feel irresponsible socializing,” Tunis said. “As much as I sleep better in my own place, it was easier to manage my own work when I had other people living with me like back in the dorms. Them having their own schedules helped motivate me to stay on my schedule, and now it’s just me holding myself accountable.”

Many students experienced a lack of connection to other students and felt as though attending classes online altogether was not worth their time.

Ben Carlson, after finishing his fall and spring quarter classes of 2019, decided to take a gap year. He spoke to the possibility of taking classes in spring or winter quarter in 2021, but remained unconvinced with the high likelihood of online classes.

"I personally went to college for some of that college experience, the small class sizes, the people, the interactions. I don't want to go through college without that experience, especially if I'm paying so much," Carlson said.

Carlson has been able to enjoy spending time with his family and girlfriend while at home without worrying about internet connection stability. He looks forward to a time when he can hang out with friends in Seattle U without worrying about COVID-19. With an optimistic outlook, he, among other students, yearn for normalcy and in-person classes.

"I don't want to progress through college without experiencing it. That's why I'm hesitant to go to fully online classes. I'm going to move back to Seattle next fall, but I'm hoping that this pandemic business should be cleared up by then," Carlson said.

Most students and teachers have had one quarter online already, but that does not necessarily make it any easier. Whether through a lack of connection to the conversation, internet connections or monetary influence, online classes have impacted students everywhere.