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Three Years of First Years

Ashley Hagar, News Editor

After 18 months of remote classes, Seattle University students have returned to a full capacity campus. Some students may prefer taking classes online and others may be unvaccinated against COVID-19 while staying home. However, the majority of students returned to in-person classes for fall quarter.

With a new university president, the grand opening of the Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation building and the Seattle U community returning to campus for in-person classes for the first time in over a year, Seattle U has changed a lot as it rings in the new school year.

The class of 2023 had about half a year in person before leaving campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, many of the third-year students returned to campus for the first time since March 2020.

Kylee Longenecker, a third-year nursing student, was lucky enough to spend some of the last academic year in Seattle, but had remote classes the entire year. This quarter is her first opportunity to attend an in-person class since spring of her first year. While excited about returning to in-person classes, Longenecker has some hesitations about the transition.

"I am a bit hesitant because I have gotten so used to online. I feel like I need to relearn my study habits for being back on campus. I am also a bit hesitant because I feel like my teachers have adapted to the online platform as well and have kept their online teaching strategies during this transition back to in-person, which has increased my school work load," Longenecker said.

Many of the second-year students have never been on campus at all. For many students in the graduating class of 2024, starting classes a few weeks ago was the first time they had stepped foot in a classroom at Seattle U. The idea of attending a college class in-person seemed foreign to these students, as they completed the entirety of their first year of college remotely.

However, some new students last year were able to live on campus without roommates. The on-campus events were minimal with most being online or canceled. This meant students had to rely on Zoom calls to meet people for the first time.

For second-year Biology student, Alex Jensen, this was the case. He met very few people in-person last year as he lived alone in Campion Hall.

"I'm super excited to be back on campus. I get to have roommates, which is a nice change and there are more people on campus in general this year, which is really cool to see. I'm excited to get to meet more new people," Jensen said.

While second-year and third-year students may not have had the most traditional start to their college careers, they ended high school more normally than the current first-year students. The incoming class of 2025 applied blindly to colleges, and tours were offered online with very little interaction on campus.

First-year student and Psychology major, Alyssa Recasner, finished her last two years of high school online when the COVID-19 pandemic first hit. Recasner began her college career at Seattle U this year. She was able to attend fall welcome events in-person as well as the online summer orientation. So far, Recasner has enjoyed being in-person at Seattle U and getting to experience traditional college life as much as possible.

"I am happy I got the opportunity to be on campus and have in-person classes too. I'm also excited to continue meeting new people in class and people living on my floor in the dorms. It's been really cool to meet so many people from different states and countries," Recasner said.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues into this year, Seattle U welcomes back its three years of "freshman" as well as new transfer students and returning fourth-year students, faculty and staff.

