



**STUDENT
ENGAGEMENT
IN THE POST
COVID ERA:
Series XIII**



School Name: Rutgers University-New Brunswick
Year: Freshman
Major: Biology
GPA: N/A

Q: Now that everything's online, what does your typical school day look like?

I haven't taken any classes yet, but in the Spring semester, I would wake up at 8 every day. I had class every day but the lectures weren't mandatory so I never attended a Zoom call. We had a lot of work to do, there was a lot of busywork, always handing in assignments. But our teachers were cool if we were late with it because they understood. But my grades definitely went down in the Spring once we started online. It was harder to manage because you're not in school doing it. You're not in a school-work environment, you're at home.

Q: With this being your first college semester, since everything is online, are you worried a little about how that's going to affect your grades?

Yeah for sure especially with my bio lab and chem lab because those are supposed to be hands-on classes and now it's completely online.

Q: How is your school going about those labs?

So for those labs, we are required to meet on Zoom once a week and that's kind of all know so far.

"But my grades definitely went down in the Spring once we started online. It was harder to manage because you're not in school doing it. You're not in a school-work environment, you're at home."





Q: A few other students have told me how they've been bombarded with email since everything is now online, have you experienced something similar?

Yes! This weekend all my teachers reached out at once. I haven't heard from them all summer and then they all just started emailing me, posting syllabi, posting some homework and announcements, so I was a little overwhelmed this weekend for sure.

Q: How do you expect to keep yourself organized?

Well, I'm planning on setting up times at home so like between this time and that time is strictly school or Zoom. I already have a calendar app to keep myself organized for each class. There are Zooms this week except for like one or two of my classes, but the Zooms are optional except for my bio class because those are mandatory. For the Zoom classes, you can attend it live or they'll record it and post it after but I'd rather attend live to keep on track of things.

Q: With online classes, it definitely does take a lot of discipline to keep up with your schedule and making sure you're turning everything in on time. Does this worry you at all?

Yeah, it does.

Q: Do you think your teachers are going to be assigning a lot of homework based on what you've seen in your syllabi?

Yeah especially since I'm majoring in bio, so I feel like that's going to be hell with essays and homework.

"This weekend all my teachers reached out at once. I haven't heard from them all summer and then they all just started emailing me, posting syllabi, posting some homework and announcements, so I was a little overwhelmed this weekend for sure."



Q: As an incoming freshman, I know people have this really eccentric idea of what the college experience is supposed to be. How do you see that changing now that everything's online?

Well, I wasn't planning on dorming, I was planning on commuting, so the college experience with the partying and all that stuff, I had already decided it wasn't really for me. I wasn't really anticipating that part but I know for a lot of people that's something they want to do and I totally get that, but they're not getting that experience this semester. But the college experience for me has definitely changed as far as going on campus, meeting professors, making new friends and peers, that's gone for now. For my school, they host these webinar things to meet other students who haven't participated in anything. I'm just kind of bummed out about it. I don't care at this point to try to meet people online. I mean yeah like I'm sad but I know it'll come back soon.

Q: So other than those online webinar sessions that your school is hosting, there aren't really any other ways to connect with new students?

Well, we have this group meet for my class and there are few girls that are going pre-dental like me. We've already established connections with each other and we want to meet so it's cool that I have those people at least and it's not like I don't know anybody.

Q: I know right now you haven't had any college classes yet, but with the online classes you took when you were in high school, were they at all understandable and engaging?

No, no. Maybe like my English teacher made it pretty good for us, but she understood how to reach us in a home environment. Other teachers, they would just post videos from Khan Academy, not even of them talking. But I know it was really hard for my teachers too because this is a new situation for everyone. No one really knew what to do and I know they tried but for me at least, it wasn't something easy for me to adapt to during the spring.

"This weekend all my teachers reached out at once. I haven't heard from them all summer and then they all just started emailing me, posting syllabi, posting some homework and announcements, so I was a little overwhelmed this weekend for sure."



Q: What did you find was missing from those classes that weren't so engaging?

Being in like a school environment. Being at home was not the same. If a teacher were to record themselves and post it, I couldn't listen and pay attention normally.

Q: I suppose that gets really boring after some time.

Yeah, I wouldn't even open the folder to listen to them. I can't pay attention like that, I need to be in a school environment.

Q: What is something that you hope your teachers can implement to help you since you're going in as a new college student with this experience?

I don't know. I just don't know how they're supposed to react to this either. I just wish it would be easier to participate, that was one thing that was missing in the spring semester. No one participated.

Q: How is it for you having to do everything at home?

I used to go to Starbucks all the time or hang out with my friends and study. But today I tried cleaning my room a little and setting it up for a good study area you know? Trying to make it a school-friendly type thing, but with distractions, it's not the same for sure.

Q: Is there anything you hope your teachers can do to make this process a little easier for you?

I think just take it easy on us.

