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SINCE TODAY MARKS THE NEAR ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICA finally acknowledging the coronavirus and taking it seriously, I thought it apt to talk about how it has been affecting me and my academic processes for over a solid year, now.

Reflection

DARBY ANDERSON

As I do, I want to emphasize that I know my experiences are not unique to me, and that, as a campus, as a student and faculty body, as the OSUM Family, we have all struggled dearly with departing from the normal.

I want to emphasize that we can overcome these things, together or alone, and that, although we are separated, the strength in our community has not faltered or waned. If anything, we have found new ways to seek self-improvement, to go out of our way to be kinder Buckeyes, and to reach out to help our fellow students who are in need.

When this all began, back in 2020, when we were all expecting one weird ending to a semester that we would never have to repeat, never having to do that debilitating in-sync out-of-sync learning again, I was one of those who adapted but who struggled to do so. I thrive off a classroom environment, I live off the discussion of my peers. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but these things are not often achieved in a Zoom environment.

Sometimes, if you are a sado-masochist, you can achieve some semblance of a thought-provoking seminar by prying out the discussion from blank grey boxes with names on them. Some days, on rare occasions, the discussion flows and the cameras are all on, the internet connection is all strong and stable, the topic is engaging and interesting to everyone, and all have done the preliminary work for the day. Those

days were brilliant! Often remember saying at the end of the Zoom call that “today’s discussion was great, thank you all”.

Now, fast forward a year. I started this semester living away from home with my significant other for the first time for three months (they were watching the house for relatives while they were away). We’re still doing the same thing, but I’m away from the only support group I’ve ever had: my parents. The workload of which the likes I had never seen before (hello, fellow juniors, sorry seniors) has fronted me with a new challenge that I had never before had to overcome; I was struggling to keep up, I had to actually apply myself fully to even reach my usual standards of excellence in application.

Throughout this semester, while I was testing out life alone, I was up poring over difficult texts until the single digit hours of the morning, only to wake up for class or work some couple hours later. After working for a few hours, I come home and invest the same amount of hours into school work (and nobody pays me for those hours, ha!).

But am I doing it? Yes, and I am proud to say I am doing it well. Not only am I managing to keep afloat my grades, but I feel as though I have begun to turn the tide against it. At the halfway point, I feel as if “I can do anything for six weeks!” and this mantra changes, grows smaller, as we get closer to the

finish line.

I’ve since moved back in with my parents, and having that support is wondrous. It goes to show that having a loving safety-net is what we all need in these desperate times when we feel like we are drifting apart from our core group. ✱