

Understanding the Impact of Coronavirus on Student Housing, Health, and Success

A Research Portfolio

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this project was to study a current, relevant, and vast social phenomenon that has not been experienced within current lifetimes. Each section of this project aimed to gain different types of insight and knowledge related to how students were impacted by the 2020 global pandemic. As a graduating senior in sociology, it was also important for me to gain firsthand experience with the research process to grow my analytical skills before graduation. There were five main pieces of this project and each one served a different purpose, both in relation to what new information was gained from the study as well as in relation to what research skills I gained. Each section of the project fit within the overarching theme of “student experiences within the coronavirus pandemic”. However, smaller sub-themes emerged and were analyzed at different points of the project to gain a rounded understanding of the various types of situations, feelings, and stressors students faced.

To begin, after the administration of a survey on student experiences following the Spring semester, I helped to draft and write a two-part data analysis. The analysis focused solely on quantitative data and focused on three topics which were present in the survey. These topics included academic status and success, financial and employment status, and domestic life arrangements. We conducted both a univariate and bivariate analysis to first generalize what were the most common student experiences and then to visualize differences along gender, racial, and political lines. In this portion of the project, I learned how to take statistical analyses and word them to represent meaningful and easy to understand results.

The second portion of the project allowed me to gain a behind-the-scenes view of lesson planning and teaching in a virtual classroom. Following the quantitative analysis on the spring survey, I wanted to then take a qualitative approach through interviews to collect more data on the specific theme of domestic life arrangements. In order to obtain the most comprehensive data possible, I wanted the interview participants to grasp the importance of the topic and of the entire research process. Therefore, I invited the participants into the research process. Over the course of two weeks, I visited the Sociology 3213 Research Methods class meetings to introduce the topic of my project and then implement a project for the students within their course schedule. We conducted a focus group meeting to discover any emergent themes related to student housing insecurity for students. Then I provided information and resources on how to conduct semi-structured research interviews so that the students could conduct them themselves. This entire portion of the project helped me to understand how to make the transition from quantitative to qualitative data through redirection of research questions towards more specific themes. Also, I gained an understanding of the planning and implementation process of student teaching.

For the actual interview portion of the project, the students focused solely on asking questions related to student housing situations and insecurities stemming from the pandemic. Students were placed into partners and were asked to follow one of two interview scripts. I proceeded to listen to, take notes on, and code emergent themes amongst all 23 interviews. These themes included decreased mental health, the benefits of living with family and friends, and the importance of maintaining social connection to combat feelings of isolation. While I did not have

a hand in actually conducting the interviews, I was able to be active in each piece of the process by teaching the students and analyzing their audio files.

The final piece of the project involved presenting my data and analyses at three separate conferences. These conferences included the North Carolina Sociological Association annual conference, ECU's Research and Creativity Week, and the Global Issues Conference hosted by ECU and several other universities around the globe. At each of these conferences I was able to join sessions on related topics and see what other directions research is going related to social aspects of the pandemic. I was also able to enhance my presentational skills by participating in a series of presentations in an unfamiliar format since this was my first time giving any form of virtual presentation.

Coronavirus Student Impact Report: A Summative Overview

Following ECU's transition to online instruction during the Spring 2020 semester, students were faced with many experiences they had never faced before. As a result, faculty members from the sociology and political science departments found it imperative to look into what type of impact these new experiences had on student well-being and success. An initial survey was administered from June to July 2020 which asked students and faculty to reflect on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on different aspects of their lives. After the survey, an initial report was written up on several themes which emerged across the responses.

Since the first report only covered half of the survey, a lot of data still remained which needed to be analyzed. I, alongside a master's student in the sociology department, tackled the task of analyzing and developing a write-up of the remaining survey results. My co-author was responsible for developing our data tables and running the statistical analyses. We then split up the task of analyzing and interpreting the data results.

During this portion of the project, I was able to gain first-hand experience working with quantitative data. Both my faculty mentor and co-author taught me how to use SPSS to run data tests and then taught me how to convey these results in a written format. We decided to develop both a univariate and bivariate analysis. The univariate analysis presents the overall experiences of all of the respondents. Meanwhile, the bivariate analysis discusses any differences along racial, gender, or political party lines. Dividing the analysis into two separate parts helped to highlight the broad range of experiences for different types of peoples and groups.

This portion of the project took place across the entire fall semester. Participating in a long term, expansive project like this helped me to see the behind-the-scenes of the data collection and analysis process. I now have a deeper understanding of quantitative research and the steps involved in administering a survey and then conveying the information into a written format.

**ECU Covid-19 Impact Survey:
Understanding the Impact of Coronavirus on Student Experiences
and Success**

October 2020

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ECU Covid-19 Impact Survey:
Understanding the Impact of Coronavirus on Student Experiences and Success

Executive Summary

Researchers from East Carolina University (ECU) used data from an original survey completed by ECU students on a broad range of Covid-19 impacts and responses. ECU, along with many other universities, made the decision to transition to online instruction after the university's spring break. Survey questions focused on the effects of the transition. The survey was administered by ECU's Center for Survey Research (CSR) between June 19 and July 3. There were 495 completions for a response rate of 12.4% and a margin of error of + 4.0%.

Given the results of this study, estimates indicate that:

- 53.9% of students had no online classes before the online transition after spring break.
- The majority of ECU students prefer face-to-face instruction.
- 66.4% of male students and 19.4% of female student said their classes were harder or much harder after spring break when compared to before,
- Black students are more worried about their financial situation than white students.
- Independent and Democrat identifying students are more worried about their financial situations than Republican identifying students,
- 43.4% of ECU students said their work commitments (school or job) increased after spring break 2020.
- 23.0% of ECU students had to find a new place to live after spring break 2020.
- 81.6% of these students identified ECU's closure as the reason for changing living situations.
- The percent of students with more than 2 roommates increased from 48.3% before spring break 2020, to 51.9% after spring break 2020.
- 59.2% of students said their family responsibilities increased after spring break 2020.
- 9.1% of students stated they were taking care of someone who was ill at the time of survey completion .
- 49.9% of students stated they were worried about returning to ECU campus for the Fall semester.
- 68.9% of students stated they relied on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for health related news.
- 20.6% of students stated they relied on President Donald Trump's press briefings for health-related news.

Background

The Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) began with a small outbreak in Wuhan, China in the latter part of 2019. Within a span of just a few short months, this small outbreak expanded globally and was declared a global emergency by the World Health Organization. By January of 2020 Covid-19 had arrived in the United States, bringing with it the first Coronavirus death in San Jose, California. As a way to “slow the curve” and stop the spread of the virus, countries shut down all around the globe and implemented social distancing protocols. These protocols included social distancing, the wearing of face masks and coverings, as well as the temporary shutdown of all nonessential businesses. Schools and Universities chose to also close and transition to online learning to prevent the spread of Coronavirus on campuses and to do their part to protect all students, staff, and faculty.

East Carolina University (ECU) decided it was in the best interests of its students to make the transition to online instruction. Therefore, on March 8, 2020 students left ECU on Spring Break and did not return for the remainder of the semester. Spring Break was extended an extra week to monitor the progression of the virus across the U.S. and also to allot more time for faculty to move all course materials to an online format. This transition created a wide range of various feelings regarding the University’s decision to close. Many students faced new, unexpected challenges, including taking online courses for the first time, changes in employment status and responsibilities, and new living environments.

The Survey

Following ECU’s closure, members of the ECU and Georgia Southern University Sociology departments developed a survey to gather systemic, empirical data on feelings, experiences, and responses from the ECU community from COVID-19. This survey was formatted similarly to a questionnaire administered to ECU students surrounding the effects of major flooding on ECU campus following Hurricane Floyd in the Fall of 1999. This questionnaire also sought to understand the socioeconomic and academic impacts of not only the disaster but the school’s need to close down. ECU’s Center for Survey Research (CSR) administered the Covid-19 questionnaire to a random sample of ECU students (N=4,000) and employees (N=1,000). The survey ran between June 19 and July 3, 2020 and asked explicitly about experiences from the Spring 2020 semester. It oversampled Black and African American students to ensure adequate response rates and representations within the statistical analyses. In total, the response rate was 18% with a 12.4% response rate from students and 32.3% response rate from employees. The margin of error for the students was approximately $\pm 4.0\%$ and the margin of error for employees came out to be approximately $\pm 5.5\%$.

Characteristics of the ECU Student Population and Covid-19 Survey Sample

Table 1 below presents characteristics of the ECU student population retrieved from the ECU Factbook (see the ECU Analytics Portal at <https://performance.ecu.edu/portal>). The proportion of graduate and undergraduate students in the sample closely matches the demographics of the full student population. To correct for any small imbalances, the analysis utilized a weight to the survey data to approximate the student population more precisely on gender and race.

TABLE 1

Academic Status

The following tables provide descriptive results for a subset of responses and questions related to student's experiences within the realm of academics. These questions considered students' fears associated with being able to graduate and challenges associated with academic performance as a result of the transition to online learning.

Experiences with Online Learning Prior to Spring Break, 62.5% of students indicated that they had taken an online course before the Spring semester. Even though many had experienced online learning before, 64.8% of respondents indicated that their ability to learn after Spring Break was harder than before Spring Break. This comes as no surprise considering that of the students who had taken online courses prior to Spring Break, 62.8% of them preferred face-to-face course delivery with only 18.7% preferring online course delivery. Luckily, 61.8% of students felt that the majority of their professors were providing enough flexibility in their courses to help them continue to be successful in their classes. These results suggest that most students felt it was the environment of online learning, rather than the fault of their professors which made classes more difficult post Spring Break.

Influences on Ability to Graduate With the extreme changes in course delivery came many new stressors, including several barriers which left students feeling new anxieties about their ability to graduate on time. Nearly half of respondents (48.2%) reported feeling some level of worry regarding their ability to graduate due to the Coronavirus. Some of the most reported situations which students felt may prevent them from graduating on time included: not being able to take a required course during the summer or next year (28.7% of respondents); not being able to fulfill clinical, lab, or internship hour requirements (29.7% of respondents); not passing Spring classes (9.9% of respondents); and several other factors related to increased stress from the new, uncertain circumstances brought on by the Coronavirus.

TABLE 2

Employment and Financial Status

From here, the tables shift to focus on questions relating to employment and job security. Specifically, they cover topics such as changes in payment amount, changes in responsibilities, and feelings experienced based on personal safety concerns regarding contracting Covid-19 while at work.

Changes in Employment When asked about their current employment situation post Spring Break, 57.2% of respondents stated that they were employed at the time of the survey. However, many reported that the amount they were earning had changed with 20.0% of people making less money than before Spring Break and 14.5% earning more than before Spring Break. On top of changes in earnings, many also saw changes in their work responsibilities, with 42.1% reporting increases in work commitments.

Precautions being Taken Of the people who reported they were employed at the time of the survey, 33.9% of them were doing some or all of their work from home. All of these changes came as a result of businesses and employers making difficult decisions to keep their businesses afloat and their employees safe. When asked how people felt about the precautions their employers were taking to prevent exposure to Covid-19, 67.1% of respondents were satisfied with the precautions being taken while 13.9% were dissatisfied with the precautions being taken.

Financial Status The following table summarizes data from one question from the survey regarding feelings towards financial status.

TABLE 3

Domestic Life

This set of tables shifts the focus once again to home life and experiences within different living situations. Several questions center around changes in living situation from before and after Spring Break. From there they cover topics such as household size and responsibilities.

Living Situation Before & After Spring Break

Prior to the Spring 2020 semester spring break, 24.6% of students were living on campus, 55.4% of students were living in a rental, 17.7% of students were living in a home they own, and 2.2% of students were living in a family member's home. After the spring break campus closure announcement, 23.0% of students reported they had to find a new place to live. Of the respondents who had to move, 81.6% confirmed that ECU's decision to close was the main reason they had to change their living situation.

There was a noticeable change in the number of roommates respondents had before and after the Spring 2020 semester spring break. Before spring break, 15.7% of students had no other roommates, 36.0% of students had one roommate, and 48.3% of students had two or more roommates. After spring Break, 25.6% of students had no roommates, 23.5% of students had one roommate, and 51.9% of students had two or more roommates.

Household/Family Responsibilities and Returning to Campus

The majority of students identified that they lived with parents (53.3%), with siblings (34.1%), or spouses/partners (22.4%) after spring break. Difficulties with housing changes can cause strain and anxiety and 24.8% of students agreed that they were worried about their current living situation. Many students said their family responsibilities increased after spring break (59.2%). Some of these responsibilities included assisting with the home schooling of children in the household (31.9%) and taking care of someone who was ill (9.1%).

The impact of Coronavirus on students' states of mind and stability in the university system has the potential to alter student success as a whole. Overall, 49.9% of students agreed with the statement "At the present time, I am worried about returning to the ECU campus for the fall semester due to concerns about the coronavirus."

TABLE 4

Informative Media

In the final table, we explore the most popular news sources respondents use to gather information and knowledge about the Coronavirus pandemic. The latest research suggests media consumers can receive very different messages from different media outlets when viewing coverage on similar topics. Media bias can directly affect its audience's opinions. Some individuals believe media outlets that discourage the use of masks for personal protective practices, even though many peer reviewed studies support their use. This can greatly affect their use and potentially cause a divide between those who support mask use and those who do not.

News Sources

A battery of questions associated with media consumption during the pandemic were asked to respondents. Students were able to select all applicable outlets of where they gathered information about Coronavirus. The results were ranked by frequency in Table 5. At 66.8%, the majority of students stated they relied on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or some other government agency to receive health related information about coronavirus. 49.7% relied on information from family members, 47.8% used network television like ABC or CBS to gather coronavirus information. 47.8% of respondents also said they relied on NC Governor Roy Cooper's press briefings. These press briefings were held multiple times each week during The spring and summer months of 2020. 43.4% of students said they utilized ECU's coronavirus webpage to gain information. 40.0% of students relied on information from friends, 32.5% of students relied on Twitter, 28.9% of students relied on Facebook, 27.6% of students relied on CNN, and 26.3% of students relied on Fox News. The least popular information resources included President Donald Trump's press briefings (25.0%), Newspapers (including newspaper websites) (18.5%), National Public Radio (NPR)(17.2%), MSNBC (13.4%), Talk Radio (other than NPR; talk radio can include web radio programs) (10.4%), Other social media (4.3%), Information from employers (2.1%), and One America News Network (OAN) (1.5%).

TABLE 5

Gender, Racial, and Partisan Differences

The ECU community as a whole worked through the challenges of uncertain and unexpected circumstances following the partial closure of campus and the switch to online instruction in March 2020. The collective actions the community took to slow the spread of COVID-19 and to encourage public safety have disrupted aspects of the everyday lives of millions of people. This experience has been shared by the entirety of the ECU population. Yet, individually, not all of us feel these changes and adjustments equally. To document some of the varying student experiences, the next section examines gender, racial, and political partisanship differences among ECU students.

Gender Differences

In this portion, we assess the differences in responses between students by gender. These findings are shown in tables 6,7,8, and 9.

TABLE 6

Academic Status

When comparing gender differences to academic success during the transition to online course delivery, there were significant differences between men and women. Of the people who had taken an online course prior to Spring, women (19.45%) were more likely than men (15.7%) to prefer online course delivery. However, both genders significantly preferred face-to-face course delivery (59.9% of women and 72.5% of men). Men (66.4%) were much more likely to indicate that their ability to learn was harder after Spring Break than women (19.4%).

When it came to fears related to ability to graduate on time, women were less likely than men to express worry that the changes in the Spring would impact their ability to graduate. On average, 67% of females expressed worries about graduating on time and 90% of males. Of the situations that students felt may prevent them from graduating on time, males were more likely to worry because: they did not pass Spring classes (14.9%) and they will not be able to return to school next year (8.2%). Meanwhile, women were more likely to express worries from not being able to complete clinical, lab, or internship hours (34.3%).

TABLE 7

Employment and Financial Status

There were no significant differences between men and women when it came to the questions related to employment and financial status. Relatively equal numbers of men and women indicated changes in the amount of money they were earning after Spring Break.

The percentage of women and men who reported doing all of their work from home was virtually equal, with 18.1% of women and 19.0% of men. Men were more likely to indicate that they were satisfied with the precautions their employers were taking to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus (68.5% of men as opposed to 65.3% of women).

When asked about worry regarding their financial status, both men and women indicated they were at least somewhat worried about their current financial status at the time of the survey (2.33, 2.47 mean).

TABLE 8

Domestic Life

After ECU's closure, men were significantly more likely to have needed to find a new place to live (82.5%) than women (75.0%). Despite this fact, women were likely to see an increase in the number of people they were living with. The mean number of roommates for women rose from 1.70 to 1.85. At the same time men saw a decrease in the mean number of roommates they were living with, with the average dropping from 1.68 to 1.54. Not only did the number of roommates change, but also the types of people students were living with. Women were significantly more likely to be living with someone under the age of 15 (23.0%) and someone with an existing medical condition (18.8%) than men were (9.7% and 11.9% respectively). While women were more likely to be living with someone under the age of 15, they were also unsurprisingly more likely to have assisted with home schooling of a child with 37.6% of women being involved and only 17.2% of men being involved.

TABLE 9

Informative Media

Male respondents were significantly more likely to rely on Donald Trump's press briefings as a news source (26.1% versus 18.5% of women) as well as NPR (22.4% versus 12.1% of women) when it comes to health-related news about the Coronavirus. On the other side, women were

much more likely to turn to social media platforms as their source of news. A significantly higher number of women (35.1) relied on Facebook for their news than men (20.1%).

Racial Identification Differences

Below, we discuss whether there are disparities between students who identify as Black or African American and those who identify as White. These outcomes are presented in tables 10,11,12, and 13.

TABLE 10

Academic Status

Prior to Spring Break 2020, Black students were more likely to be enrolled in online classes than White students. During the Spring semester, only 42.3% of Whites were enrolled in online courses before Spring Break as opposed to 49.2% of Black or African American students. Face-to-face was the preferred method of course delivery between both races. However, more Black students stated that they preferred taking online courses (22.6% versus 16.5%). With the transition to online course delivery after Spring Break came many new challenges. Each race indicated that they experienced more difficulty with learning after Spring Break as opposed to before Spring Break. However significantly more White students indicated it was harder for them to succeed in the classroom post Spring Break (70.5% versus 57.1% of Black students). Students within each race equally felt that their professors were providing enough flexibility in their courses to allow students to still be successful.

Both races indicated some level of worry related to being able to graduate on time. The biggest difference lied in the fact that the biggest source of worry for Black students was not passing classes during Spring semester (15.9% versus 6.7% of White Students).

TABLE 11

Employment and Financial Status

Table 10 analyzes the employment and financial status of ECU students based on racial identification. Each group experienced similar changes and feelings regarding their relationship to their work.

Each race saw the same level of changes in earnings after Spring Break. No major racial differences presented themselves when it came to the amount of paid employment work being completed at home. Black and White people were slightly more likely to report increases in work responsibilities as opposed to decreases, both related to school and their jobs. The only significance found was that in the worries of the individuals' financial situation. Black students indicated they were more worried than white students when it came to their financial situations (M= 2.50,2.37).

TABLE 12

Domestic Life

When analyzing domestic life based on race, significance was found in the living situation of students. Only 14.3% of black students reported they were living with a spouse or significant other at the time of their survey, while 24.0% of white students stated they were living with a spouse or significant other. Meanwhile, 21.4% of black students reported they were living with someone who had a medical condition that might make them more vulnerable to coronavirus, compared to only 18.3% of white students with the same living situation.

Significantly more black students were involved in assisting with home schooling children in their households during the spring semester (36.5%) when compared to white students (28.5%). Over two thirds of white students (67.3%) reported they didn't have children in their households at all, while 53.2% of black students had children in their households. Overall, black students reported they were more worried about returning to the ECU campus (mean of 235) for the fall semester due to concerns about the coronavirus than white students (mean of 2.10).

TABLE 13

Informative Media

In the table comparing media consumption between racial identification, significance was found in the network television outlets like ABC or CBS. 61.1% of black students reported they used this media, while only 45.2% of white students reported they used it. Twitter was used as an information source by almost half of black students (45.2%), but only 32.4% of white students reported it as a source for health-related news. CNN was more widely used by black students (43.7%) than white students (22.4%). Fox was more widely used by white students (26.3%) than black students (15.9%).

A significant difference in health-related media consumption about the pandemic was the viewing of President Donald Trump's press briefings. 25.6% of white students indicated they used this outlet to gain information about the pandemic, but only 7.9% of black students selected it as a source they have relied on for information. MSNBC showed a similar divide, with 22.2% of black students stating they used it, but only 7.7% of white students stating they used it as a health-related news source. OAN had no responses indicating black students used this media, and only 1.6% of white students relying on it for health-related news.

Political Partisanship Differences

On a surface level, the Covid-19 pandemic does not appear to be a topic about which political partisanship should matter. Republicans, Democrats, and Independents are all similarly vulnerable to contracting Coronavirus and to its implications. Nonetheless, recent data from academic researchers and polling organizations suggest that politicization of Covid-19 has become a commonality. The latest research reveals that nationally there is a major political gap amongst Americans. Republicans and Democrats have largely differing views, attitudes, and practices related to Covid-19, according to the findings. More precisely, self-identified Republicans expressed less concern than self-identified Democrats and Independents (Newport 2020; Pew Research Center 2020; Thomson-DeVeaux 2020) about the magnitude of Covid-19 and its possible consequences. Republicans are also less likely to say that they are adopting the precautionary safety measures recommended by public health experts, such as wearing a face

covering, avoiding large public gatherings, and practicing social distancing (Newport 2020; Pew Research Center 2020; Thomson-DeVeaux 2020).

TABLE 14

Academic Status

Political status was not a large determinant of differences in academic status. Republicans, Independents, and Democrats reported an average of 43%-48% of people who had taken online courses before Spring Break. Fewer Independents, an average of 52.7% of the sample, had taken an online course before the Spring 2020 semester as opposed to 64.3% Republicans and 68.6% of Democrats. All three parties indicated that they preferred online course delivery as opposed to Face to Face delivery and so all three also reported that their ability to learn was harder after Spring Break.

TABLE 15

Employment and Financial Status

There were few significant differences among political parties when comparing employment and financial status during the spring semester. The majority of students from all three parties were not employed at the time of the survey but also said that their work commitments (job and schoolwork) had increased since spring break 2020.

The only significant difference among political parties was the response to the question asking if students were worried about their current financial situation. Students who identified as Democrat or Independent were more likely to agree with this statement than students who identified as Republican.

TABLE 16

Domestic Life

When comparing changes in domestic life by party affiliation, there were significant differences found in students' living situations. The percentage of Republican students that stated they were living with parents or guardians was 60.2% while only 45.4% of Independent students and 52.0% of Democratic students identified they were living with a parent or guardian. Only 3.3% of Republican students indicated they were living with other family members, while 11.3% of independent students and 9.3% of Democratic students stated they were living with other family members. An important response was that 18.9% of students who identified as Democrats and 17.5% of students who identified as Independents were living with someone who had an existing medical condition that might make them more vulnerable to the Coronavirus. This was much higher than the 9.8% of Republican students who stated they were living with someone who was more vulnerable to Coronavirus.

There was also significance found when students were asked if they had helped with homeschooling any children during Coronavirus. Democratic students indicated that 37.4% of them had been helping homeschool, followed by 29.9% of independent students, and 23.6% of Republican students. Meanwhile, 74.0% of Republican students stated there were no children in

their households, followed by 64.9% of Independent students, and 55.0% of Democratic Students.

Students who identified themselves as Democrats indicated they were more worried about returning to ECU's campus in the fall ($M=2.40$) than students of other political affiliations. Republican students were slightly less worried ($M=2.20$), followed by Independent students ($M=1.73$).

TABLE 17

Informative Media

In table 17, Media consumption is compared to political party affiliation. Significance was found when individuals indicated they relied on information from family members with 61.0% of Republican students, followed by 52.0% of Democratic students and 46.4% of Independent students. Over half of Democratic students (53.7%) and Independent students (51.5%) indicated they watched network television stations like ABC or CBS, while only 39.0% of Republican students used this media source. Twitter as a health-related media source was used by 45.4% of Democrats, followed by 32.0% of self-identified Independent students and 26.0% of self-identified Republican students. CNN was more widely used by Democrat and Independent students (37.4%, 30.9%) when compared to Republican students (13.0%). Fox was more widely used by Republican students (45.5%) when compared to Democrats (12.3%) and Independents (22.7%).

A significant difference was found when analyzing the use of President Donald Trump's press briefings for health-related news on coronavirus. Republicans were most likely to indicate that they relied on these briefings for news (43.1%), while significantly less independents relied on them (23.7%) and less than 10% of Democrat students used them (7.0%). Of the students who identified themselves as Independent, 23.7% used newspapers and newspaper websites, followed by 22.5% of Democrats and 9.8% of Republicans. Democrats used National Public Radio (NPR) more than the other parties (20.3%), followed by 16.5% of Independent students, and 5.7% of Republican students. Lastly, MSNBC was more widely used by Democratic students (16.7%) followed by Independents (10.3%) and Republicans (3.3%).

Summary

The following conclusions are drawn from the findings provided in this survey study. First, ECU's decision to switch to online instruction has created a plethora of difficulties for students. These problems are not felt equally across race, gender, and political parties. With the majority of students agreeing that their classes were more difficult after spring break and the transition to online instruction. 38.5% of ECU students had never taken an online class before the spring 2020 semester. With the coronavirus pandemic forcing the ECU to return to online-only instruction as of August 23, it is important to find ways to support these students and ensure that they feel comfortable in the online learning environment. This a serious educational challenge for both ECU administrators and faculty to acknowledge and integrate into their methods of online instruction, planning, and implementation.

Second, students at home lives are vastly different than they were before spring break 2020. 59.2% of students stated their family responsibilities have increased since spring break, with

31.9% of students assisting with homeschooling for children in the household, and 9.1% of students taking care of someone who is ill. These new problems affect women and ECU's black students more than men or the white community. These new responsibilities could have a significant effect on the success of students in their now online classes. Keeping these new difficulties in mind, ECU administration and faculty may need to change their instruction methods in order to increase the likelihood of success of students in their classes now the ECU is back online for the Fall 2020 semester.

Third, there are significant differences in health-related news consumption between gender race and political affiliation. 35.1% of women relied on Facebook, while only 20.1% of men did. Every table showed significance in the use of President Donald Trump's press briefings. Significantly more men than women, significantly more white than black, and significantly more republican individuals trusted these briefings for health-related news. The bias of different media outlets along with the politicization of Coronavirus could have a huge effect on the media selection and trusted outlets of ECU students.

We understand that our data only allows us to estimate student pandemic protective strategies at a time when many respondents will be a wide selection of incentives to attend and engage in large social activities. As held outside of East Carolina University and the local Greenville community over the summer. However, the figures reported here provide an empirical framework to be used when anticipating the effects of reopening the college campuses and returning students to a community where important tasks will need to be carried out and there preparations will eventually begin to re-open campuses and the fall semester grows closer, it is important that ECU administrators are strongly urging continuous and successful efforts to educate students about appropriate safety measures to help prevent the spread of coronavirus both on and off campus.

Table 1. ECU Student Characteristics: ECU Population and Covid-19 Survey Sample	ECU Population	Unweighted Survey Sample	Weighted Survey Sample
Total number of students in ECU population and Covid-19 Survey Sample	26,595	495	495
Student Status *			
Undergraduate students	79.8%	82.4%	82.3%
Graduate students	20.2%	17.6%	17.7%
Student Gender **			
Female	59.0%	72.4%	59.4%
Male	41.0%	27.2%	40.2%
Prefer to self-describe	n/a	0.4%	0.4%
Student Racial Identification ***			
Black or African American	16.0%	25.6%	16.1%
White (Non- Hispanic/Latinx)	66.0%	63.4%	65.8%
All others	18.0%	11.0%	18.1%
Student Political Party Identification ****			
Republican	n/a	27.5%	32.8%
Independent	n/a	21.7%	21.5%

Democrat	n/a	50.8%	45.7%
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* Students needed to indicate they were enrolled during the spring 2020 semester to be included in the analysis. Undergraduate students are those who identified themselves as undergraduates in question one of the survey, or as a freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior in question three of the survey. Graduate students are those who identified as enrolled in a master's degree program or doctoral degree program.

** Gender is based on responses to question forty-four in the survey (see Table 3). Students who chose to self-describe were not included in the analysis on gender differences due to the small number of cases.

*** Racial identification is based on responses to both question forty-six and question forty-seven in the survey. Non-Hispanic/Latinx White students and non-Hispanic/Latinx Black students are included in the analysis on differences by race (see Table 4) because there are enough cases in each group for statistical comparisons. There were twenty-six Hispanic/Latinx respondents and another twenty-eight respondents who identified as Asian American, American Indian, Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. There were not enough responses from these students to perform quantitative analysis.

**** Republicans are defined as students who reported that they “usually think of themselves as Republicans.” Democrats are defined as students who reported that they “usually think of themselves as Democrats.” Republicans and Democrats also include independent “leaners.” These are respondents who answered that they do not think of themselves as Republicans or Democrats, but that they “lean” closer to one of those two parties. We treat those who “lean closer” to the Republican Party as Republicans and those who “lean closer” to the Democratic Party as Democrats. Independents are those who answer that they “lean closer” to neither political party. This coding scheme is consistent with the recommendations of political scientists who study partisanship (see e.g., Petrocik 2009).

Table 2. Academic Status	Percent
Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	Yes
Before Spring Break, How many of your courses were being taught completely online?	
<i>Some-All</i>	46.1%
<i>None</i>	53.9%
Had you ever taken online courses before the spring 2020 semester?	
<i>Yes</i>	62.5%
Which kind of course delivery method do you find helps you learn course material more effectively? (Of those who had taken online course prior to 2020.)	
<i>Online</i>	18.7%
<i>Face-to-Face</i>	62.8 %
<i>No Preference</i>	18.5%
How would you describe your ability to learn course material after Spring Break as compared to before the Spring Break?	
<i>Harder than before Spring Break</i>	64.8%
<i>About the same</i>	27.7%
<i>Easier than before Spring Break</i>	7.5%
In how many of your Spring 2020 courses did you feel that your professor provided enough flexibility (such as with deadlines and assignments) for you to be successful in your courses?	
<i>Non-Half</i>	38.2 %
<i>Most, but not all</i>	28.9 %
<i>All</i>	32.9 %
How worried are you that you will be unable to graduate on time because of the changes that happened during the spring 2020 semester due to the coronavirus?	

<i>Very/extremely worried</i>	25.5%
<i>Moderately worried</i>	22.7%
<i>Slightly worried/not worried at all</i>	51.8%

Which of the following situations may prevent you from graduating on time? (Select all that Apply)

<i>None</i>	2.0%
<i>I didn't pass all my Spring classes</i>	9.9%
<i>Personal Stress, Struggle or Problems</i>	5.7%
<i>I won't be able to take a required class in summer or next year</i>	28.7%
<i>I won't be able to come back next year</i>	5.1%
<i>I won't get the thesis, clinical, lab, or internship hours I need</i>	29.7%

Table 3. Employment Status **Percent**
Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495). **Yes**

Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?

<i>Currently not employed</i>	42.9%
<i>Employed, but earning less money than before Spring Break</i>	20.0%
<i>Employed and earning about the same as before</i>	22.7%
<i>Employed and earning more</i>	14.5%

Approximately how much of your current paid employment work are you doing from home? (Among students who are currently employed.)

<i>None</i>	66.1%
<i>Some</i>	13.2%
<i>All</i>	20.7%

Since Spring Break, have your work commitments (school or job related) increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?

<i>Increased</i>	43.4%
<i>Stayed about the same</i>	31.1%
<i>Decreased</i>	25.5%

How satisfied are you with the precautions your employer is taking to prevent exposure to coronavirus (Covid-19)?

<i>Satisfied- Very satisfied</i>	67.1%
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	15.7%
<i>Dissatisfied</i>	13.9%
<i>Not sure</i>	3.2%

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about my financial situation.

<i>Agree</i>	64.4%
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	15.4%
<i>Disagree</i>	19.4%

Table 4. Domestic Life **Percent**
Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495). **Yes**

Which of the following best describes where you were living before this year's Spring Break?

<i>On campus</i>	24.46%
<i>In a rental</i>	55.4%
<i>In a home you own</i>	17.7%
<i>Family Members' Home</i>	2.2%

Did you need to find a new place to live after spring break?

<i>Yes</i>	23.0%
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(For those who had to find a new place to live after spring break)Was the university's decision to close campus the reason that you needed to find a new place to live after Spring Break?

<i>Yes</i>	81.6%
How many roommates/household members were living with you before Spring Break?	
<i>0</i>	15.7%
<i>1</i>	36.0%
<i>2+</i>	48.3%
How many roommates/household members were living with you after Spring Break?	
<i>0</i>	25.6%
<i>1</i>	22.5%
<i>2+</i>	51.9%
Which of the following describes who you are living with now? (Select all boxes that Apply)	
<i>A spouse or partner</i>	22.4%
<i>A parent or parents</i>	53.3%
<i>A sibling or siblings</i>	34.1%
<i>Other family</i>	8.5%
<i>Friends</i>	12.9%
<i>Children 15 years of age or younger</i>	29.8%
<i>Someone over the age of 60</i>	8.3%
<i>Someone with a physical disability or mobility impairment</i>	3.2%
<i>Someone with an existing medical condition that might make them more vulnerable to the coronavirus</i>	17.4%
<i>Alone or no roommate</i>	9.1%
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about my current living situation.	
<i>Agree</i>	24.8%
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	19.6%
<i>Disagree</i>	54.9%
Since Spring Break, have your family responsibilities increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?	
<i>Increased</i>	59.2%
<i>Stayed about the same</i>	33.9%
<i>Decreased</i>	1.8%
Have you assisted with home schooling of any children during the coronavirus outbreak?	
<i>Yes</i>	31.9%
<i>No, my spouse, partner, or parent is the one who home schools the children</i>	5.5%
<i>I do not have children living with me to home school</i>	62.6%
Are you currently taking care of someone who is ill?	
<i>Yes</i>	9.1%
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about returning to the ECU campus for the fall semester due to concerns about the coronavirus.	
<i>Agree</i>	49.9%
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	20.4%
<i>Disagree</i>	28.1%

Table 5. Student response on Informative Media Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	Percent Yes
What sources of information have you relied on for health-related news about the coronavirus?	
<i>Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or some other government agency</i>	68.5%
<i>Information from family members</i>	51.3%
<i>Network television news (ABC, CBS, NBC)</i>	50.3%
<i>North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's press briefings</i>	49.7%

<i>ECU's Coronavirus Webpage Updates</i>	44.2%
<i>Information from friends</i>	39.2%
<i>Twitter</i>	35.6%
<i>Facebook</i>	30.9%
<i>CNN</i>	29.9%
<i>Fox News</i>	23.2%
<i>President Donald Trump's press briefings</i>	20.6%
<i>Newspapers (including newspaper websites)</i>	18.6%
<i>National Public Radio (NPR)</i>	14.9%
<i>MSNBC</i>	12.3%
<i>Talk radio (other than NPR; talk radio can include web radio programs)</i>	11.5%
<i>Other Social Media</i>	4.4%
<i>Information from Employer</i>	2.2%
<i>One America News Network (OAN)</i>	1.4%

Table 6. Academic Status Results by Gender Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	Percent Female (N=292)	Percent Male (N=198)
Before Spring Break, How many of your courses were being taught completely online?		
<i>Some-All</i>	49.2	36.6
<i>None</i>	50.8	63.4
Had you ever taken online courses before the spring 2020 semester?		
<i>Yes</i>	63.0	62.4
Which kind of course delivery method do you find helps you learn course material more effectively? (Of those who had taken online course prior to 2020.)		
<i>Online</i>	19.4	15.7
<i>Face-to-Face</i>	59.9	72.5
<i>No Preference</i>	20.8	11.8
How would you describe your ability to learn course material after Spring Break as compared to before the Spring Break?		
<i>Harder than before Spring Break</i>	19.4	66.4
<i>About the same</i>	28.4	25.4
<i>Easier than before Spring Break</i>	7.0	8.2
In how many of your Spring 2020 courses did you feel that your professor provided enough flexibility (such as with deadlines and assignments) for you to be successful in your courses?		
<i>None-Half</i>	39.3	35.1
<i>Most, but not all</i>	28.7	30.6
<i>All</i>	32.0	34.3
How worried are you that you will be unable to graduate on time because of the changes that happened during the spring 2020 semester due to the coronavirus?	MEAN (SD) 0.67 (0.83)	MEAN (SD) 0.90 (0.85)
Which of the following situations may prevent you from graduating on time? (Select all that Apply)		
<i>None</i>	1.1	4.5
<i>I didn't pass all my Spring classes</i>	7.9	14.9
<i>Personal Stress, Struggle or Problems</i>	5.6	5.2
<i>I won't be able to take a required class in summer or next year</i>	27.0	32.8

<i>I won't be able to come back next year</i>	3.9	8.2
<i>I won't get the thesis, clinical, lab, or internship hours I need</i>	34.3	17.9

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 7. Employment Status Results by Gender Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	Percent Female (N=292)	Percent Male (N=198)
Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?		
<i>Currently not employed</i>	41.3	46.3
<i>Employed, but earning less money than before Spring Break</i>	21.1	17.2
<i>Employed and earning about the same as before</i>	23.6	20.6
<i>Employed and earning more</i>	14.0	15.7
Approximately how much of your current paid employment work are you doing from home?		
<i>None</i>	67.0	65.3
<i>Some</i>	14.1	11.1
<i>All</i>	18.9	23.6
Since Spring Break, have your work commitments (school or job related) increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?		
<i>Increased</i>	45.2	38.8
<i>Stayed about the same</i>	28.1	38.1
<i>Decreased</i>	26.7	23.1
How satisfied are you with the precautions your employer is taking to prevent exposure to coronavirus (Covid-19)?		
<i>Satisfied</i>	66.5	69.4
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	14.1	19.4
<i>Dissatisfied</i>	15.5	9.7
<i>Not sure</i>	3.9	1.4
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about my financial situation.	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	2.47 (0.80)	2.33 (0.88)

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 8. Domestic Life Results by Gender Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	Percent Female (N=292)	Percent Male (N=198)
Which of the following best describes where you were living before this year's Spring Break?		
<i>On campus</i>	23.8	26.3
<i>In a rental</i>	56.4	53.4
<i>In a home you own</i>	17.6	18.0
<i>Family Members' Home</i>	2.3	2.3
Did you need to find a new place to live after spring break?		
<i>Yes</i>	75.0	82.8
(For those who had to find a new place to live after spring break) Was the university's decision to close campus the reason that you needed to find a new place to live after Spring Break?		
<i>Yes</i>	80.9	82.6

How many roommates/household members were living with you before Spring Break?	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	1.70 (1.21)	1.68 (1.17)
How many roommates/household members were living with you after Spring Break?	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	1.85 (1.43)	1.54 (1.37)
Which of the following describes who you are living with now? (Select all boxes that Apply)		
<i>A spouse or partner</i>	22.2	21.6
<i>A parent or parents</i>	53.4	54.5
<i>A sibling or siblings</i>	35.1	32.1
<i>Other family</i>	9.0	7.5
<i>Friends</i>	11.8	15.7
<i>Children 15 years of age or younger</i>	23.0	9.7
<i>Someone over the age of 60</i>	7.3	10.4
<i>Someone with a physical disability or mobility impairment</i>	2.5	5.2
<i>Someone with an existing medical condition that might make them more vulnerable to the coronavirus</i>	18.8	11.9
<i>Alone or no roommate</i>	9.8	7.5
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about my current living situation.	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	1.63 (0.83)	1.83 (0.91)
Since Spring Break, have your family responsibilities increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?		
<i>Increased</i>	61.2	53.0
<i>Stayed about the same</i>	31.7	40.3
<i>Decreased</i>	1.4	3.0
Have you assisted with home schooling of any children during the coronavirus outbreak?		
<i>Yes</i>	37.6	17.2
<i>No, my spouse, partner, or parent is the one who home schools the children</i>	5.3	6.0
<i>I do not have children living with me to home school</i>	57.0	76.9
Are you currently taking care of someone who is ill?		
<i>Yes</i>	9.8	7.5
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about returning to the ECU campus for the fall semester due to concerns about the coronavirus.	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	2.22 (0.87)	2.05 (0.97)

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 9. Student response on Informative Media by Gender	Percent Female (N=292)	Percent Male (N=198)
Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).		
What sources of information have you relied on for health-related news about the coronavirus?		
<i>Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or some other government agency</i>	69.4	64.9
<i>Information from family members</i>	52.0	50.0
<i>Network television news (ABC, CBS, NBC)</i>	49.7	52.2
<i>North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's press briefings</i>	50.3	46.3

<i>ECU's Coronavirus Webpage Updates</i>	43.0	47.0
<i>Information from friends</i>	37.6	44.0
<i>Twitter</i>	36.5	33.6
<i>Facebook</i>	35.1	20.1
<i>CNN</i>	30.1	29.1
<i>Fox News</i>	21.9	26.9
<i>President Donald Trump's press briefings</i>	18.5	26.1
<i>Newspapers (including newspaper websites)</i>	18.8	17.9
<i>National Public Radio (NPR)</i>	12.1	22.4
<i>MSNBC</i>	11.0	14.9
<i>Talk radio (other than NPR; talk radio can include web radio programs)</i>	11.2	12.7
<i>Other Social Media</i>	3.9	5.2
<i>Information from Employer</i>	2.2	1.5
<i>One America News Network (OAN)</i>	0.8	3.0

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 10. Academic Status Results by Racial Identification	Percent	Percent
Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions	Black	White
(N=495).	(N=79)	(N=324)
Before Spring Break, How many of your courses were being taught completely online?		
<i>Some-All</i>	49.2	42.3
<i>None</i>	50.8	57.7
Had you ever taken online courses before the spring 2020 semester?		
<i>Yes</i>	68.8	61.6
Which kind of course delivery method do you find helps you learn course material more effectively? (Of those who had taken online course prior to 2020.)		
<i>Online</i>	22.6	16.5
<i>Face-to-Face</i>	60.4	66.1
<i>No Preference</i>	17.0	17.4
How would you describe your ability to learn course material after Spring Break as compared to before the Spring Break?		
<i>Harder than before Spring Break</i>	57.1	70.5
<i>About the same</i>	33.3	23.1
<i>Easier than before Spring Break</i>	9.5	6.4
In how many of your Spring 2020 courses did you feel that your professor provided enough flexibility (such as with deadlines and assignments) for you to be successful in your courses?		
<i>None-Half</i>	44.4	34.6
<i>Most, but not all</i>	26.2	32.1
<i>All</i>	29.4	33.3
How worried are you that you will be unable to graduate on time because of the changes that happened during the spring 2020 semester due to the coronavirus?	MEAN	MEAN
	(SD)	(SD)
	0.79	0.72
	(0.87)	(0.83)
Which of the following situations may prevent you from graduating on time? (Select all that Apply)		
<i>None</i>	3.2	0.6
<i>I didn't pass all my Spring classes</i>	15.9	6.7
<i>Personal Stress, Struggle or Problems</i>	5.6	5.1
<i>I won't be able to take a required class in summer or next year</i>	31.0	29.2

<i>I won't be able to come back next year</i>	5.6	4.5
<i>I won't get the thesis, clinical, lab, or internship hours I need</i>	22.2	33.0

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 11. Employment Status Results by Racial Identification Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	Percent Black (N=79)	Percent White (N=324)
Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?		
<i>Currently not employed</i>	42.4	40.6
<i>Employed, but earning less money than before Spring Break</i>	20.8	21.0
<i>Employed and earning about the same as before</i>	23.2	23.2
<i>Employed and earning more</i>	13.6	15.2
Approximately how much of your current paid employment work are you doing from home?		
<i>None</i>	69.4	66.8
<i>Some</i>	12.5	14.1
<i>All</i>	18.1	19.0
Since Spring Break, have your work commitments (school or job related) increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?)		
Increased	44.4	42.9
Stayed about the same	29.4	31.7
Decreased	26.2	25.3
How satisfied are you with the precautions your employer is taking to prevent exposure to coronavirus (Covid-19)?		
<i>Satisfied</i>	65.3	68.5
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	12.5	17.4
<i>Dissatisfied</i>	18.1	11.4
<i>Not sure</i>	4.2	2.7
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about my financial situation.	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	2.50 (0.84)	2.37 (0.84)

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 12. Domestic Life Results by Racial Identification Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	Percent Black (N=79)	Percent White (N=324)
Which of the following best describes where you were living before this year's Spring Break?		
<i>On campus</i>	22.6	25.2
<i>In a rental</i>	57.3	55.8
<i>In a home you own</i>	17.7	16.8
<i>Family Members' Home</i>	2.4	2.3
Did you need to find a new place to live after spring break?		
<i>Yes</i>	22.2	24.7
(For those who had to find a new place to live after spring break) Was the university's decision to close campus the reason that you needed to find a new place to live after Spring Break?		
<i>Yes</i>	78.6	83.1
How many roommates/household members were living with you before Spring Break?	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)

	1.85 (1.17)	1.62 (1.17)
How many roommates/household members were living with you after Spring Break?	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	1.81 (1.45)	1.74 (1.40)
Which of the following describes who you are living with now? (Select all boxes that Apply)		
<i>A spouse or partner</i>	14.3	24.0
<i>A parent or parents</i>	48.4	55.8
<i>A sibling or siblings</i>	29.4	34.9
<i>Other family</i>	8.7	9.3
<i>Friends</i>	25.4	16.7
<i>Children 15 years of age or younger</i>	18.2	51.5
<i>Someone over the age of 60</i>	11.9	7.1
<i>Someone with a physical disability or mobility impairment</i>	6.3	2.6
<i>Someone with an existing medical condition that might make them more vulnerable to the coronavirus</i>	21.4	18.3
<i>Alone or no roommate</i>	11.9	8.3
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about my current living situation.	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	1.66 (1.58)	1.71 (0.85)
Since Spring Break, have your family responsibilities increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?		
<i>Increased</i>	54.8	59.0
<i>Stayed about the same</i>	35.7	34.3
<i>Decreased</i>	3.2	1.6
Have you assisted with home schooling of any children during the coronavirus outbreak?		
<i>Yes</i>	36.5	28.5
<i>No, my spouse, partner, or parent is the one who home schools the children</i>	10.3	4.2
<i>I do not have children living with me to home school</i>	53.2	67.3
Are you currently taking care of someone who is ill?		
<i>Yes</i>	11.1	9.3
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about returning to the ECU campus for the fall semester due to concerns about the coronavirus.	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	2.35 (0.87)	2.10 (0.90)

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 13. Student response on Informative Media by Racial Identification Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	Percent Black (N=79)	Percent White (N=324)
What sources of information have you relied on for health-related news about the coronavirus?		
<i>Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or some other government agency</i>	61.9	71.5
<i>Information from family members</i>	46.8	54.2
<i>Network television news (ABC, CBS, NBC)</i>	61.1	45.2
<i>North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's press briefings</i>	53.2	49.7
<i>ECU's Coronavirus Webpage Updates</i>	47.6	41.7
<i>Information from friends</i>	34.9	40.4

<i>Twitter</i>	45.2	32.4
<i>Facebook</i>	27.8	32.4
<i>CNN</i>	43.7	22.4
<i>Fox News</i>	15.9	26.3
<i>President Donald Trump's press briefings</i>	7.9	25.6
<i>Newspapers (including newspaper websites)</i>	17.5	20.8
<i>National Public Radio (NPR)</i>	11.9	15.4
<i>MSNBC</i>	22.2	7.7
<i>Talk radio (other than NPR; talk radio can include web radio programs)</i>	8.7	11.9
<i>Other Social Media</i>	5.6	3.8
<i>Information from Employer</i>	2.4	1.9
<i>One America News Network (OAN)</i>	0.0	1.6

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 14. Academic Status Results by Political Party Identification	Percent Republican (N=149)	Percent Independent (N=98)	Percent Democrat (N=207)
Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).			
Before Spring Break, How many of your courses were being taught completely online?			
<i>Some-All</i>	43.1	43.3	48.0
<i>None</i>	56.9	56.7	52.0
Had you ever taken online courses before the spring 2020 semester?			
<i>Yes</i>	64.3	52.7	68.6
Which kind of course delivery method do you find helps you learn course material more effectively? (Of those who had taken online course prior to 2020.)			
<i>Online</i>	15.3	21.1	20.5
<i>Face-to-Face</i>	63.3	56.3	65.3
<i>No Preference</i>	21.4	22.5	14.2
How would you describe your ability to learn course material after Spring Break as compared to before the Spring Break?			
<i>Harder than before Spring Break</i>	66.7	61.9	66.5
<i>About the same</i>	25.2	30.9	25.6
<i>Easier than before Spring Break</i>	8.1	7.2	7.9
In how many of your Spring 2020 courses did you feel that your professor provided enough flexibility (such as with deadlines and assignments) for you to be successful in your courses?			
<i>None-Half</i>	39.8	33.0	40.5
<i>Most, but not all</i>	24.4	32.0	30.4
<i>All</i>	35.8	35.1	29.1
How worried are you that you will be unable to graduate on time because of the changes that happened during the spring 2020 semester due to the coronavirus?	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	0.65 (0.81)	0.81 (0.83)	0.76 (0.86)
Which of the following situations may prevent you from graduating on time? (Select all that Apply)			
<i>None</i>	0.8	5.2	1.3

<i>I didn't pass all my Spring classes</i>	7.3	12.4	10.6
<i>Personal Stress, Struggle or Problems</i>	4.9	6.2	5.7
<i>I won't be able to take a required class in summer or next year</i>	26.0	25.8	31.3
<i>I won't be able to come back next year</i>	2.4	5.2	5.7
<i>I won't get the thesis, clinical, lab, or internship hours I need</i>	30.1	30.9	28.6

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 15. Employment Status Results by Political Party Identification Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	Percent Republican (N=149)	Percent Independent (N=98)	Percent Democrat (N=207)
Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?			
<i>Currently not employed</i>	41.8	38.1	42.6
<i>Employed, but earning less money than before Spring Break</i>	20.5	25.8	17.9
<i>Employed and earning about the same as before</i>	22.1	25.8	22.4
<i>Employed and earning more</i>	15.6	10.3	17.0
Approximately how much of your current paid employment work are you doing from home?			
<i>None</i>	73.2	65.0	63.3
<i>Some</i>	9.9	18.3	12.5
<i>All</i>	16.9	16.7	24.2
Since Spring Break, have your work commitments (school or job related) increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?			
Increased	44.7	47.4	43.6
Stayed about the same	36.6	27.8	26.4
Decreased	18.7	24.7	30.0
How satisfied are you with the precautions your employer is taking to prevent exposure to coronavirus (Covid-19)?			
<i>Satisfied</i>	76.1	60.0	66.4
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	9.9	21.7	15.6
<i>Dissatisfied</i>	9.9	16.7	14.8
<i>Not sure</i>	4.2	1.7	3.1
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about my financial situation.	MEAN (SD) 2.19 (0.87)	MEAN (SD) 2.51 (0.77)	MEAN (SD) 2.50 (0.81)

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 16. Domestic Life Results by Political Party Identification Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	Percent Republican (N=149)	Percent Independent (N=98)	Percent Democrat (N=207)
Which of the following best describes where you were living before this year's Spring Break?			
<i>On campus</i>	24.6	17.7	27.1
<i>In a rental</i>	53.3	63.5	54.7
<i>In a home you own</i>	19.7	17.7	15.6
<i>Family Members' Home</i>	2.5	1.0	2.7

Did you need to find a new place to live after spring break?			
<i>Yes</i>	24.4	16.5	23.3
(For those who had to find a new place to live after spring break) Was the university's decision to close campus the reason that you needed to find a new place to live after Spring Break?			
<i>Yes</i>	80.0	81.3	81.1
How many roommates/household members were living with you before Spring Break?	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	1.65 (1.24)	1.85 (1.19)	1.56 (1.18)
How many roommates/household members were living with you after Spring Break?	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	1.59 (1.42)	1.80 (1.37)	1.79 (1.44)
Which of the following describes who you are living with now? (Select all boxes that Apply)			
<i>A spouse or partner</i>	22.0	22.7	22.9
<i>A parent or parents</i>	60.2	45.4	52.0
<i>A sibling or siblings</i>	39.8	32.0	31.7
<i>Other family</i>	3.3	11.3	9.3
<i>Friends</i>	10.6	14.4	13.2
<i>Children 15 years of age or younger</i>	13.8	20.6	22.9
<i>Someone over the age of 60</i>	7.3	4.1	8.8
<i>Someone with a physical disability or mobility impairment</i>	0.8	3.1	4.4
<i>Someone with an existing medical condition that might make them more vulnerable to the coronavirus</i>	9.8	17.5	18.9
<i>Alone or no roommate</i>	8.1	14.4	8.8
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about my current living situation.	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	1.73 (0.87)	2.20 (0.87)	1.74 (0.85)
Since Spring Break, have your family responsibilities increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?			
<i>Increased</i>	55.3	54.6	61.7
<i>Stayed about the same</i>	39.8	38.1	30.4
<i>Decreased</i>	4.1	6.2	4.8
Have you assisted with home schooling of any children during the coronavirus outbreak?			
<i>Yes</i>	23.6	29.9	37.4
<i>No, my spouse, partner, or parent is the one who home schools the children</i>	2.4	5.2	7.0
<i>I do not have children living with me to home school</i>	74.0	64.9	55.0
Are you currently taking care of someone who is ill?			
<i>Yes</i>	8.1	6.2	10.6
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the present time, I am worried about returning to the ECU campus for the fall semester due to concerns about the coronavirus.	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)	MEAN (SD)
	2.20 (0.87)	1.73 (0.87)	2.40 (0.85)

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Table 17. Student response on Informative Media by Political Party Identification	Percent Republican	Percent Independent	Percent Democrat
Results for all students (undergraduate and graduate) on selected questions (N=495).	(N=149)	(N=98)	(N=207)

What sources of information have you relied on for health-related news about the coronavirus?			
<i>Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or some other government agency</i>	64.2	73.2	70.5
<i>Information from family members</i>	61.0	46.4	52.0
<i>Network television news (ABC, CBS, NBC)</i>	39.0	51.5	53.7
<i>North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's press briefings</i>	45.5	50.5	51.1
<i>ECU's Coronavirus Webpage Updates</i>	38.2	41.2	49.3
<i>Information from friends</i>	39.8	37.1	43.6
<i>Twitter</i>	26.0	32.0	45.4
<i>Facebook</i>	35.8	24.7	32.6
<i>CNN</i>	13.0	30.9	37.4
<i>Fox News</i>	45.5	22.7	12.3
<i>President Donald Trump's press briefings</i>	43.1	23.7	7.0
<i>Newspapers (including newspaper websites)</i>	9.8	23.7	22.5
<i>National Public Radio (NPR)</i>	5.7	16.5	20.3
<i>MSNBC</i>	3.3	10.3	16.7
<i>Talk radio (other than NPR; talk radio can include web radio programs)</i>	13.0	11.3	10.1
<i>Other Social Media</i>	4.1	2.1	6.2
<i>Information from Employer</i>	1.6	3.1	1.3
<i>One America News Network (OAN)</i>	3.3	2.1	0.4

Note: Results in **bold font** are statistically significant at $\leq .05$ (one-tailed).

Student Teaching and Project Preparations: A Summative Overview

Following the quantitative data analysis, a need for more in-depth qualitative data quickly arose. As a result, we decided that the best course of action would be to conduct interviews to obtain more personalized data. Since ECU is currently online the sampling process to find interview participants seemed like a daunting task. That is when my faculty mentor, Dr. Edwards, suggested that we use a convenience sampling method and involve the students from his Sociology 3213 Research Methods course. There are 32 students enrolled in the class which provided a large enough sample size to collect data to discover any emergent themes.

Since the initial survey was 59 items long and covered many different topics, we felt it would be best fitting to focus on one sub-topic from the survey. There was a limited number of questions related to domestic life and housing, so we decided to dig further into this category. We focused specifically on housing insecurity and housing-based stressors experienced by students from the pandemic.

Sociology 3213 is oftentimes the first research methods course introduced to sociology students. In order to obtain the best data possible and avoid taking up too much class time with this project, we decided to turn the interviews into a teaching opportunity for the students. Rather than having myself and Dr. Edwards conduct all of the interviews, we connected this project with the interviewing unit of the course and taught the students how to conduct the interviews themselves. I developed a project proposal which presented a unit outline for the project.

First, we provided textbook readings as homework assignments to introduce the students to the interviewing process. I then attended class and presented our data from the survey. This helped me to introduce to the students why we wanted their participation in this project. Dr. Edwards and I then drafted an initial interview schedule which we used to conduct a focus-group style conversation with this class. This discussion allowed us to test out the efficacy our questions and begin to identify potential themes which may appear across the interviews. I then attended class one more time to talk about how to actually conduct semi-structured interviews. Finally, I edited down the focus group schedule into two separate interview scripts. The students were assigned partners, and each student used a different script to interview their partner.

In total, 23 students completed their interviews. I took on the responsibility of listening to every interview. During my first pass through I focused on the interviewer and graded them based on a grading code-sheet I developed. My second pass-through required me to pay attention to the interviewee. I took detailed notes on each of their responses and collected timestamps of important quotes. Since this project took so much time the data has yet to be fully analyzed. However, I was able to find several emergent themes related to declines in mental health and the importance of positive roommate interactions.

This portion of the project killed multiple birds with one stone. I was able to collect qualitative data for my project to gain a deeper understanding of student experiences within the coronavirus pandemic. Also, since I led and implemented this project, I was able to gain first-hand experience with teaching. I had to adapt to the knowledge level of the students to introduce new topics and teach them how to conduct research interviews. There were also many extra

documents I needed to draft up for this project, so I learned how much preparation is actually required during the teaching process. Lastly, the students were able to learn a new skill and practice it during this project. Many students complained about the lack of class interaction they experience right now since all classes are online and most follow an asynchronous format. This project was the perfect opportunity for the students to connect with and have an in-depth conversation with one of their classmates.

Moving forward I hope that someone else can pick back up with this project to finish analyzing the data collected. I took detailed and organized notes on consistent experiences, themes, and topics. Now it is necessary for someone to go in behind me to fully analyze the data and present it in a format which will be useful and informative for the university moving forward.

Interview Project Proposal

The Coronavirus pandemic has shifted every definition of normalcy for almost a year now. Different people groups have experienced this global health crisis in different ways. As a senior Sociology student, I am interested in seeing how Covid-19 has impacted the lives of college students. In particular, I want to learn how the implementation of social distancing protocols and the shifts to virtual communication have impacted living situations and security. It is my hope that through this project I will gain an understanding of how housing and living have been impacted for ECU students.

The first half of this project was a qualitative study on the experiences of students as a result of the university's transition to online instruction. The second half of this project will provide quantitative data on the personal experiences of students directly related to rent, housing, and student living.

Interviews will be conducted with the spring semester students in Sociology 3213. Students will be involved in the process of drafting research questions and conducting interviews. This will allow them to gain first-hand experience with creating and implementing a qualitative research study.

A shortened version of the Covid-19 survey part 2 with only the housing and rent related questions will be sent to the students on Thursday, February 5 and they will have one week to complete the survey. The purpose of this mini survey will be to gain a quick insight into the range of experiences amongst the students in the class.

Tuesday, February 9th, Dr. Edwards will begin discussing the project and will assign a reading related to the current student housing crises. (Assigned Reading- Apartment Therapy and linked article)

Class 1- Thursday February 11th

I will introduce myself and will explain the purpose of this project.

I will give a short presentation to the class introducing the first two surveys and briefly explaining initial findings from the surveys.

Then I will explain why I would like student participation and provide an outline of what all will be required of them.

Expected amount of class time (20 minutes)

For homework:

- Read chapter 3 from Methodological Thinking book on how to draft research questions.
- Begin thinking about your own experiences with housing and living from the past year
- Begin thinking about potential topics for questions

Class 2- Tuesday February 16th

Review and discuss as a whole class how to create research questions.

Discuss how to properly conduct interviews.

Have students begin thinking about who they want to partner up with (maybe ask them if they would rather pick a partner or be assigned one).

Split into breakout rooms on Teams where students work together to draft ideas for potential research questions.

Come back together as a class in the last half hour or so where groups will share the topics and questions they came up with.

Expected amount of class time (full class period)**For homework:**

- Reading or video on how to conduct interviews
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nw9TOjyCWiM>)
- Email group document with research questions and topics to me and Dr. Edwards (due by 11:59 on Tuesday)
- Begin inserting name onto Word Document/Google Doc on Canvas with you and your partners name for the interviews (due by Sunday at 11:59, if not posted before then you will be assigned a partner)
- Review list of interview questions which will be sent out either Wednesday or Thursday morning

Class 3-Thursday February 18th

Talk in-depth about interview expectations.

Answer any questions about the interviews or the project.

I do not know how much talking I will need to do during this class period. I feel as though it is important that they full understand how to conduct the interviews with a semi-structured format.

For Homework:

- Meet with your partner before Thursday February 25th for both of you to interview each other.
- Take notes during the interview and also record the audio of the interview.
- Send notes and audio recording to both Dr. Edwards and I.

To Do List for the Students:

February 9th- Read Apartment Therapy articles

February 11th-

- Read chapter 3 from Methodological Thinking book on how to draft research questions.
- Begin thinking about your own experiences with housing and living from the past year
- Begin thinking about potential topics for questions

February 16th-

- Reading/Video on how to conduct interviews
- If group leader, email group document with research questions and topics to me and Dr. Edwards (due by 11:59pm)
- Begin inserting name onto Word Document/Google Doc on Canvas with you and your partners name for the interviews (due by Sunday at 11:59, if not posted before then you will be assigned a partner)
- Review list of interview questions which will be sent out either Wednesday or Thursday morning

February 18th-

- Meet with your partner before Thursday February 25th for both of you to interview each other.
- Take notes during the interview and also record the audio of the interview.
- Send notes and audio recording to both Dr. Edwards and me.

Focus Group Interview Script

Interview Schedule

Introductory pleasantries, ice breaking small talk questions, etc.

Financial implications/complications in housing over the last year.

Tell me about your current living situation?

- Probe: What kind of place are you living in, apartment, house?

Who are you living with? Tell me about your roommates.

- Tell me about any difficulties or issues you have with your roommates.

What issues or stress is there about paying the bills?

- How much do you have to pay to live where you do?
 How do you afford to live there?
 How much help do you get from family or do you pay all on your own?
 About how much does your family pay?
 About how much do you pay?
 Do you get the money from work, loans, etc.?

What condition is the place you are living in?

- Is it well maintained? Is there anything broken?
 What kinds of problems have you had with your landlord?
 Tell me more about that.

Did you have to move as a result of Covid-19?

- What were conditions like where you were before?
- Why did you move?
- What was your experience like with breaking the lease/giving up the old place?
- How did you find the place you are living now (online listing, through a friend, family, etc.)

At the present time how worried are you about your financial situation? What about your living situation?

Educational implications

- What are some ways your current living situation has made it harder for you to keep up with your schoolwork and do well in classes
 - Say more about that.
 - How is that a difficulty?
- Are there ways your current situation has made it easier to do well in school?
 - Tell me about that.
 - Say more about that. How has it helped?
- Did having a living situation that made school easier influence your decision on your living situation since ECU went online last spring? Or did something else influence your decision?
 - Say more about that.
 - How did you think your current situation would be easier?
 - Did it work out that way?

- To what degree have you been experiencing differences in your ability to concentrate since Covid hit?
 - How does that influence your schoolwork?
 - What are your main distractions?
 - How do you personally curate an environment fit for studying?

Social Implications

Since ECU went online, have you felt more or less:

- Sad? Anxious? Irritated?
- How has your living situation impacted these feelings?
- Do your roommates/the people you live with help you through these feelings? Are they the cause of these feelings?

Since ECU went online, how much social interaction have you had with people outside of your household?

- How has that impacted your mental health/ability to manage stress?

Interview Project Grading Code Sheet

Each interview will be passed through multiple times to collect data related to common themes which present themselves across the 25+ interview audios. After an initial focus-group style conversation with the students of the class, several initial themes appeared.

The first major problem students reported was inadequacy and lateness from the maintenance team at their place of residency. ECU's decision to begin the fall semester early impacted the ability of many complexes to adequately prepare units for new tenants upon move-in.

When the conversation shifted towards financial stability, many students complained about a loss of hours at work due to the pandemic. This increased stress levels as they struggled to cover rent and support living costs.

Lastly, the most prominent issue students discussed was related to mental health declines and difficulties. Many feel increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and uncertainty regarding the future.

Grading Code Sheet

Interviews will be graded on an efficacy scale from one to three. One will indicate an inadequate score, two will indicate a proficient score, and three will indicate job well done.

_____ How effectively did the student ease into and out of the interview with "icebreakers"?

_____ Was the interview conducted in a professional way?

_____ Did the interviewer follow the natural direction of the conversation or did they seem to just be reading off the questions as a script?

_____ How effectively were probing and follow-up questions used to direct the flow of conversation?

_____ Did the interviewer ask only one question at a time?

_____ Was the interviewee granted ample time to reflect on each question and answer fully?

_____ Did the interview meet the 20-minute time requirement?

_____ Does the recording include the entire interview with audible sound quality?

Notes:

Interview Script A

Introductory pleasantries, ice breaking small talk questions, etc.

Financial implications/complications in housing over the last year.

1. Tell me about your current living situation
What condition is the place you are living in?
How responsive is maintenance where you live?
How prepared was your landlord/leasing office for move-in at the start of the Fall semester?
2. Who are you living with? Tell me about your roommates
3. What issues or stress is there about paying the bills?
How much do you have to pay to live where you do?
How do you cover rent?
4. What is your current employment status?
How has this changed during the pandemic?
5. At the present time how worried are you about your financial situation? What about your living situation?
6. Did you have to move as a result of Covid-19?
What were conditions like where you were before?
Why did you move?
What was your experience like with breaking the lease/giving up the old place?
How did you find the place you are living now (online listing, through a friend, family, etc.)
7. Since ECU went online, have you felt more or less:
Sad? Anxious? Irritated?
How has your living situation impacted these feelings?
Do your roommates/the people you live with help you through these feelings? Are they the cause of these feelings?
8. Since ECU went online, how much social interaction have you had with people outside of your household?
How has that impacted your mental health/ability to manage stress?
9. How has the last year caused uncertainty for the future?
What are your plans for next semester?

Interview Script B

Introductory pleasantries, ice breaking small talk questions, etc.

Educational Implications

- Tell me about your current living situation
- What are some ways your current living situation has made it harder for you to keep up with your schoolwork and do well in classes?
- Are there ways your current situation has made it easier to do well in school?
- To what degree did the need for a positive learning environment influence where you chose to live?
- To what degree have you been experiencing differences in your ability to concentrate since Covid hit?
How do synchronous vs asynchronous classes help or hinder your ability to stay on task and complete your school work?
- How many other people in your household are doing virtual learning/working from home?
To what degree is it helpful or not to have other people at home working virtually as well?
- Since ECU went online, have you felt more or less:
Sad? Anxious? Irritated?
How has your living situation impacted these feelings?
Do your roommates/the people you live with help you through these feelings? Are they the cause of these feelings?
- Since ECU went online, how much social interaction have you had with people outside of your household?
How has that impacted your mental health/ability to manage stress?
- How has the last year caused uncertainty for the future?
What are your plans for next semester?

Project Presentations: A Summative Overview

Conducting research requires presenting your findings to add to the existing literature and discussion surrounding the topic. I was lucky enough to present my findings from the impact survey at three separate conferences. These conferences all greatly differed from each other and I learned a lot about conducting a professional presentation in an online setting.

The first conference I presented at was conducted by the North Carolina Sociological Association. I was assigned to a breakout room with two other presenters from different NC universities. The two presenters were faculty members at their universities and so I felt extremely unqualified as the only undergraduate presenter. I was amazed to realize how relaxed the session actually came out to be and how much it felt more like a conversation than a formal event. We were able to have an interesting discussion about online education following all of our presentations since we all presented on this topic. The other professors offered a lot of useful feedback for me to think about for my next two presentations.

My second presentation was during ECU's Research and Creativity Week. I opted to do an oral presentation which required me to film and upload a video of myself presenting. Prior to this I had only recorded a handful of academic presentations and so this was a semi-new experience for me. I had to properly prepare my background and test my audio to ensure my video was professional and of good quality. Recording this video also required me to get creative since I knew I wanted to include both my PowerPoint as a visual aid as well as capture video of myself while speaking. I used screen-sharing and screen-recording on Zoom to tackle this obstacle. The live Q&A session had a time limit of five minutes for each presenter. As a result, I learned how to summarize my information quickly and answer questions fully yet succinctly.

The third and final presentation I gave was at the Global Issues Conference hosted by ECU and other universities across the globe. My session included presenters from Pakistan and the Dominican Republic. This conference was extremely insightful into how to conduct intercultural discussions. My research focuses specifically on ECU and so it was interesting to hear the responses from students from other countries regarding their experiences through Covid-19.

I was only able to present the findings from the impact survey and so I only focused on the quantitative data. It was unfortunate that the timeline did not match-up well enough for me to be able to present on the qualitative data as well. The common themes which emerged through the interviews did help me respond to some peoples' questions during the sessions though.

This experience helped me practice my presentational skills in many different ways. I learned how to create a visually appealing yet minimalistic PowerPoint as an aid during a presentation. I also learned how to properly conduct myself in a professional, formal, online format. Lastly, I learned how to summarize my data and draw conclusions based on my findings to answer questions throughout the session.