

## STUCK AT HOME



COVER ART BY HANZ PACHECO

# ONE YEAR OF ISOLATION

<b>PAGE 3</b> Students share their experiences with contracting COVID-19	<b>PAGE 4</b> Dealing with grief under extraordinary circumstances	<b>PAGE 5</b> At-home classes create a lack of independence	<b>PAGES 6-9</b> How students from different backgrounds are coping	<b>PAGES 11-12</b> Loneliness drives a need for relationships and caps creativity
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ILLUSTRATION BY NICK YBARRA

## THE TIDAL WAVE THAT CHANGED US

**M**arch 2020 feels like an eternity ago. One year later, the global coronavirus pandemic has evoked a wave of existentialism. This public health crisis spread not only a virus: it brought loneliness and mental health issues, strained relationships and frequent bouts of laziness that haunt us relentlessly.

These issues rage around us as we navigate young adulthood and search for our place in a society we're still vying to improve.

We've been left with a social void and still wrestle with expectations to perform well academically from families, instructors and maybe most damaging – ourselves.

Some of us have assumed caregiving roles while others complete coursework in unideal home environments. A portion of us became bedridden by COVID-19 while pushing to ace proctored Canvas exams. Many have moved away from campus and others dread post-graduation life.

Americans ages 18-23 reported significantly higher stress levels than older age groups, according to a 2020 annual American Psychological Association survey.

"We are facing a national mental health crisis that could yield serious health and social consequences for years to come," the survey found.

The same study also found 87% of Generation Z college students reported their education is a significant source of stress.

We're in the epicenter of events that will be in history books for decades and we're expected to worry about a 10-point discussion post? It's easy to sit back and ask 'What is the point to all this?'

Anxiety coupled with social distancing regulations have deteriorated even the simplest, but important social interactions between friends.

Our relationships have taken a backseat and our lives have plunged into a black hole of isolation.

An October 2020 national survey conducted by Harvard Graduate School of Education researchers found 61% of U.S. young adults are dealing with high levels of loneliness during the pandemic.

We can spend hours swiping on Tinder or using Snapchat to message potential love interests, but night falls and the solitude is hard to shake. Depressive symptoms set in and it's hard to pull ourselves out when there's little to keep us going.

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**We've seen catastrophic wildfires and painfully witnessed deaths of Black Americans and Asian Americans through social media. We clenched our jaws during a polarizing presidential election and a U.S. Capitol riot. We navigated pandemic misinformation and our eyes bulged in disbelief as we reached 2.6 million COVID-19 deaths globally.**

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The intricate support system offered through relationships and maintained by in-person classes, pre-class chats and weekend parties are gone and their absences are heavy. Giving up our responsibilities is easy when we're trying to sort through burnout and decreasing creativity and motivation.

It's tough not to feel cynical toward online education and minimum wage jobs while we're struggling. As many students enter an uncertain job market, it's hard not to acknowledge that nearly half of American workers have suffered from mental health issues since the pandemic began, according to a 2020 study by The Standard, a Portland, Oregon insurance company.

While we all hope for well-paying jobs with benefits including mental and physical health care, the pandemic has made social and economic inequities incredibly apparent.

COVID-19 mortality rates are higher among Black and Latinx patients than white patients, according to a June 10, 2020 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

A Feb. 21 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report also found systemic health care and social inequities put Black and Latinx communities at an increased risk of contracting the virus and even dying as a result of testing positive.

This information is alarming for a university with more than 64% students of color enrolled, according to the most recent San Jose State enrollment statistics from Data USA.

Trying to mitigate social issues such as these have further weighed us down as previous generations hold college students accountable to promote change and use social media's power. While it's honorable to be recognized for our strength, we've been left to pick up pieces of broken glass we never shattered.

We've seen catastrophic wildfires and painfully witnessed deaths of Black Americans and Asian Americans through social media. We clenched our jaws during a polarizing presidential election and a U.S. Capitol riot. We navigated pandemic misinformation and our eyes bulged in disbelief as we reached 2.6 million COVID-19 deaths globally.

It's uncertain what the effects of our long-term isolation and online dependency will be, but what's abundantly clear is that our worldviews will be indefinitely changed.

As we look at what lies ahead for us after we graduate, one thing is certain.

*We are resilient.*

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OPINION



ILLUSTRATION BY AUDREY TSENG

# I recovered, but symptoms still linger



**Madison Fagundes**  
STAFF WRITER

I'll never forget the moment my sister called my phone to tell me she contracted the coronavirus and most likely gave it to me. My chest tightened, panic and uncertainty washed over me as I wondered what would happen to us both.

It was the week after Thanksgiving and I left San Jose to see my family after testing negative for COVID-19.

By the time my sister called with the news, I had already spent the night at a friend's house. I immediately informed my friend and we got tested together.

Guilt consumed me knowing I could've passed the virus to loved ones.

Fortunately, my friend tested negative, but I tested positive.

In a state of panic and shock, I drove back to my family's house to avoid openly spreading the virus.

My sister and I didn't know what to expect, so we did our research and talked with nurses and contact tracers to prepare for 10 days of quarantined isolation.

After months of hearing horror stories about the virus' symptoms, my mind was blurred with awful scenarios of what could happen to my sister and me.

Was I going to end up on a ventilator in the hospital fighting for my life? Was my family going to suffer the same fate?

I'm grateful that wasn't the case for my family or I, but even the mild symptoms I experienced were paralyzing.

Everything I smelled and tasted became metallic and it was nauseating.

Shortly after, those senses completely disappeared.

While it was relieving to get rid

of the metallic smell and taste, the loss of those senses is indescribable.

The scariest moments were when my breath would suddenly hitch and I couldn't breathe.

It felt as though someone was sitting on my chest and I was gulping and gulping to get air into my lungs, but it was impossible.

These episodes only lasted a few minutes at a time, but they still left me shaky and physically and

short-lived unlike my loss of smell.

I've been COVID-19 free for more than three months now, but my sense of smell is still almost completely gone.

When I can smell something, the fragrance only lasts a few seconds.

I find myself smelling phantom scents that either aren't there or are inaccurate. The most notable and frustrating mixup has been my fruity shower products now

thoughts to become fuzzy and incomplete, according to an Oct. 10, 2020 New York Times article.

It was hard to participate in daily life for a long time because I couldn't form complex thoughts, remember things or stop myself from losing focus.

I was extremely lucky that mine and my family's symptoms were minor but I'm still deeply afraid of COVID-19. People who minimize the severity of the virus are either lucky or ignorant.

I've been cautious and conscientious throughout the pandemic but it only took one slip-up for me to get infected.

It's easy for people to get tired of being quarantined and stop caring about the risk, but lives are at stake.

We're finally making progress toward eradicating the virus and we must keep going.

Thankfully, vaccines are becoming increasingly available and cases are declining.

Follow Madison on Twitter | @maddxsonn

## After months of hearing horror stories about the virus' symptoms, my mind was blurred with awful scenarios of what could happen to my sister and me.

emotionally exhausted.

COVID-19 felt like an awful flu made worse by sensory deprivation and occasional episodes of asphyxiation.

The body aches and fatigue were enough to make anyone bedridden, but those symptoms were

smelling like cannabis.

The long-term effects of COVID-19, including extended loss of senses and "brain fog," are mentally tough to handle. I've only recently felt my "brain fog" lift.

"Brain fog" is a common lingering effect that causes patients'

# Students talk about testing positive

By **Giorgina Laurel**  
STAFF WRITER

Contracting the coronavirus can be seen as shameful for some San Jose State students because of negative connotations since the pandemic began. Students who tested positive opened up about their experiences one year into the public health crisis.

Political science senior Beatriz Raz said she was "embarrassed and ashamed" when she contracted COVID-19 because she was warned it spreads faster among people ages 18-30 who are more likely to attend big gatherings.

"It's something that could have been avoidable," Raz said in a Zoom call. "Being a young college student, we were warned the most to avoid going out and seeing people. It made me really embarrassed to find out that I was a part of that demographic that wasn't being careful."

She said she developed a deep cough after seeing her friends for the first time during the summer and knew she contracted COVID-19.

"I had the flu a couple years back [but COVID-19] was a cough that I felt deeper than just something in my throat," Raz said. "I felt it from my chest and it was really painful."

People experience COVID-19 symptoms differently, including asymptomatic people who won't experience any symptoms at all, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Symptoms can include fever or chills, loss of taste or smell and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, according to the CDC symptom webpage.

While some symptoms are similar to the common cold and flu viruses, the loss of taste or smell is distinctive to COVID-19.

Chemical engineering senior Brandon Chung experienced cold and flu symptoms and lost his sense of taste.

"I figured that out from trying to eat a bunch of stuff . . . you can feel the sensations that you're eating but there's nothing

that you can associate it with," Chung said over Zoom. "You could taste sour but you can't really taste what it is . . . if I tried eating an orange all I tasted was the sadness from the orange but no orange flavor at all."

He said he tested this by trying different foods with strong flavors like pickle juice and Hot Cheetos, but still couldn't taste them.

"After a while, it starts getting tiring [to] crave for something in your head," Chung said. "You just want to eat something but you can't really like anything without being disappointed."

Although these symptoms don't

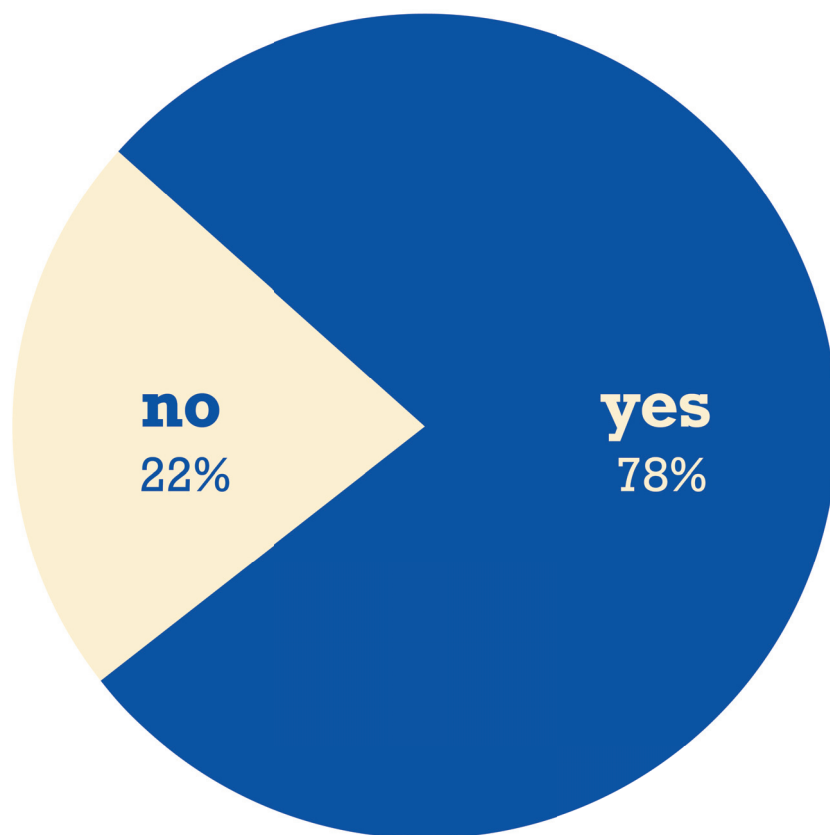
seem life-threatening, they can have long-term effects.

Dr. Melissa Frederick, a Santa Clara County cardiologist and skilled nursing facility medical director, said many COVID-19 patients experience "post-COVID syndrome."

She said these are long-term symptoms including difficulty breathing, increased fatigue, difficulty sleeping or staying awake, chest pain and headaches among others.

"These symptoms are real and impact your life, studies and work," Frederick said in a phone call. "For post-COVID [syndrome], you may take a few steps forward, then a few steps back, but overall moving forward."

## Have you or someone you know contracted COVID-19?



RESULTS ARE FROM 250 PEOPLE SURVEYED ON INSTAGRAM. INFOGRAPHIC BY PAULA PIVA.

“Being a young college student, we were warned the most to avoid going out and seeing people. It made me really embarrassed to find out that I was a part of that demographic that wasn't being careful.”

Beatriz Raz  
political science senior

Mark Schwartz, an adjunct business marketing professor, said the number of people experiencing long-term symptoms is unknown because it's only been a year since the pandemic began.

A study published Sept. 9, 2020 in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that out of 3,000 people ages 18-34 hospitalized by COVID-19, 2.7% of them died and 21% were in an intensive care unit.

According to the CDC, 0.5% of people ages 18-29 who contracted COVID-19 resulted in death and overall, more than 523,000 U.S. residents have died from the disease.

Schwartz advised students to look into unbiased and non-political websites to do their own research about COVID-19.

"Educate yourself from people that are knowledgeable and don't have a political agenda," Schwartz said in a Zoom call. "Then you make the decision [on how to respond to COVID-19] based on what you and your critical thinking deem to be the best decision."

Follow Giorgina on Twitter | @ItsGiorgina



ILLUSTRATION BY RYAN JOHNSON

# Pandemic worsens loss of beloved

## Students navigate death of family members and the grieving process with limited social support systems

By **Jacqueline Vela**  
STAFF WRITER

San Jose State communications junior Paige Waid said her life changed last year when she came home from a morning run in August to discover her father died from a heart attack.

"[While I was running] I just felt I had everything I wanted for a second," Waid said during a Zoom interview. But her life quickly took a sharp turn.

"When [first responders] told us there was nothing more that they could do, I remember feeling so sick to my stomach," Waid said.

Before that morning, she said she was content with how her life was going because she strengthened her relationship with her family, especially with her father during the pandemic.

"In a way, I feel like for me it kind of was [a blessing] because I got to spend time with my family a lot that I haven't been able to," Waid said. "It was nice being home."

She also said being home allowed her and her dad to engage in activities they enjoyed doing together, such as watching their favorite TV show or swimming in their backyard pool.

"It was nice to have that quality time with him," Waid said. "He usually worked a lot or I was at school and we haven't gotten that [time] since I was in high school."

She said her family struggled planning his funeral service because they had to adhere to social distancing regulations.

"We weren't able to do things as easily for him," Waid said. "We couldn't have a normal [funeral] because of COVID-19."

Grieving students are experiencing social isolation because of social distancing measures and lengthy school closures, making it difficult for schools to provide support according to an April 10, 2020 National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement report.

When a family member or close friend dies, students cope with not just losing that loved one, but also losing everything that person did or could've done, the report stated.

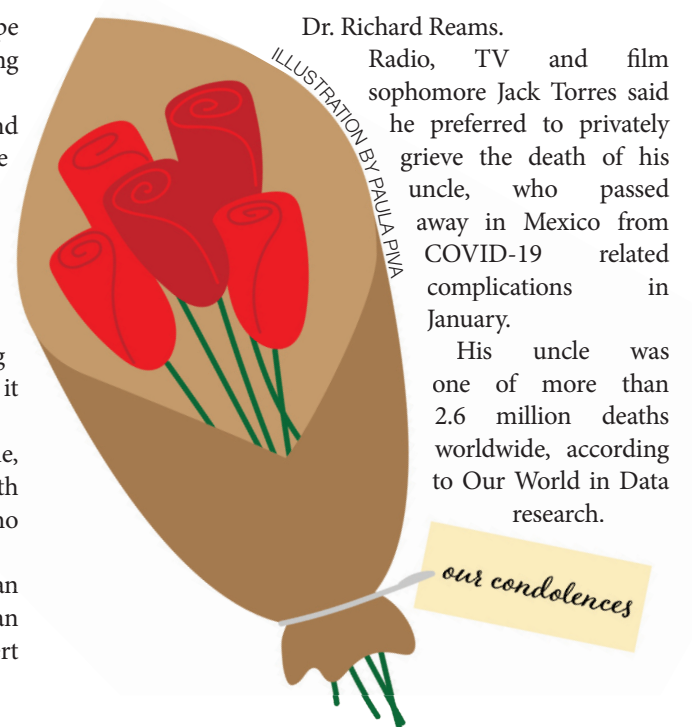
"During a pandemic that requires social distancing and school closures, the magnitude and importance of the secondary losses may be accentuated," the report found.

San Jose marriage and family therapist Dr. Margaret Greig said anyone who lost a loved one should share their experience with others because it helps relieve the pain.

"The key to grief is always talking about it. The more you talk about it, the more the intensity of it lessens," Greig said over the phone. "Tell your story over and over until it doesn't have the emotional weight it used to."

According to a Feb. 12 Affordable Colleges Online article, a website for information on higher education, coping with loss can be especially challenging for college students who are away from their family, often for the first time ever.

Grieving past losses and anticipating future ones can make students anxious about their future, according to an April 8, 2020 Trinity University article by counseling expert



Dr. Richard Reams.

Radio, TV and film sophomore Jack Torres said he preferred to privately grieve the death of his uncle, who passed away in Mexico from COVID-19 related complications in January.

His uncle was one of more than 2.6 million deaths worldwide, according to Our World in Data research.

"I have this thing where it's like autopilot mode," Torres said in a Zoom call. "I kind of let my body take control of what I am doing. I don't really let my mind and my heart really go through all of that."

Torres said he preferred not to share his loss with other people, including his instructors.

"I don't like to tell people how I feel about my stuff," Torres said. "I don't like to let people know my personal business. I never notified any of my teachers."

Unlike Torres, Waid said sharing her feelings about her dad's death to other people helped her work through her grief.

"All my teachers were actually pretty understanding," Waid said. "Being in school was hard, but I also knew that sitting around, being sad was not going to do anything for me."

Greig said it is important for people to figure out a coping mechanism that works best for them when processing grief.

"You want to thrive, not just survive," Greig said. "The more you can face these things head on and be honest about what is going on inside of you about what you lost, the more healthy you will be."

Follow Jacqueline on Twitter |  
@Jacqueline\_v20



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**Dr. Margaret Greig**  
Marriage and family therapist



I have this thing where it's like autopilot mode. I kind of let my body take control of what I'm doing. I don't really let my mind and my heart really go through all of that.

**Jack Torres**  
Radio, TV and film sophomore

ILLUSTRATION BY PAULA PIVA

# Online classes demand more, give less

By Madilyne Medina  
STAFF WRITER

Waking up and immediately attending online class while still eating breakfast in our pajamas sounded like a dream in March 2020, but our new normal has been problematic and distressing. After a year of remote learning, it's clear online classes are challenging in ways in-person education was not.

Karin Jeffery, a San Jose State psychology and kinesiology lecturer, said online learning may be troublesome because other issues caused by the coronavirus pandemic made this past year of college taxing.

A pivotal presidential election, west coast wildfires and fights for justice among Black lives are some of the many stressors that occurred since transitioning online.

Some educators don't understand that on top of personal struggles, it's hard to focus on assignments when the world is drastically changing every day.

Election Day sticks out to me in particular. It was strenuous to focus on classes that continued like normal when the election's outcome was so crucial to the country's future.

School wasn't nearly as important as the United States' potential downfall.

Spring 2021 has felt even heavier because many instructors modified curriculum now that they're more familiar with Zoom.

Our online learning success is dependent on multiple factors including our workspace, access to resources and personal home environments.

Although switching to



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY NICK YBARRA

online learning was necessary and inevitable, it surfaced new hurdles and hardships for students, staff and faculty.

As instructors attempt replicating the in-person experience, they must realize some protocols such as excessive busywork and the use of Respondus LockDown Browser have damaged our success and well-being.

Jeffery said not every student is comfortable sharing their workspace or simply can't use their cameras because of numerous distractions.

When classes first transitioned online, I didn't reside on campus nor did I have my own room. My schedule conflicted with my younger sister's middle school classes and caused distractions and added anxiety.

University administration

## Grading students for online, and oftentimes self-taught, classes by similar standards to in-person classes isn't empathetic or logical . . .

accommodated students to an extent after introducing the Credit/No Credit grading option that helped students including myself.

As someone who doesn't thrive in online courses or self-taught material, it was comforting to know a Credit/No Credit grade wouldn't affect my GPA.

It's unrealistic to expect every student to pass their classes or adequately

learn in this adaptive stage. SJSU's grading system must reflect the challenging times that have caused students to struggle.

Grading students for online, and oftentimes self-taught, classes by similar standards to in-person classes isn't empathetic or logical given how every individual has struggles specific to them during the pandemic.

Low-income students

without consistent digital access or WiFi are significantly hindered in their learning, according to a March 25, 2020 Human Rights Watch study.

A May 2019 Pew Research Center Study also found 44% of adults in households with incomes below \$30,000 don't have broadband.

Students had no say in the decision transitioning to online education, it was forced.

We don't all have the same mental capacities and instructors must validate these feelings by accommodating students to their best ability.

SJSU is a diverse university with students from all backgrounds and walks of life, including some who unfortunately don't have unlimited resources or time.

"The whole remote learning is based on a lot of assumptions that are incorrect," Jeffery said.

Educators might assume students have the same amount of time they did before the pandemic or even more, but it's not the case for all of us.

Jeffery said many of her students are parents who must balance teaching themselves with homeschooling their children.

Given the pandemic's unpredictable nature and the disadvantages surrounding online classes, it's imperative instructors are flexible and students must recognize what's obstructing their academic success.

Follow Madilyne on Twitter @madilyneee

# Moving home inhibits independence

By Ruth Noemi Aguilar  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

College is often the first time many students gain independence away from home and a recent loss of freedom by moving back with family has some San Jose State students feeling unmotivated and distracted by the transition.

Sociology junior Evelyn Castro said when she moved back home with her family, she became busy with not just her coursework, but also with supporting them.

"One of the things that at first was hard was [my family] didn't know how it was to be living with a college student," Castro said in a phone call.

Students worldwide have grieved university experiences after leaving campuses only to return to unsupportive environments. This results in feeling like a failure being back with family, according to a Sept. 3, 2020 Mental Health America article.

Castro said she was expected to help with chores around the house and take care of her siblings, but sometimes those responsibilities conflicted with her class times and homework assignments.

"[My family] will be like 'Can you help me clean this?' 'Can you help me do this?'" Castro said. "I'm like, 'Oh, well, you see, I have class right now,' or 'I have an assignment do' or 'Have to do something for school.'"

Castro is the first in her family to go to a four-year university and said she misses the encouragement from other students who understand the workload.

Students have been removed from social support systems because of the pandemic, causing mental health concerns and impacting their



ILLUSTRATION BY DAISHA SHERMAN

academic performance, according to a University of Michigan Department of Psychiatry webpage.

"While many students may be happy to reconnect with family again, some have returned to abusive households, others to an empty fridge, and others to no home at all," according to the webpage.

Bryan Do, an industrial technology senior said he has felt a lack of motivation since moving back home and being away from the SJSU campus.

"[Campus] just gives me that atmosphere of like 'I just need to do this work,'" Do said. "But when I'm at home, I'm more lazy and I have to push myself really hard to like actually get the things done."

Like Castro and Do, justice studies junior Andrea Chavez



**It was pretty upsetting because of everything I did to be independent. Now I have to go back home and go backwards.**

Andrea Chavez  
justice studies junior

said she's also missed the positive influence the campus had on her college experience before the pandemic.

"I used to go to the [Martin Luther King Jr.] library a lot,"

Chavez said in a phone interview. "It was an environment you wanted to do your homework in and now I feel like I don't have that environment."

Chavez was living off campus before she moved back into her parent's home when school went online.

One of the biggest obstacles she has faced has been losing the independence she gained living away from her parents.

"It was pretty upsetting because of everything I did to be independent," Chavez said. "Now I have to go back home and go backwards."

Students such as Castro who move back to their hometowns can feel like their personal growth and progress that occurred in college is reversed, according to an April 16,

2020 Stanford University report.

"Loss of independence or motivation, countless distractions and family disputes are some of the downsides to these new circumstances," the report stated.

Like Chavez, business administration junior Kimberly Victoriano also moved from her San Jose apartment and relocated to her family's Santa Ana home in Southern California.

While she has obligations at home including caring for her young nieces, Victoriano said she doesn't feel distracted from her school work.

"I'm helping [my family] by watching my nieces and taking them out more," Victoriano said in a phone interview. "I feel like it's OK [studying from home] because I still get my privacy."

Victoriano said she has been living with her family for months because of traveling restrictions, but said she would like to return to San Jose.

"If it weren't for travel circumstances I definitely would be back at San Jose," Victoriano said.

Victoriano said she still hopes to go back to her apartment because she applied to SJSU to experience life in a large city.

"The only reason why I went so far so away was because I wanted to see life outside my hometown," Victoriano said. "Here I see the same old people and I just wanted to see new faces and get more experience living alone."

Stephanie Lam contributed reporting to this article.

Follow Ruth Noemi on Twitter @RuthNAguilar



PHOTO COURTESY OF POLET RAMIREZ

The 6-year-old brother of Polet Ramirez, a San Jose State graduate student, works on his homework at his desk at home in San Jose on March 8.

# Caregivers face mounting duties

## Students looking after family members during the pandemic open up about feelings of pressure and burnout

**Bryanna Bartlett**  
NEWS EDITOR

The responsibilities of a student caregiver were burdensome long before March 2020, but some said the pandemic exacerbated them, leaving students mentally and emotionally exhausted.

Polet Ramirez, a San Jose State graduate student, said she has difficulty juggling different “hats” including being a full-time student, a graduate assistant and a caregiver to her 6-year-old brother with Type 1 Diabetes.

“I don’t catch a break,” Ramirez said in a Zoom call. “If it’s not school, it’s work. If it’s not work, it’s me taking care of my brother.”

She said her brother used to attend school with a nurse who constantly monitored his insulin, but since the pandemic began she’s assumed a more prominent role.

“It’s more difficult now . . . because it’s just me and my mom that know how to take care of him,” Ramirez said.

Ramirez said she experienced a lack of motivation and “caregiver burnout” many times within the last year which have played out in various ways.

She said she’d take out her frustration on the wrong people during moments of burnout, including her mother. Other times she said she’d feel defeated and think “he’s not my kid. . . why am I doing this?”

Maria Fusaro, an SJSU child and adolescent development assistant professor, said caregiver burnout can be felt by anyone looking after someone else, but it’s exacerbated during the pandemic.

“The stressors of being a [parent or caregiver] are always present but are multiplied under the pressure of COVID,” Fusaro said in a phone call. “We’re concerned about parenting stress both because of its impact on the parent and child, including their emotional health and well-being.”

“I don’t catch a break . . . if it’s not school, it’s work. If it’s not work, it’s me taking care of my brother.”

**Polet Ramirez**  
SJSU graduate student

Out of 30,593 undergraduate students from 10 different U.S. public research universities, 5.7% reported being caregivers for children during the pandemic, according to a University of California, Berkeley Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Consortium survey.

According to the survey, 3,236 students said they were caregivers for other adults and 874 said they were caregivers for both children and adults during the pandemic.

The survey was administered in May 2020 to evaluate the effects of COVID-19 on the student experience.

The SERU survey results found the pandemic has worsened financial hardships, mental health and the ability to learn remotely for many student caregivers.

UC Berkeley psychology sophomore Annelise Hayes said balancing online classes and caring for her 2-year-old nephew took a heavy toll on her during Fall semester.

“I’m taking the [Spring 2021] semester off . . . I still have incomplete grades from [Fall] semester,” Hayes said in a Zoom call. “I could tell early on that it was too much strain on my mental health . . . I wasn’t eating, showering, sleeping, things like that.”

Hayes said her nephew consumed a lot of her physical and emotional energy and while she had “zero hesitation” to care for him, she didn’t have time for herself in return.

She moved in with her sister, who is a full time health care worker in Orange County, last April after her nephew’s day care closed.

“If you think about it, you’re replacing his time in day care that has kids, toys, games, crafts, movies, snacks and all that with an overworked, depressed college student and an overworked, single mom,” Hayes said.

Because caregiving while studying or working full time can be overbearing during the pandemic, Fusaro said students should schedule self-care time.

“If you’re able to take the child outside to take a walk around the block or to a park then that’s great for you to get that bit of fresh air and time away from sitting at a desk or staying indoors,” Fusaro said.

Hayes said although her nephew isn’t old enough to understand the pandemic, he’s been misbehaving and throwing tantrums significantly less now that she’s not tied to her laptop.

“You think kids don’t know when [adults] are mentally absent or somewhere else, but I don’t think that’s the case,” Hayes said.

Behavioral problems have increased among many children since shelter-in-place mandates began, according to a Jan. 23 peer-reviewed Southern Gerontological Society article.

The increase in behavioral problems put caregivers’ resilience and patience at its lowest, according to the article.

Fusaro said children look for a caregiver who responds when they try communicating and who engages with them face-to-face



PHOTO COURTESY OF POLET RAMIREZ

Polet Ramirez and her brother smile for a photo on Dec. 19, 2020 in celebration of Ramirez graduating from San Jose State’s undergraduate program in Fall 2020.

both verbally and nonverbally.

“I don’t want to make it sound like you have to be with the child all the time to have a good relationship,” Fusaro said. “It’s possible that you have a child who’s maybe going to another caregiver for hours everyday.”

She said because many support networks came “crumbling down” a year ago, students should ask for help in any way that’s available to them. This includes asking a friend or family member to help with grocery shopping, laundry, meal preparation or errands.

Those who felt they had no choice in becoming a caregiver during the pandemic reported a higher feeling of burden, according to a 2020 study by The National Alliance for Caregiving.

Ramirez said as the oldest sibling, she feels a sense of responsibility to step up as a caregiver which prevents her from having time for herself.

“The [weekday] mornings are for my younger brother, so I only have three hours in the day for myself because once 4 p.m. hits, I’m in class until 10 p.m.,” Ramirez said, adding her weekends are like “30 minute breaks.”

She said she also feels responsible because her parents mostly speak Spanish and it creates a language barrier when her brother needs help with homework in English.

“[My mom] teaches him and it’s hard to teach a language she’s not proficient in,” Ramirez said. “That falls on my end to be the person to correct certain grammar mistakes and be present when he is doing his homework.”

“If you think about it, you’re replacing his time in day care that has kids, toys, games, crafts, movies, snacks and all that with an overworked, depressed college student and an overworked, single mom.”

**Annelise Hayes**  
UC Berkeley psychology sophomore

Ramirez said her responsibilities have “no boundaries” but her and her mom try their best to coordinate who’s cleaning, who’s in charge of the house and who’s taking care of her little brother.

Fusaro said it’s important for student caregivers to be kind and easy on themselves right now because circumstances are challenging.

“A child would be really fortunate to have a parent who’s a student . . . it means that their parent [or caregiver] is working hard on their education, advancing their career and their family’s future,” Fusaro said.

Follow Bryanna on Twitter  
@brybartlett



ILLUSTRATION BY HANZ PACHECO

# Overseas students struggle

## Students abroad feel detached from campus because of clashing timezones

By **Jovanna Olivares**  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

As a result of remote learning, many students studying abroad feel disconnected and isolated from the university as they choose between prioritizing academics or their mental well-being.

“The pandemic has taken a huge toll on myself, it has affected both my mental and physical health,” said Cherrie Lee, a hospitality, tourism and event management senior. “Being at home 24/7 with different time adjustments has made me feel depressed at times, it just makes me feel like a prisoner.”

Lee moved back to Taiwan, her home country, at the beginning of the pandemic to be with family and has had to adjust to synchronous learning and group work despite time zone differences.

“I’m usually pretty good at learning online but it’s been over a year since we started doing this,” Lee said in a phone call. “It’s also really sad knowing that my last semester is going to be online as well.”

Students studying overseas have been forced to pick between attending classes and drastically changing their sleep schedules or falling behind academically.



**Steven Ngyuen**  
communications junior;  
also spent time in Hanoi, Vietnam

Lee said she has classes Monday to Thursday, but after moving her classes changed to Tuesday to Friday. Her school days range from 2 a.m. to noon and 1-6 a.m. each day.

“I’m over here in Taiwan, but I’m basically living in the U.S. time zone,” Lee said. “Just so that I can make sure that I attend all my class meetings.”

On Feb. 10, Kaijie Zhang, a freshman international student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York,

died from having irregular sleep patterns, according to a March 9 Davis Vanguard article.

Zhang had been studying remotely from his home in Wuxi, China where he passed away after attending classes at inconsistent times, according to the article.

Nutrition senior Tu Le from Vietnam said while many of her friends returned to their home countries because of travel restrictions and unstable immigration policies, she stayed in the U.S. to avoid unreasonable online school hours.

“When you go back to your home country, even though you don’t feel that alone because you have familiarity around, the time change is not worth it,” Le said. “But International students

“Being at home 24/7 with different time adjustments has made me feel depressed at times, it just makes me feel like a prisoner.”

**Cherrie Lee**  
hospitality, tourism and event management senior

that are in their home countries are still paying much higher tuition fees than residents.”

Le said the university’s tuition should reflect the circumstances of the pandemic.

“International students are still being charged with the same expensive tuitions, they can’t even [use] any physical resource from school,” Le said. “Because of the pandemic people have lost their jobs and don’t have resources to pay for their tuition, a lot of students feel stressed, really homesick or really tired of weird time adjustments.”

Steven Ngyuen is a communications junior who travels between Vietnam and the Czech Republic to stay with family.

He said the university isn’t considering the various stressors international students face alongside academics.

“It’s just pointless because despite how people are struggling and how people are running out of resources, campus has been closed and charging for resources that no one is using,” Ngyuen said. “People are fighting for toilet paper and the school is charging for a rec center that no one uses, while cases are skyrocketing.”

Since interviewing Ngyuen, the university reopened the Spartan Recreation and Aquatic Center at limited capacity on Monday.

But Ngyuen said it’s still difficult for international

“Because of the pandemic people have lost their jobs and don’t have resources to pay for their tuition, a lot of students feel stressed, really homesick or really tired of weird time adjustments.”

**Tu Le**  
nutrition senior

students to find motivation through the campus community because of the lack of opportunity for students to interact with each other.

“The Sammy app is like a form of Twitter and where most people get to meet other students,” Ngyuen said. “But the university needs to look out for [its] students, make sure that its [students are] in good health and ensure that they’re safe. International students are important to be in the classroom.”

Follow Jovanna on Twitter | @joo\_zunigaa



Taipei, Taiwan  
**Cherrie Lee**  
hospitality, tourism and events management senior



Hanoi, Vietnam  
**Tu Le**  
nutrition senior





# Athletes adapt to lost pro prospects

By **Jesus Tellitud**  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

For many student-athletes, the ultimate goal is to play professionally one day. When their sport is stripped away like it was during the coronavirus pandemic, the cruel possibility of that dream not happening begins to loom.

Preparing for life beyond athletics consequently became a priority for San Jose State student-athletes, but their futures were clouded by uncertainty when the pandemic began a year ago.

"It was devastating having my [senior] season suddenly canceled like that," said former SJSU baseball player Troy Viola. "Being a senior, I didn't really know what my future held."

Many SJSU student-athletes including Viola had their spring 2020 season canceled or postponed because of

show who you are," Amanoni said. "I feel like now having that human connection is just really hard."

She said her focus on becoming a professional athlete has changed because the pandemic emphasized the importance of having a plan beyond athletics.

"I was thinking like, it just scares me because I really don't know what I want to do anymore," Amanoni said. "I don't want to bank on putting all my efforts into trying to [become a professional athlete], when I really should have a backup plan because the pandemic is really making things harder."

As the pandemic continues to highlight the impermanence of athletic careers, an SJSU program called Beyond Football has helped some student-athletes navigate these challenges.

Football head coach Brent Brennan founded the program in 2017 after

lean on me in their process of transition."

Offensive lineman Jack Snyder is one of many student-athletes Beyond Football has helped. He said the program made him realize there's more to life than just football.

"I always felt like whenever football's over, I'm going to need to do something," Snyder said. "I'm still taking Beyond Football pretty seriously because I could play in the NFL for like five or six years and then still have the rest of my life where I need to do something."

After four years in the program and Blaine's guidance, Snyder received an internship at Acero Insurance, worked at a construction and real estate company L. Nelson Properties and was recently interviewed by the real estate firm Marcus and Millichap.

Linebacker Tysyn Parker is another Beyond



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SJSU ATHLETICS

Top: San Jose State football players travel to Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park to practice elevator pitches and prepare for jobs outside of football in April 2019.

Middle: San Jose State offensive lineman Jack Snyder (right) talks with another attendee at an alumni networking event for career development in March 2019.

Left: San Jose State linebacker Tysyn Parker tackles Hawaii Jr. College's Calvin Turner Jr. during a Dec. 5 victory in Honolulu.

“I don't want to bank on putting all my efforts into trying to [become a professional athlete], when I really should have a backup plan because this pandemic is really making things harder.”



**Lauola Amanoni**  
women's soccer defender

COVID-19, making the path to professional sports increasingly difficult.

"[The pandemic] definitely put a speed bump in the route to professional baseball," Viola said. "Because I had a lack of facilities, I had a lack of structure and really a lack of knowing what was even going on."

Those same seniors are now returning one year later because of the NCAA's policy to extend the eligibility of student-athletes affected by COVID-19. Yet, they still face unprecedented challenges that come with playing collegiate sports in a pandemic.

SJSU women's soccer defender Lauola Amanoni said because spectators are banned from games, players can't introduce themselves to coaches and scouts after they play.

She said building that human connection is crucial especially if a student-athlete has professional aspirations.

"Just talking to coaches like after [games], you know, and that's really where you can introduce yourself and really

he helped successfully run a similar one when he was a wide receiver coach at Oregon State University from 2011-16.

"I think Beyond Football is the most important thing we do," Brennan said. "How we help our young men and women in our athletic department build a plan that gives them a chance to build the life they want to build when they're done playing is seriously one of the most important things we do."

Beyond Football coordinator Tobruk Blaine said the purpose of the program is to help student-athletes find passion and joy outside of football.

She said her job involves helping football players transition from athletics to other careers by building a lasting relationship with them.

"As they go through the program, the player and I develop our own relationship just like a receivers coach would with their receivers," Blaine said. "And then once they graduate, because I built a relationship with them, they

Football athlete who credits the program for developing and executing a plan for career success after athletics.

"You know for me personally, I have always thought football [as] being the first thing I did," Parker said. "[But] once I got to college, you kind of get to the realization that [there's] only one more level from here. I'm not promised to make it so what can I do now?"

Parker said he's been focusing on becoming a police officer since the pandemic started and has gotten help from other student-athletes who've transitioned with guidance from Blaine and Beyond Football.

With the pandemic adding challenges to the dream of becoming a professional athlete, Blaine said she hopes to expand Beyond Football to help more student-athletes.

Follow Jesus on Twitter | @JesusTellitud



OPINION

# A dark cloud looms over seniors

As graduation nears we have to face the unknown

By Kathryn Hoedt  
SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Before we were graduating seniors, we hoped the mysterious virus that came to our shores in March 2020 would be an elongated spring break.

Then we wished for declining cases and thought we'd be in person by Fall 2020. The semester came and went and we anticipated we'd be together for our last first day of instruction in Spring 2021. Still apart, we crossed our fingers for a vaccine and a commencement ceremony, socially distanced or not.

However, our hope was squashed. San Jose State President Mary Papazian announced in a March 1 campuswide email SJSU would be "safely honoring our spring graduates."

The email read similar to statements sent to the Class of 2020 and it dealt the same blow as a college or job rejection letter.

**I was emotional not only for myself but for my parents and grandparents who've supported me through undergrad and won't see me walk the stage to receive my diploma.**

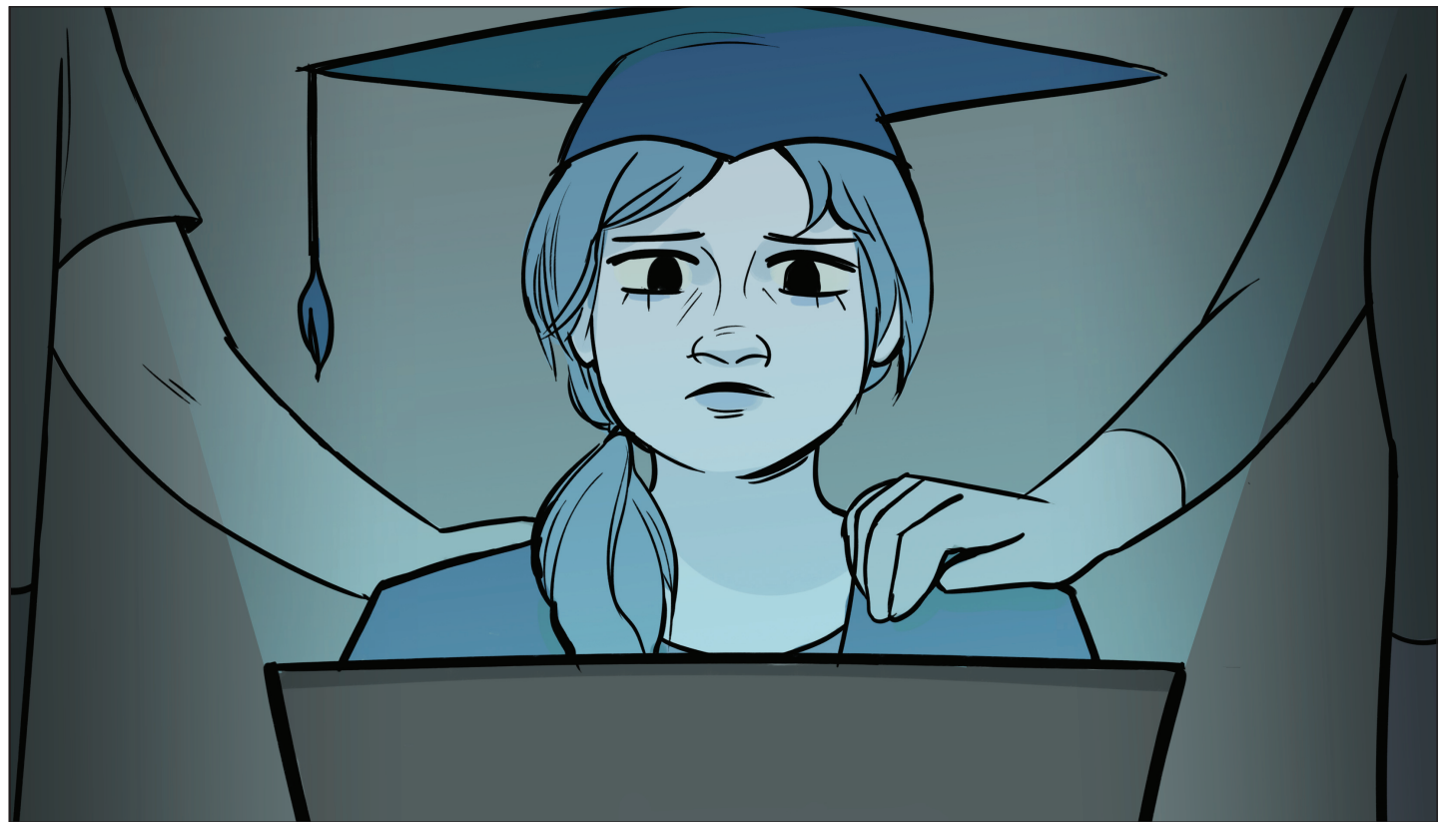


ILLUSTRATION BY BIANCA RADER

I can't imagine the pain it caused many first-generation students or hopeful graduates who've dreamed of walking across the commencement stage.

I was emotional not only for myself but for my parents and grandparents who've supported me through undergrad and won't see me walk the stage to receive my diploma.

I even cried one day later when I got an email about my virtual graduation slide because how can a 150-character message rectify a normal celebration?

The short answer: it can't.

And I won't even attempt to give you the laundry list of reasons why it'll never make up for the usual pomp, circumstance and utter euphoria of waiting to hear your name while basking under the California sun.

On the other hand, this might be the time to discover new ways to celebrate.

I'm buying all my graduation regalia and taking as many pictures as possible. I'm going to party hard through Zoom

because after all, we're celebrating our entrance into the big, wide world of job opportunities . . . right? Wrong.

Economic experts have started calling the job market uncertain for recent graduates, according to an April 10, 2020 USA Today article.

It feels a bit like the world's falling apart accompanied by moving out of your parents' house to become a "grown-up" in one of the country's most expensive states.

Since the pandemic began, hiring for entry level and college graduate positions fell 45% more than any other education category, according to a Feb. 4 Wall Street Journal article. As if that wasn't bad enough, as graduates start getting hired, they're more likely to be paid less or be in a "mismatched" job because of the economic downturn.

Because recent graduates are being paid less, it's probable they'll need to make up for it in the future.

Graduates who begin careers during a

recession earn less for about 10-15 years versus those who start in periods of economic growth, according to an April 2019 Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research study.

Despite these scary statistics, the world isn't falling apart. In fact, we're starting to pick up the pieces as more people receive vaccinations daily.

It's time to change our perspective on graduating right now.

Don't be afraid to move back in with your parents after graduation to save money and don't be scared to take a job that doesn't initially fit your standards.

Just like our predecessors, we will prevail.

Maybe we'll get a slower start but we'll strive with unrelenting hope. If there's one thing this pandemic taught us, it's how to rely on that hope regardless of whether normalcy is within reach or a million miles away.

Follow Kathryn on Twitter @hoedtkatie

## CLASSIFIEDS

### CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17					18						19			
20							21				22			
			23		24				25					
26	27	28	29		30			31						
32			33	34			35				36	37	38	
39							40							
41					42		43							
			44				45				46			
47	48	49				50			51	52				
53					54			55			56	57	58	59
60					61			62						
63					64					65				
66					67					68				

ACROSS

- 1. Gestured
- 6. No
- 10. Whip
- 14. Any compound of oxygen
- 15. Makes a mistake
- 16. Within
- 17. Catastrophe
- 19. Novice
- 20. Jubilant
- 21. French for "Summer"
- 22. Send forth
- 23. French for "Queen"
- 25. Districts
- 26. Read superficially
- 30. A symbol of disgrace
- 32. Temporary
- 35. Relating to a wedding
- 39. Required
- 40. Gunk
- 41. Part mortal and part deity
- 43. On the other hand
- 44. Spotted cat
- 46. Hearing organs
- 47. Related to tides
- 50. Cringe
- 53. Module
- 54. Estimated time of arrival

- 55. Part of a tea service
- 60. Cab
- 61. Instructions
- 63. Pearly-shelled mussel
- 64. Sleep in a convenient place
- 65. Earthenware jar
- 66. Observed
- 67. 1 1 1 1
- 68. Publicizes

DOWN

- 1. Interlaced
- 2. Angle of a leafstalk
- 3. Brand of credit card
- 4. Modify
- 5. Discourage
- 6. Mesh
- 7. The far east
- 8. An important nutrient
- 9. Feudal worker
- 10. Written material
- 11. Japanese cartoon art
- 12. Stripes
- 13. Owl sounds
- 18. Citrus drink
- 24. Belief
- 25. Enough
- 26. A region of SE Pakistan
- 27. Leg joint
- 28. Bit of gossip
- 29. Drugs
- 31. Spurt
- 33. Kingly
- 34. False god
- 36. Notion
- 37. Food thickener
- 38. Not more
- 42. Verbiage
- 43. Expression of surprised admiration
- 45. Lacking refinement
- 47. Ballet skirts
- 48. Absurd
- 49. Confederate States
- 51. And so forth
- 52. Barf
- 54. Cocoyam
- 56. Breezy
- 57. Defecate
- 58. A single time
- 59. Sounds of disapproval
- 62. S

### SUDOKU PUZZLE

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

		2		5				
6	1							5
		8			6	9		
1	7	6			3		4	9
3								1
2	4		6			7	3	8
		7	2			1		
4							7	3
				6		8		

### SOLUTIONS 3/17/2021

K	N	I	T	S		H	U	N	T		I	M	P	S	
I	O	N	I	C		A	N	E	W		N	O	A	H	
N	I	C	E	R		S	A	R	I		C	U	R	E	
G	R	A	D	U	A	T	I	O	N		A	L	G	A	
			B	R	E	D			G	E	N	D	E	R	
O	V	E	R		O	N	E		E	L	D				
W	A	D	E		S	I	D	E		K	E	N	D	O	
L	I	G	H	T	E	N		M	A	S	S	E	U	R	
S	N	E	E	R		G	R	A	B		C	A	M	E	
			A	I	L		A	C	E		E	R	A	S	
P	A	T	R	O	L		M	I	T	T					
L	E	E	S			A	M	B	A	S	S	A	D	O	R
U	R	S	A			M	A	L	T		A	M	I	G	O
M	I	L	L			A	L	E	E		R	O	M	E	O
S	E	A	S			S	I	R	S		S	K	E	E	T

9	1	8	7	5	4	2	3	6
4	3	2	8	1	6	5	7	9
7	6	5	9	3	2	8	1	4
6	8	9	2	7	5	1	4	3
1	2	7	6	4	3	9	5	8
5	4	3	1	8	9	7	6	2
3	7	1	4	2	8	6	9	5
2	5	6	3	9	1	4	8	7
8	9	4	5	6	7	3	2	1

### JOKIN' AROUND

Why was the picture sent to prison?

It was framed.

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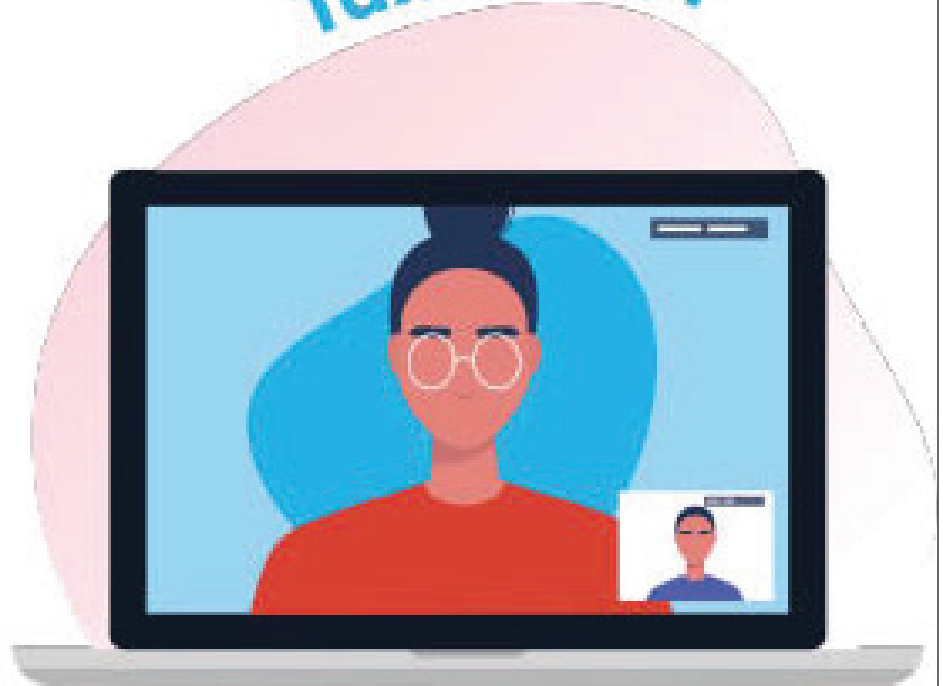
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## Virtual Services



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## ANALYSIS

# Expectations eat away at artists

By Isalia Gallo  
COPY EDITOR

Sitting down with a guitar, piano or empty sketchbook for hours feeling discouraged and uninspired is what many artists have faced since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

The year 2020 was greatly anticipated by many and looked to be filled with hope, but life soon took a sharp turn toward feeling agonizing and exhausting.

Alonzo Jones Jr., San Jose State alumnus and aspiring TV show writer, said after pushing through tough days repeatedly trying to write, he was diagnosed with moderate-to-severe depression in September.

"I felt like I didn't really have an excuse," Jones said in a Zoom interview. "I was trying to produce content before the pandemic happened. The ironic thing is the pandemic is the reason, literally why I couldn't write, you know . . . staring at a blank page isn't going to give you an idea."



**I have conversations about mental health with a lot of my friends and I think that's a constantly moving target and it's week by week, day to day.**

**Kristian Buenconsejo**  
Beatmaker  
Mechanical engineering senior

For artists in every sphere including musicians, visual artists and directors, dreams were paused and challenges surfaced in the last year.

Expectations from fans for artists to rollout content put an immense amount of pressure on them.

People might assume they must produce large amounts of new content from the "endless amount of free time on their hands,"

but for some artists this couldn't be further from the truth.

Jones said missing in-person interactions took a toll on his work because writers produce content based on personal encounters.

For Gage Phillips, a radio, TV, and film senior and visual artist, things got worse everyday after his grandmother passed away from cancer last year.

"I did feel that [pressure] especially towards the beginning of quarantine," Phillips said in a Zoom call. "There was this weird pressure. . . feeling like I had to make something and I don't even know where it came from either because it's not like anyone was telling me to do that."

Other students such as Ashley Mehta, a communications senior and musician, realized a break from her passion was the best option.

"There are so many different platforms right now like Instagram, TikTok and I think I would just scroll and see people literally tell the rest of the world like, 'Oh, you need to take a break right now,' like it's OK [to take a break]," Mehta said through Zoom.

Many of these artists have felt similarly despite different situations and have been haunted by feelings of lost opportunity.

Kristian Buenconsejo, mechanical engineering senior and beatmaker also known by the stage name YesYes, said he lost his internship during the initial lockdown.

"I actually had three potential internships and they all ghosted me and they all just dropped out of the world [and] stopped replying because COVID happened," Buenconsejo in a Zoom interview.

Besides losing out on internship opportunities, he said the pandemic has negatively affected his mental health and he's had to reach out to close friends to combat it.

"I have conversations about mental health with a lot of my friends and I think that's a constantly moving target and it's week by week, day to day," Buenconsejo said. "Sometimes you just got to take baby steps."

While mental health is a top priority, performing on stage for an audience is



ILLUSTRATION BY YUE XIN

important to many artists and gathering restrictions have made it difficult to show fans new work.

Fred Cohen, director of the School of Music and Dance, said student artists and especially those graduating soon are hindered from fully experiencing on-stage performances.

"I feel there's a certain amount of guilt that I feel," Cohen said. "I feel like we weren't able to deliver the kind of education that we want."

He said artists already have stress and

added anxiety from COVID-19 can be disrupting and demanding.

A combination of pressure and a lack of agency during the pandemic has become tiring for many creators.

Producing extraordinary content while feeling burned out or unambitious isn't something fans should demand or expect from artists right now.

Follow Isalia on Twitter  
@IsaliaGallo

# Hope perseveres through loneliness

By Royvi Hernandez  
STAFF WRITER

Friendships, academic relationships and everyday interactions were jeopardized during the last year, leaving some San Jose State students feeling both isolated yet appreciative for personal growth.

Psychology junior Jada Wilson said the absence of socializing in the last year has greatly affected her. She said she doesn't know how to act around other people anymore and her anxiety rises when she anticipates certain interactions.

"[The] lack of interaction and the feeling of losing connections with good friends has left me feeling lonely and has lowered my self-esteem," Wilson said in an email.

She said despite occasional FaceTime calls, it's still difficult to keep in contact with friends.

Psychology lecturer Naleem Rattan said social isolation has negatively impacted student's self-esteem which can make them feel lost, depressed, alone and anxious.

She said these feelings can even lead to self-destruction and harm.

"Students feel a lack of interpersonal connections and by maintaining this, it can lower their social skills," Rattan said in an email.

According to the University of Michigan Department of Psychiatry, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased loneliness, stress, anxiety and depression among college students.

Students are especially prone to these mental health concerns compared to the general population.



ILLUSTRATION BY NICK YBARRA



**[The] lack of interaction and the feeling of losing connection with good friends has left me feeling lonely and has lowered my self-esteem.**

**Jada Wilson**  
Psychology junior

Communications junior Steven Nguyen said while it's been a year full of hardship, he's grateful for social media platforms that allow him to still connect with friends.

"I'm happy that regardless of our situation, I can still communicate through Zoom, FaceTime [and] Google Meet," Nguyen said in a Zoom call. "Although it gets tiring, it has brought good change."

He said the pandemic even allowed him to improve his communication skills through technology.

Nguyen said he's still shared enjoyable moments with friends despite not being physically with them.

He's played video games through the online messaging platform Discord, hosted Zoom parties and even sent birthday gifts over the internet all to maintain his personal relationships.

Like Nguyen, software engineering freshmen Ananth Upadhy said while his loneliness increased, he's thankful for technology and its ability to foster connections.

He said he hasn't struggled much with keeping friendships during the pandemic and has even made new friends online.

Rattan said even if students don't see the effects of a lack of socialization, it can still ultimately

impact them. She said it may make them inept at developing appropriate social skills and understanding social cues.

"They may lose the value of social interaction which may result in trouble in communicating with each other," Rattan said.

On a brighter side, she said students might have more time for self-reflection, meditating, grounding themselves, becoming more self-aware and finding inner balance.

Upadhy echoed this idea and said he's made extra time for himself.

"This past year has been a way to explore oneself and grow," Upadhy said in a Zoom call.

Nguyen agreed that the pandemic led him to dig deep spiritually, become more confident and especially learn to appreciate both time alone and time talking with others more.

Rattan encourages students to make an effort to develop healthy friendships, even if it's through technology.

"Be more vocal in online classrooms, use the chat functionality on Zoom to reach out to others and express your opinions," Rattan said.

She said it's also important to use this period of isolation to strengthen bonds with family members.

Upadhy said he is looking forward to what's to come in the next year.

"Keep your hopes up whenever you feel lonely," Upadhy said. "In some way, the pandemic has been a blessing in disguise to help tune in to your higher self."

Follow Royvi on Twitter  
@lesroyvs



GRAPHICS BY PAULA PIVA

## The pandemic's uncertainty inspires students to confess feelings and take risks in online dating to combat personal solitude

By Christina Casillas  
STAFF WRITER

Face masks and social distancing have made the phrase "love is in the air" less applicable than ever for those seeking new romantic relationships.

While more traditional ways of falling in love have changed because of the coronavirus pandemic, students have found romance despite a dating life drastically different from one year ago.

Environmental studies junior Maritza Ortiz-Urrutia wasn't looking for a romantic relationship when she reconnected with an acquaintance she initially met in 2018 on Instagram.

Urrutia said she was opposed to new connections because she had recently gotten out of a relationship and wanted to focus on personal growth.

Daily messages between the two eventually bloomed

into a relationship, but the threat of COVID-19 made seeing each other in person more complicated.

"He invited me to go out but I was feeling really hesitant about going out because of COVID, so I initially said no," Urrutia said. "But then eventually I caved in and then we hung out in person."

Urrutia said face-to-face dates are easier because she and her partner both live alone.

On the other hand, those who can't see their partners in person might struggle more

than those able to see their significant others face to face.

Dr. Ayelet Hirshfeld, a San José clinical psychologist, said the lack of in-person interaction could undermine the stability a relationship adds to a person's life.

"I would imagine not being able to see a partner due to lockdowns during this time will create a significant sense of anxiety," Hirshfeld said. "This craving for some stability, sense of security and connectedness, it will definitely have an adverse effect."

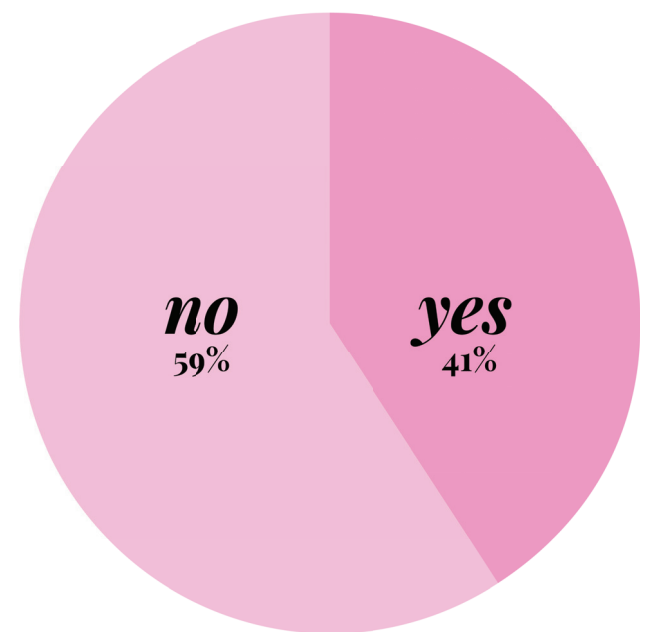
She also said people who started relationships during the pandemic probably did so because reaching out through a screen is easier without the possibility of in-person rejection.

"There is less fear of rejection because [of] the distance it allows," Hirshfeld said. "You have less inhibition, less fear of rejection or being able to take words back."

She said the pandemic might encourage people to begin romantic relationships because of a heightened sense of

## Love is in the air

Have you used a dating app since the pandemic began?



RESULTS ARE FROM 227 PEOPLE SURVEYED ON INSTAGRAM

His feelings were reciprocated and the two became a couple.

Torres' relationship helped him cope with losing loved ones to COVID-19 and escape the monotony of pandemic life.

"I think it's kind of brought me back to reality," Torres said. "It makes it easier to find new things to do with a partner instead of doing the same thing over and over again every day." Urrutia said her new relationship helped her manage stress created by the pandemic.

"Before I was very worried about the world and too fixated on what's going on every second," Urrutia said. "I feel like it's kind of branched off and not been so bad because of the support system."

Falling in love can be difficult for some and with the pandemic's added strain it might seem like finding love is on hold.

Torres said the pandemic shouldn't stop people from creating romantic relationships even if it feels impossible right now.

"With this whole thing going on I feel like nobody should be afraid [to] try to find someone to love," Torres said. "I don't think it's really difficult, I just feel like with this pandemic it's like a barrier."

Urrutia and Torres are only two of the students who've found love during an unimaginable period, attesting to the idea that love can even conquer a pandemic.



**I think it's kind of brought me back to reality. It makes it easier to find new things to do with a partner instead of doing the same thing over and over again every day.**

**Jack Torres**

Radio, TV and film sophomore

urgency from unknown outcomes of living through a pandemic.

"Some people can feel more motivated to review their lives or make different decisions in respect to [love] or reevaluate what's important to them," Hirshfeld said.

Radio, TV and Film sophomore Jack Torres realized life was too short not to reveal his true feelings for a friend he's been close with since his first year of college.

"I feel like this was one of the chances I didn't want to miss," Torres said.

While the pandemic was a threat, Torres said it was important for him to share his feelings for his partner.

He initially called his partner and told her he had something too important to tell her in a phone call and wanted to meet in person.



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### ABOUT

The Spartan Daily prides itself on being the San Jose State community's top news source. New issues are published every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday throughout the academic year and online content updated daily.

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**CONTACT US**

**EDITORIAL –**  
**MAIN TELEPHONE:**  
(408) 924-3821

**EMAIL:**  
spartandaily@gmail.com

**ADVERTISING –**  
**TELEPHONE:**  
408-924-3240

**EMAIL:**  
spartandailyadvertising@gmail.com

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