

Saturday, March 27

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During 2020, my greatest challenges were in regard to my education. In the spring, we switched from in-person to remote within 2 weeks, far faster than the students and instructors were prepared for. The switch happened after spring break in March, during the most difficult semester I had had up to that time. Class proceedings, exams, and internet access points all became a confusing mess that had to be resolved hastily. Even when we began classes back, it felt like I was still learning less than when we were in person.

In the summer, I took an accelerated basic EMT course, where we had in-person classes but were very spread out. Every time we moved or acted, we had to do so carefully. It felt like walking through a minefield, which didn't help the class proceed any more smoothly. When fall finally came, all of my classes were still remote, but UNC attempted to bring some students back to campus, only to send them home and cause massive confusion and anxiety for many.

However, each time – no matter how difficult or awkward the class setting may have been – both the students and instructors were there for each other. We all understood that no person was unaffected by the pandemic, and that now more than ever we needed to communicate effectively and efficiently. Many of my instructors, both at UNC and during the summer course, went well out of their way to hold help sessions, and sponsor university-wide mental health days. Likewise, many students, including myself, supported our instructors in a variety of ways, from giving end-of-course gifts to attending their extra sessions (even if we didn't need to).

Ironically, in perhaps the most difficult and stressful year of the century, I've seen more benevolent examples of "loving one another" and "treating neighbors as I want to be treated" surrounding my educational experience alone than at any other point in my life. 2020 has shown me that now is when we need to hold close to God most and reflect the love He has shown us back to those around us.