

## Regression of Academic Performance due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

My name is Alex Brickley, a student in my senior year at UW-Eau Claire. This document plans to cover the regression of morale, motivation, and performance of my academic success as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and barriers. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected countries around the world and the manner in which institutions conduct their processes. Through my experience, it can be seen that the way these processes changed has had a negative effect on my as well as others academic performances. Many of the UW-Eau Claire students came into the semester with a sense of determination that has been reduced by the effects of Covid-19 barriers, at least in my experience, and has increased the frequency of procrastination, stress, and sleepless nights. To analyze these effects, I plan on telling my story from the beginning, middle, and end of my final semester at UW-Eau Claire to better understand how the changing processes have had a negative effect on academic performance.

### Beginning of the Semester

At the beginning of the semester, I came in with a sense of grit and determination. I was determined to maintain my 3.0 GPA and was planning to do so through superior academic performance in my last semester. On my first day of class, I learned that many classes would be either online or partially online. The partially online classes required that you attend class in person one day a week, and attend the other online via social sites such as Collaborate Ultra or Zoom. I followed the rules set in place by the partially online classes attending once in person and once online. I soon learned that I best absorbed the information presented in person, but due to the guidelines set by these partially online classes, I was only able to attend in person one time a week. To better learn the content, I began to rid myself of distractions such as videogames or music playing devices so I would have no choice but to pay attention to what the professor was

presenting online. Still, I found it difficult to pay attention to these online lectures as they left me with the opportunity to shift my attention to something else. Soon after this realization, I came to the conclusion that I would rather attend all class periods virtually as I was not required to wear my facemask and could easily access entertainment during what I considered to be particularly boring lectures. After most of my classes had administered their first tests around week four, I decided to make the switch. I figured that if I was receiving anywhere between 88 and 94 percent on most of my tests, the attendance online would only have a minimal effect on my grades. I would soon learn, however, that this does not prove to be the case.

### Middle of the Semester

For around the next six weeks, I “attended” class online. I use the quotations only to show that “attend” may be a bit of an exaggeration. Most of the time, I did not even make attempts to understand what the professors were teaching us that day, often spending most of my time playing video games or even sleeping. Following the lectures, I decided I would need a “brain break” and continue to play videogames or clean or some other activity. In reality, I was avoiding working on assignments between classes. Most of the assignments were flexible in their due dates, spanning multiple days. I often took advantage of this flexibility, and would put it off until last second. The negative effect of this, I soon discovered, was that these flexible dates often made multiple assignments due the same day at the same time. As a result, I often became stressed as I had multiple days solely devoted to doing homework, which also often made me miss classes and become further uneducated on topics that were presented in class. My professors began to notice my poor attendance, and talked to me about the benefits of attending in person rather than attending only online. With processes in place for the safety of the students, however, no student was required to attend in person and the classes were required to have online

attendance options. Without the ability for them to require me to attend in person, I remained completely online. Around the time of the second stretch of tests, I noticed a slight, possibly anticipated decline in my performance, this time receiving between 84 and 90 percent on most of my tests. Since these grades were relatively good in a sense, I continued to remain online. I did not anticipate, however, that the content would become increasingly intense and lecture oriented rather than reading oriented. The decrease did have some effect on my morale, however, not enough to convince me to attend in person.

### End of the Semester

The end of my final semester proved to be among the most stressful times of my life. I had discovered that my grades were beginning to falter as a result of my procrastination, poor class attendance, and relative inability to recall information from lectures. Coupled with these realizations, the most work-intensive and comprehensive projects were approaching their due dates. My tendency to procrastinate maintained, however, this was no longer due to my attitude towards that homework anymore. Now it was due to the inability to complete things quickly as a result of my inability to concentrate during lectures. For most of the semester, I was only surviving rather than thriving. The inability to leave my house at this point and the lack of available leisure activities due to covid restrictions had a profound effect on my morale. I was not able to focus as I had no will to continue working and staying in my house. My grades took more hits, and began to slowly decline as often I was unable to complete assignments on time. With the completion of my finals and 40 page paper, I still feel stressed from the inability to work diligently and remain focused in classes. I do believe had the covid restriction and policies not been put in place, I would have been required to attend in person thus performing better in classes. I also believe my morale would have been dramatically increased, as social interaction

and a change of scenery would have been greatly beneficial for my attitude towards the semester and college altogether. Lastly, I also believe that I would have procrastinated to a much lesser extent as I would have had less distractions and had access to facilities on campus if I were required to be on campus, in person two or three times a week.