

Sarah Heavren 0:00

We are recording. The following introductory conversation and questions have been structured off but not copied from the suggested introductory script and questions provided by Indiana University as part of the *Journal of the Plague* COVID-19 Oral History Project. My name is Sarah Heavren, and I'm here with Abbey Wheeler. Today is February 17, 2021, and it is 7:03pm. I am coming to you from Howley Hall on the campus of Providence College and Abbey is speaking from her dorm room, also on the campus of Providence College. Abbey, I would like to review the informed consent form that you signed for participating in the project. This interview will be part of a collection in the Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive as well as the Providence College Archives and Special Collections. As stated on the release form that you signed, the Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive is a digital archive project created and maintained by the Providence Public Library and the Rhode Island Historical Society in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis. The archive seeks to document and share the lived experience of Rhode Islanders from all walks of life during the global health crisis. Any audio or video recording of this interview, and a text-based transcript of the interview will be contributed to both the Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive and the Providence College Archives and Special Collections. Do you verbally agree to this?

Abbey Wheeler 1:23

Yes.

Sarah Heavren 1:25

I am briefly going to review the license on the release form that you signed. Under this CC-BY 4.0 license, the creator will retain the copyright to their work and allow uses such as the Rhode Island Historical Society, the Providence Public Library, and the Providence College Archives and Special Collections to include the materials in the permanent collections of Rhode Island Historical Society and the Providence Public Library, and the public do have access to and share, adapt, modify, and cite the work. Per the CC-BY 4.0 license, the Rhode Island Historical Society, the Providence Public Library, Providence College Archives and Special Collections, and the public must credit the creator when making any feature uses. Do you verbally agreed to this license?

Abbey Wheeler 2:09

Yes.

Sarah Heavren 2:10

Do you have any other questions before we begin the interview?

Abbey Wheeler 2:14

No.

Sarah Heavren 2:17

So you're a student, or you're a student athlete. So do you mind sharing what your major is and what things you're involved with on campus?

Abbey Wheeler 2:29

I major in math and Applied Physics. I also have a minor in finance. And I'm involved with a cross country and the track team at Providence. I also do astronomy research, astrophysics research.

Sarah Heavren 2:47
Where are you from?

Abbey Wheeler 2:49
I'm from Elmira, New York.

Sarah Heavren 2:52
And if you're in your dorm room, then that means you're studying in person this semester.

Abbey Wheeler 2:59
Yes.

Sarah Heavren 3:00
That answers that. So going back to last March when all this started do you remember where you were in what you were doing when you found out that spring break was going to be extended? And how did you react to that?

Abbey Wheeler 3:17
I do. I was actually on campus. I was staying over spring break because I qualified for the national indoor track meet. And prior to that I started feeling a little ill over the weekend. And I checked in with my trainer. And I think it was about Monday where we checked in and I was going to see how I felt, to see if I'd be able to fly to the meet. And I actually started running like a terrible fever. I was very sick. I was having really bad flu like symptoms, but I wasn't tested for the flu or COVID because it was the beginning stages where like there weren't a lot of tests and like you really weren't supposed to like, you know, if you were kind of sick, not supposed to be in contact with people. So I wasn't sure if I had the flu or what it was. So I had been like staying in my dorm room that whole week. And I remember I was laying on the couch in pretty bad pain. I found that out. So at that time, just like due to the given circumstances, like I had been working so hard to travel to that track meet and I was very disappointed and upset and like alone. So like initially I was kind of excited to go home just because when you're sick you always miss home anyway. And so I was really looking forward to spend time with my family even though I guess like I feel like I didn't have a lot of foresight of like how long it would actually be of me going home but it's not like just a couple weeks and I'll come back for the summers like I usually do.

Sarah Heavren 4:57
So then how did you react to it? being sent home for the remainder of the semester, and what was it like adapting to online learning at home.

Unknown Speaker 5:11
It was like, I honestly liked some of aspects of learning online. I found that a lot of times the lectures, professors chose to send out video lectures prior to class and have class as an office hour. And I personally like that because I find, for me anyway, I like to choose when I want to

focus, I don't like just like showing up at 10:30 when I have to, I prefer like, whenever in the day I feel ready to do work for me to sit down and focus on a lecture. And that gave me time to like, pause it and to think about it and write it down. So I felt like I was digesting information more easily. It definitely was harder because, like that process, I definitely spent more time on school than I had, like, prior. And I was in a lab. So my electronics lab was online and virtual, which like was a little odd when you're used to working with your hands. But I think especially in beginning quarantine it was easy to not think about much when you're supposed to be leaving your house. Anyway, you busy yourself with productive things. So it wasn't a matter of me feeling like I'm missing out and like the world because I'm inside busy anyways. So it didn't really feel like I was, like, restricted from going, I felt like I was choosing to stay indoors. And productivity always definitely helps you mentally.

Sarah Heavren 6:36

So you're unique in that this is actually your fifth year of college. So at what point had you decided to do your fifth year, and were you still satisfied with that decision in light of the pandemic, especially having gone home for the spring and now anticipating what the fall was going to look like?

Abbey Wheeler 7:05

I, I decided for athletic reasons, I was already a physics minor. So an extra year would give me my physics major degree, which would be a lot better for me academically, and it was going to give me an indoor track season and an outdoor track season to compete in. So for those reasons, I think it's, I'm happy enough in the way where I've, I see some of my classmates really struggle to find jobs right now, and just struggling a lot of different ways. And I think I'm really lucky that I made that choice because it kept me to some routine that I think a lot of other people weren't lucky to have. Because for me, I had like something to look forward to instead of if I graduated, and I was in some job search and where it's very difficult to find a job at the moment, there are a lot of hiring freezes, I think I'd feel like unsure about what's going to happen next and when, but at least I knew in the fall, I was coming back to school. So I think that helps me get through the summer. And it helps just break up this time into pieces. Because then I'm home for two weeks for the winter. But I know I'm coming back for the spring. And so I think just with graduation, people feeling a lot of unknowns, I'm, I'm happy that I had some consistency with being able to stay at school.

Sarah Heavren 8:27

What was your summer? Like? Did you have any plans that were compromised? Were you able to do work or research?

Abbey Wheeler 8:37

I was about to like organize some summer plans around that spring break time. So ironically, I didn't have anything planned to do anyway. But I ended up spending finals week with my sister in Salt Lake City. So I actually ended up doing more than I think I would have before. We drove together to Utah, which is like a 30-hour drive from my house. And so we definitely did it the safe way where we didn't really have to exit the car unless we were getting gas or like a quick drive thru snack. But, and when we got there, it was nice to just be in a place that was warm and like a place that like really embraced being outdoors and like the type of things that were safe to

do in the pandemic. So I was able to feel comfortable and still feel like I was like having a good time but doing so without compromising my health and safety or other people's. And after that I had received a message from my professors and he offered me a slot to do research with him. So I came back to Providence then for about a month in July. And it was definitely different from other summers because I had spent all the summers previously here doing summer school. And I wanted to do research with him but I was also anticipating having some teammates and friends around for summer school. So it was different in the aspect that I was really just spending a lot of time by myself. And on campus was like, a bit strange and lonely because I would wake up and just go to research for my like five hours or so and then like, all of like, some of my favorite things to do about Providence weren't really safe or available at the moment. So that was kind of strange, where Providence is just such a good place for food. And like, it always has great free events. And like Waterfire there's always so much going on. And so it felt weird because I was in this place that I love to be in the summer when there's so much to go on. But you can't really participate in some of your favorite things. But I still got to enjoy the beautiful province, I go on a lot of walks.

Sarah Heavren 10:51

Were you hopeful about classes, you know, going back to in-person in the fall, especially because you had been on campus in the summer? So you were you were you hopeful that there would be some attempt at returning to normalcy?

Abbey Wheeler 11:07

I knew that like, we would try to go there, but I had like, close to no hope at all. I feel like unfortunately, like, you just see, um, I think social media is a bit of a problem, because you just see what some of your classmates are doing anyway. And you realize that like, if people aren't going to be acting safely, like, this isn't going to work. And you just know, like, Providence is a very social school. So I just like had a good feeling that people wouldn't want to compromise on the social aspect as much. And I had a good feeling that like, I don't know, just, I knew people would be wanting to hang out with everyone. And it's just not great. I knew like the intentions were never bad. I think you just remember to your own freshman year, specifically, when you're like, I don't know how I would have handled that situation as a freshman, I would hope I would do the right thing. But you also just have to realize that I guess like, Okay, if you came to school, and you're living with one other person in a dorm, like realistically, you're going to want to go and meet other people. Like that was, freshman year, so special for me because of that, you get to interact with all these new people. And so, I don't know, I wasn't super hopeful

Sarah Heavren 12:31

But you still decided to study in person in the fall?

Unknown Speaker 12:36

Yeah, I did that largely because of athletics, and just it being my last year because I just wanted to participate in what I could. And I think the school does a good job of making, I feel, the shared spaces safe. So like I, I trust, my friends are behaving safely. And the people I interact with on a daily basis are safely and that I'm being safe myself. And so that gave me comfort. I guess I just like feel like if I was comfortable within my small knit community that I would feel comfortable being at school.

Sarah Heavren 13:14

How are your classes split between in person online are like half and half in the fall? And which format do you prefer?

Abbey Wheeler 13:24

I had a good deal of them in person. And few are fully online, but they were all at least synchronous. What I found though, is like some of the classes had a Zoom option as well. I'm currently I'm in a split one now. So I go in person Mondays and Wednesdays and on Friday, I'm supposed to be on Zoom, because the class size was just too big. And I found even sometimes, like if I was supposed to be in a class, but there's a Zoom option I would elect for that one due in part just to like, you forget that like the simple things that you could like, take advantage of you can't anymore. Like if you're busy in between classes, like everyone's like, Oh, just grab some food in between class. But now you can't necessarily like sit in the back of a lecture and like sneak a snack really quick or drink some water or something as silly as that. So like, I've, like just stayed in my room a lot of the times because of like if I'm like, Oh, it's lunchtime, I haven't eaten and I have two classes in a row, I might just like stay in my lab room or something during the class. And especially it's difficult if you have both because you have to walk from your room to the other side of campus, which doesn't sound like that big of a deal. But I mean 10 minutes isn't a lot, especially if you know, sometimes you might get out a few minutes late. So it's just been like trial and error. It's like a routine that works. I definitely prefer I think the online versions and I almost prefer the lectures to be asynchronous Just because you can learn at your own pace, and the professors that have that option usually have office hours during the time. So I feel I just I learned better that way.

Sarah Heavren 15:14

You already kind of alluded to expecting the outbreak. So when the outbreak did happen, how did it affect you? And did you move home at all or stay on campus?

Abbey Wheeler 15:28

It like, in a weird way, it was like we expected it, we definitely like had a couple weeks in the first bit that we had like almost no cases at all. So like, I was like, surprised that it took so long, almost. But I went home for two weeks, and that time when campus shut down. And I think just like after seeing like, so few cases, then when we got the 60 number, it was really just just a bit like scary. And we weren't allowed to leave campus, especially for my athletic reasonings like, we weren't even allowed to go for a run. So if we wanted to run we were doing, like some days, we'd have like a 13 mile run, and we would run with our mask on loops around campus, or like the track and 13 miles is a really long time to be running, like up the stairs behind the library or like around the track that way too many people are on anyway. So I went home so I could like get some space for that. And just to like, feel comfortable and less stressed about things, especially with the testing. Like at that point, we were only testing I think like maybe we got to the point of once a week or so or like it was because we started with random. And then I want to say went to once a week. And like, I don't think that was enough testing to begin with. Because you would almost convince yourself that like you are sick before because there'll be seven days in between to like get nervous when you don't have a reason to be. So I found myself also getting anxious and like convincing myself I'm sick when there's like no reason for me to think that way.

And I feel like all my friends were in the same boat. And so I was like, no. So I went home to the two weeks, but I did return when things calmed down a bit.

Sarah Heavren 17:19

What influenced your decision to come back after having gone home?

Abbey Wheeler 17:25

Honestly, I just I started to feel miserable at home. Like, I think it was just so hard because like everything was just on the fly. And so you couldn't really find the routine that I think I work really well off of. Like I packed and I didn't know when I'd be allowed to be back on campus. I was surprised that I was even home for as long as I was because I think I was planning on going back like a week earlier or something and they extended it. And so like even just due to that, I think I was just like, as soon as I got home, I was like oh, I'm kind of anxious to get back because I want to work out with my teammates, I just want to like, I didn't feel like the second time I was as productive home with work as I was the first time. I think the first time since we knew we were home. And we knew we just had to get into a routine. It was easy to get to something and stick to it. But it was really hard for me the second time, I think because it was like you're doing this but you don't have to until like you're allowed to go back which is I don't know when and so I think like the not knowing was the hardest part, I think I would have been able to maybe do a little better at it as soon as like, if I knew exactly how much time but it was definitely like hard to be like moving back and forth. I live like five and a half hours away. So it's like not like very convenient thing to plan. So that was definitely a bit frustrating at the time.

Sarah Heavren 18:52

What was your winter break like, once the fall semester ended?

Abbey Wheeler 18:58

It wasn't too good. And like, I think just as like probably a lot of people feel like it's, not to be like pessimistic, but it's like just super dark. There's little sunlight, freezing cold and like just anything that I really find joy in you're just like, kind of restricted in doing. Like, I love to just spend time with people. And it's not super safe to so I was just spending most of my time home alone, and the break was also extended longer because like we had, we came back later. And we did the last bit of school at home. So I found that to be hard too just because we were there for so much longer than we're used to. And it's not like your whole family is home either. So I was just like home alone while everyone's at work and not really seeing anybody with the sad weather. Like at least when you're doing school at home. I think you have a nice feeling of being productive. And I think like you can almost forget about the social aspect if you're busying yourself. But I definitely found too much time on my hands.

Sarah Heavren 20:10

So now you're back on campus for this spring. And so how are your classes divided this semester with in-person or online and such?

Abbey Wheeler 20:23

I take an individual research session. So I meet with my professor on Zoom like once or twice a week. And then I have the split class where Monday and Wednesday I am in person and Friday, I

do Zoom. I have one class that's completely Zoom and synchronous, and another class that's all the time in person.

Sarah Heavren 20:48

So you mentioned earlier that part of the reason for doing a fifth year was to have the indoor season and the outdoor season. But those obviously have been a little compromised. So what does your track schedule look like? How is your indoor season been transformed? And how are you anticipating your outdoor season to also look different?

Abbey Wheeler 21:14

Indoor has been really challenging just because like particularly like we can't train on the indoor track, because Peterson is the testing facility at the moment. And so it's just really hard being one of the rougher New England winters I've had since I've been here. Ironically enough, the first four weren't bad. But the fifth where we're not allowed inside has definitely been the harshest. And yeah, it's just it's, it's tough. But we also like usually have the ability to go to like one of the best tracks in the country at Boston University. But that's been shut down. So like, it's, it's different, because we're only limited to go to like specific small meets, where there's not a lot of competition and the facility isn't great. And so everything definitely is just on the gritty side right now. But we're lucky to compete. And honestly, it's good that it's small. We get tested as indoor athletes three times a week. And I think that definitely helps me feel a little safer about things. But outdoor track, I'm hoping it's a little better. I'm hoping vaccines come in the mix. And we can feel a little safer at events. Our Big East indoor meet was canceled. So that's a bit odd. And the other team also, I'm not on the cross country team, but the cross country team is doing that right now, too. So fall and winter sports all at the same time is definitely just, just a bit much.

Sarah Heavren 22:47

Have you had any meets so far? Right, wasn't there, just an indoor meet like last week?

Abbey Wheeler 22:53

We had an indoor meet last Thursday, and it was between URI. UNH couldn't come. But then they invited just like three UMass Lowell girls. So that was nice, because it was just there wasn't many people there. So I, surprisingly enough, felt pretty safe in like a massive facility with like, barely any of us there because usually track is a thing where you might have like 10 teams there. That's kind of small, usually just so many people. So it felt a little strange. But I guess for the best because I'd rather not come back to school and be worried that I was in contact with so many people. But we also are, we're traveling to one this Thursday, we're traveling to North Carolina. So that'll be interesting. So it'll be my first competition I really had to like, go far for the NCAA. And there'll be a lot more teams there. But I don't think we're allowed to stay at the meet the whole time. So I think it's one of the things where you're only allowed to come to do your event, and then you have to leave straight after. So that's probably a good thing. But a little strange from what you're used to.

Sarah Heavren 24:03

Do you think the pandemic and like these variations and you know, like, I'm sure your training schedule has been a little upended with all these protocols and stuff, so did you feel like that

affected your performance in the meat that you just had? And can you see it affecting your future performances too?

Abbey Wheeler 24:28

I think maybe, like slightly, but I think a lot of the reason maybe I wasn't getting great training, because I was feeling like a bit like injured and a bit under the weather. I feel like those things are usually better maintained when you have a better relationship with the training room, which is hard to have during the pandemic and a lot of the restrictions. I actually did pretty well at it so I, so I wouldn't say anything bad about it now, but definitely like, in some ways, like, it's, it's been hard because like, it's been so long and like, it's hard to mentally wrap your head around, like, I haven't been competing for a year. And now it's my last season. And this is such an important season for me, because I'm trying to move on in the sport and do it a bit professionally. And so my results are very important. But also you're going to like, it's like the real goal, I'm not going to as many good meets, and so I'm not going to have as many opportunities and the opportunities I do have are going to be lesser than the ones I did have. I think one good thing that came out of that, though, is I think it does make you think differently in like a stronger way. Like I think it makes you have a little more of the winning mentality of kind of just like going with the flow and like understanding that, like circumstances aren't going to be perfect, but you can still perform well and succeed, despite those imperfections in your training or in your lifestyle. So it's definitely made me feel as a person and an athlete a little more resilient than I had been before.

Sarah Heavren 26:17

So you are a kind of second round senior. So how do you feel about a lot of the senior activities being canceled or moved online? Or, you know, what are what are your thoughts or hopes about having an in person graduation?

Abbey Wheeler 26:38

A lot of people might not share this opinion. But I'm somebody that doesn't like put a lot of emphasis on those types of things. Like, for me, I don't really mind if we don't have graduation at all, or if we don't have senior ceremonies. I think what like bugs me a bit more is that I haven't been able to like, interact with my close friends and how I would like to in my last year, like little things, again, that you like take, you used to take advantage of just like a Friday night of going out to dinner with a group of friends and hanging out afterwards. And even just at times to go into all these different rooms that your friends live in. And now it's like you're not, you're not supposed to be hanging out with everyone. But as a senior you want, like that's in your nature, you want to see all of your close friends and really just make the most of it. So I think, for me, I'm okay with those things being canceled. It's just it's tough, because in a lot of other ways, like there's things that I miss a lot and that I anticipated I would get to do in my final year here that I'm not going to get to do.

Sarah Heavren 27:52

So you mentioned being able to like, go to see your see your friends in their rooms. But like one of the big things that the school has instituted is you have to stay with your pod, your pod primarily being your roommates, but you live in a single. So what does that mean for you? And how has that affected your ability to socialize?

Abbey Wheeler 28:18

I definitely, like, made my own rules for a bit because technically, if I listened to the rules that came out initially, I mean, I don't blame Providence, but I think too since it was such like a it's such a new thing that they didn't think of each individual circumstance. And so a lot of the rules were tied to again, yeah, staying with your roommates, which I don't have roommates, so I don't think, I think like as a school I doubt they would say I don't want you to see anybody you just hang out by yourself for two semesters straight. I'm lucky enough for a couple of my other teammates live in singles. So I've kind of like adopted them as like my main pod, I suppose. Because Yeah, I guess I just made the most sense for me. In general, I feel like being on a sports team, we kind of act as a pod anyways, we practice together. And so, but as a men's and women's team it's definitely a bit tricky because you still want to like keep the numbers down you don't necessarily want to hang out with all 40 of us but I found a lot of activities I'll do with my friends end up being driving to Thayer Street and eating takeout food in the car. It's, it looks different but you just have to I guess adapt to it. But I definitely miss just, I don't know, visit, like walking back from studying and knocking on their door and hanging out or going to see a movie in their room or something.

Sarah Heavren 29:47

Do you think the pandemic has affected your mental or physical health or well being at all?

Abbey Wheeler 29:57

I think definitely, I've been challenged mentally, almost like cyclically. And this time, I'll find like some periods where I'll be in a group of things. And I'll be feeling productive and just going along with the flow. And other times, it just gets really depressing. I think, especially if you look on like, not even about, like restriction what I can and can't do. But like, it kind of just makes you lose faith in humanity not to be dramatic. But when you look at some scenarios, it's hard to not think of what ifs and you just look at other countries who have been in the same scenario as us. And it's hard to say, like, I don't use get a little jealous, and you're like, what, what could we have done to be in their spot? Or what could we have done? So I could be hanging out with my friends now. And so and aside from that, it's just, it's hard. It's hard, like, for me personally, to get out of like, and I've been working on it, but you get into like, almost like victim mentality, where you think like, why me like I had all these friends that were able to enjoy their senior years. Like on the track team, I've had a lot of friends that graduated a few years ago. And I'm like, I wish I got to experience my last years like them, like, it's something that like everybody would take for granted. Or you just yeah, you get a lot of why me and I guess you just have to like, kind of step back. And then a lot of days, you realize, like, I am lucky, my my family is safe, they're not sick. And it's kind of also just a shared thing. Like, in a way, it's also nice, it gives you faith in humanity also, because you're like, everybody kind of has to come together. And everyone has to work together. And we're all in this together. And we're going to suffer together, prosper together. And I guess we just have to choose. And we've chose suffering for a while. But part of me thinks that there's got to be a turning point.

Sarah Heavren 31:56

Have you discovered any new hobbies or pursued any new interests?

Abbey Wheeler 32:02

I have, when I was in the Utah with my sister. Like, initially, I stayed there for about maybe two months or so. she would go to work. And I would be there in the apartment alone. So I, I like to walk a lot, I got used to just walking more. I got into hiking on like the most amateur level ever. And I got into photography, because I was in just a new space. And like, I really just grew to appreciate nature more. And then, when I was in Providence this summer, I got into knitting a little bit. And I think I just tried to do things that made me feel productive, and just try a bunch of stuff I like would listen to a lot of podcasts. And I'd be walking around and like, just find ways where I could keep a positive mentality.

Sarah Heavren 33:04

What aspects of PC life do you miss the most?

Abbey Wheeler 33:11

Ray Dining Hall. A lot of people would probably snub their nose at it. But I think it's one of the most underrated things on this campus. Because I think a lot of my friendships that I've made in life have been at those dining hall tables, like there's no better way than sitting at dinner with your friends. And everybody just ends up staying for like three hours because the conversation is so good. And you can just walk up and grab more food and have some ice cream. And it's always a good time. And yeah, I guess just like at PC like the people are the best. That's why you want to stay. You love the social hour and I'm a social person. Living alone is fine. But living alone was fine when I had my agencies to come about and meet people. But it feels like that little piece has been stripped a little for me. It's, it's a bit of a challenge.

Sarah Heavren 34:07

It's really funny because Tom said pretty much the same thing.

Abbey Wheeler 34:12

It's true. It's so underrated.

Sarah Heavren 34:16

Yeah, I remember seeing, like, yeah, all the track and cross country people, like I would see Tom in Ray all the time. Like, he'd be there and he'd be there when I left.

Abbey Wheeler 34:28

I'd be there for like six hours a day probably because I would spend possibly three hours there for dinner. maybe an hour and a half for like lunch like I spent all my time there and I don't regret it because like you get to know people so well over food. That's the easiest way to hang out. It's the most casual thing, like anything else, like we're on the track team like we can't possibly be big partiers. I'm not hanging out with you like, I don't know, over like 20 beers on a Friday night. So I'm going to hang out with you over some not super high quality food. And it's, it makes it taste better.

Sarah Heavren 35:07

What are the things that have kept you grounded? Has it been your friends or family, certain activities like running?

Abbey Wheeler 35:17

Yeah, I think, I think running as much as it's become a stressor, it also has been what's kept me grounded. And a lot of this, especially when things first started, like, I just loved to go outside. And it just felt good to be active because you just, you lose touch with the routine, like when all the day starts to feel the same, it like gets really sad. And I think running gives you a big kind of break up in the day. And like, I don't know, nothing wrong with endorphins. Definitely friends as well. Like, I've like gotten closer with like, certain friends definitely during this time, because you really just realize that good conversation is all you need, like, at the end of the day, I suppose. Like, we'd love to do all those fun activities. But I mean, really, we're just doing those activities to hang out. So as long as we can hang out in some aspect, that's, that's all you can ask for.

Sarah Heavren 36:17

What are your future plans, and if at all, how has the pandemic influenced them?

Abbey Wheeler 36:26

My future plans after this year, I'm looking to try to find a professional running club to join. The pandemic definitely affected that in the terms of I was, I couldn't go to that indoor track national race, and I couldn't race over the summer, or in the outdoor season. And during those times, it definitely helps if you can start building a resume for yourself. I kind of like started the quarantine in like the best possible shape I've ever been in my life. So I was really excited to try and test the limits and like, achieve, like, things I hadn't before. And so since I didn't get an opportunity to do those things, I mean, who knows if I would have or if I wouldn't, but it definitely makes now what I'm doing even more important. And it's giving me less opportunities in the sense where beforehand like with running, everybody would gather at the BU track, people come from all over the country. And now people can't travel like that. So you might be in a meet with just not be able to like experience like as top of competition as before, which might affect how, like this, this resume that you're building up. But all in all, I think it's it's, it's helped a little in the way too where the pandemic has kind of just thrown everybody in like a sense of like, we don't know what's going on or when this will stop or I'm not sure. And that's kind of how I'm ending my second senior year, has kind of made me a little more comfortable with that of the I'm-not-sure because at the end of the day, especially like with running like you don't know what your opportunities may be or what you can do until, until things happen. So I've gotten just more okay with not knowing maybe where in the country I'll be or who I'll be with until June, I might not know, and maybe I won't know until July. But that's okay.

Sarah Heavren 38:35

And so there's been, you know, news about the vaccine being distributed and everything. So are you hopeful that things might get back to some sense of normal in the kind of near future?

Abbey Wheeler 38:50

I definitely am hopeful. As somebody who majors in science, I do have, like, a lot of faith in people that, especially people in medicine, and um, yeah, so I'm hoping that that'll just ground things and things will be distributed. And I don't know, I just feel like after like such dark times, like there's, there's got to be light somewhere. And I feel like people will come together for that. And I don't know, I hope PC buys the vaccine. I wouldn't mind getting it myself.

Sarah Heavren 39:28

Is there anything else you would like to talk about that we have not covered? Do you have any words of advice or positive messages?

Abbey Wheeler 39:37

Positive? Can't be negative? I'm just joking. Yeah, I don't know. I just feel like, like the most important thing I've learned from this entire time is just like, it's just been such like a duality and everything where like, one day it'll feel like literally the world is crumbling and like there's no good in anyone or anything. And then the next day like, you just appreciate everything that you've neglected to before. I think it's kind of beautiful in the sense where people like really end up strengthening relationships and forming relationships that they wouldn't have before. Like the pandemic did have a way of really slowing time down and making people reevaluate what their priorities are. So in a way is it's, not saying it's a good thing. There are good things that came from it, though, but definitely through all that mess like there are lessons to learn. So I think everybody will have experienced some growth, or if not growth, probably some terrifying like, change, but I don't know, we're definitely all coming out of this different than before. And I hope everyone can walk out of it a little better than before, maybe.

Sarah Heavren 40:51

Thank you, Abbey, for sharing your story.

Abbey Wheeler 40:57

Sarah, I really hope this is the kind of interview where people take chunks because as somebody that as like an amateur athlete has been like interviewed by my, like, local newspapers once in a while, I'm always like, I'm going to spit 90% nonsense. And if you could just piece together any sentence that makes sense, that'd be great. So I'm sorry that I'm not a great speaker. And I probably don't sound as profound as Tom. I'm glad that we have similar answer about the dining hall.

Sarah Heavren 41:28

There you go.

Abbey Wheeler 41:31

I was just going to say, I feel like you're definitely going to get skewed results because there's no way that you hang out with or know people that are going to have the other result and I would love for you to go knock on some Eaton street door and be like, how is your experience and they're going to be like, flights to Miami were so cheap, Sarah, and I feel like you just need that. I was debating giving you some of that.

Sarah Heavren 41:59

All right, well on that note. This has been Abbey Wheeler sharing her pandemic experience.

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