

William & Mary Law School

William & Mary Law School Scholarship Repository

Law School Personal Reflections on COVID-19

Law School Experiences of the COVID-19
Pandemic

Fall 2020

Julian Miller '23: Reflections on the Fall 2020 Semester

Julian Miller

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/covidwriting>



Part of the [Legal Education Commons](#), and the [Virus Diseases Commons](#)

Copyright c 2020 by the authors. This article is brought to you by the William & Mary Law School Scholarship Repository.

<https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/covidwriting>



Julian Miller '23

Reflections on the Fall 2020 Semester

Coming to William & Mary ended up being the best choice I could've ever made for my legal journey. The sense of community at this school has been strong among the students even though my whole 1L year will be on Zoom. I was able to find community through organizations on campus, but also through my section and doctrinal classmates. I know that my experience wasn't exactly how it could've been without the pandemic, and I wasn't able to experience things as simple as in-person classes; however I am happy with the effort that was put in by William & Mary instructors and students to make the best out of the situation we'd been dealt.

Throughout orientation week I was told that this school was self-selecting in the way that it attracted students and faculty who really appreciated working together rather than creating an environment where everyone is seen as competition. By the end of my first semester I had seen that statement come to light a number of times. I have been able to rely on 2Ls and 3Ls for tips and advice that have made this journey and some of the stress that comes along with it so much easier. Not only have they made this experience easier, but also they whole-heartedly wanted me to succeed at each step and were happy to give me their tips and tricks on how to get a handle on 1L.

Early on, as I was one of only six black students in my class, I felt that I might have a difficult time meeting people who had similar interests and experiences. I ended up having no problem meeting people who were incredible, smart, and understanding. I do still believe (as presented by the demographics of our student body and individual classes) William & Mary is horribly lacking in the department of a racially diverse student body. With that in mind, student organizations such as BLSA helped me meet incredible people who were able to show me the ropes and give me a helping hand whenever it was needed. By the time my first semester ended I had met multiple people who I could call my friends and lean on for help and support.

Even beyond my experiences with other students, I actually felt connected to the instructors. Professors were able to keep classes engaged and reached out to the students for feedback on their lessons on multiple occasions. The professors created an environment in which I was happy to learn and struggle with the subject matter in order to truly grasp what I had been reading. I certainly struggled over course material throughout the semester, and what helped me was going to office hours or TA office hours. My specific instructors and TA's were happy to help me get through any rough patches I encountered while studying, and it made learning the

information easier. Some professors even created certain socially distanced events where we could get to know them better because of the pandemic. This had nothing to do with coursework, but was a great way by the professors to keep the sense of community that attracted so many of us to William & Mary. I know the 1Ls as a whole truly appreciated those opportunities.

For the spring semester and beyond I am hoping that I am able to take what I learned this semester and apply it to next semester in order to create a routine that best supports learning through Zoom. I am also hoping that, in due time and with the proper precautions, we will be able to learn in person. The sense of community that I have felt from William & Mary students and faculty, even throughout a pandemic, has been incredible and I am extremely grateful for the opportunities and skills I have already gained from my first semester in law school.