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### Having to Say Goodbye: Recent Carleton Graduate's Reflections

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Carleton Senior Class of 2020

May 9th, 2020

“In some ways it’s been a good thing, spending this time that we normally wouldn’t have got to spend together all under one roof. I think in some ways that’s been really fun. We’ve been playing a lot of card games...or [I’ve been] playing video games with my brothers. Our family has started an email chain in which people check in every week and talk about their experiences. I have family in Oregon and family in New York, so seeing [hearing about] those three different experiences has been really interesting. In some ways, it’s been really hard because there...is underlying family tension that has now precipitated due to being in such close proximity and having to deal with all those issues again that have been kind of long term. I think it’s also been difficult...[because] some of my family has problems with addiction and depression and [I’ve been] seeing that kind of play out and disrupt family dynamics again. For friends and people in my community, everyone has been going out and walking and everyone waves or nods, respecting that distance, but trying to stay social. I think for friends it’s made it really interesting to see how we can stay in contact, whether that is finding creative ways to play board games online, me and my friends found a way to do Code Names with a monitor and teams sharing across or women’s Wednesday nights\*”

\*the Carleton women’s swim and dive team meets via Zoom every Wednesday night

Question: “How has the pandemic changed your hopes for your senior year? What do you miss about Carleton?”

Response: “At first, it was really upsetting and really heartbreaking to have this be our final term when none of us knew...Now, I’ve had enough time to process it and knowing that this last term [spring term] what I thought it was going to be wasn’t everything. You know, I can look back at the three and six-seventh years that I spent at Carleton and still have all of those memories. I think I’m now at a place where it’s okay, I’m not resentful at anyone. But for a while, in the beginning, I think a lot of us were really angry and didn’t know who to be angry at because I think a lot of people had expectations for spring term being a lot of fun...We had all planned our schedules to take a light term so that way we would still enjoy academics and we planned to take a lot of classes with my friends...We knew that we had blocked off that term to spend time with each other, and now, looking back on it, I realized maybe we shouldn’t have done that...We should have just made time in the moment...The major lesson that I’m taking [away] is to enjoy the present that you have with everyone around you. Looking back on it, I think that’s the one thing I wish we would have done more. But in the last week [of winter term], we kind of all knew, all the seniors knew we’re not coming back. We have to prepare for reality. So, we did say a lot of goodbyes, and in the final week many of us, including myself, did not really study for

finals, and kind of put that off and hung out with friends and tried to see as many people as we could to spend time and enjoy those last few days. I think I am eternally grateful for that last week because some of my other friends from other schools were on spring break when they were told that they couldn't return, and I think that would have been worse. At least we had that chance to say goodbye... I mean once we knew for the first five weeks [that we would be online] we just planned that we weren't coming back at all. So, I think that has been different. Well, now that we're leaning more forward, in more schools there's been rumors that fall term will be online. I was talking to \_\_\_\_ [friends] last night and all of us were saying 'you know we're glad we got out when we did' (laughter)...Coming in as a freshman to online classes, making all those friends, I think the first term of college is so important...and gets you kind of settled in that transition. And so I just don't know how that will be [how it will work] online for people if that comes to pass. So, I think all of us are like I would rather lose this term and be done than come back in the fall like that."