

Miller Boyd

Colleges across the United States have closed campuses in March and are continuing classes online in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, leaving students with limited time to move out.

Two students currently studying at Duke University spent their spring break camping in Utah with an organized group. Without their access to the outside world, the group was unaware of the changes occurring until the end of their trip, when they saw their emails and messages from family about Duke's plan to shut down campus.

"It was really overwhelming because we were being told that we weren't able to go back to school and we had only packed things for the week" said Jemma Frost, a Robertson Scholar studying at Duke for the semester. "Although I grabbed a bunch of stuff from my dorm, I left a ton of stuff, and I don't know when I'll be able to go back and get it. Will it be August when I go get my stuff? Are they going to put it in storage or will they ship it to me?"

Her fellow Robertson Scholar was able to pack all of his belongings as he is an in-state student but had only a day to do so.

"Pretty much my entire life is my dorm," said Aaron Williams, a sophomore Robertson Scholar. "We got back from the airport at 10 p.m., we stayed up packing until 2 a.m., and the next day my step-dad came and got my stuff at 8 a.m. It was just horrible."

At other schools, students were informed that they would need to leave campus within a week while classes were still being held. Many students upon arriving home to their families fell ill and tested positive for coronavirus, including Lauren Huff.

“That week was our midterms, so we were all trying to simultaneously make plans to go home, pack up our dorm rooms, deal with the sadness of leaving, as well as study for and pass our midterms,” said Lauren Huff, a student in the Woodrow Wilson school at Princeton University. “As all of this was happening, faculty, staff and students began testing positive for coronavirus.”

Students are being sent home from study abroad programs as the CDC releases new travel warnings. Upon their return home, they are asked to quarantine for 14 days.

“Every day more and more of our friends were being sent home,” said Anna Mesibov, a sophomore at The University of Southern California enrolled in a New Zealand study abroad program. “One day we woke up to an email that where we were was reaching level 3 and that we were being sent home. I booked a flight, and I left the day that New Zealand went on lockdown.”

One out-of-state student attending The University of North Carolina is unable to retrieve her belongings after returning home for spring break.

“By the time that I figured out that I had to get my things, my parents couldn’t leave with me because my dad is a doctor and I wasn’t allowed to travel,” said Eleanor Christianson, a freshman at UNC studying nutrition. “I still have 90% of my belongings in my dorm, and I don’t know when I will be able to get them.”