Manizales, Colombia May 2021!

This semester, I have been mentally prepping to live in Valparaiso, Chile for 6 weeks in May 2020. February comes around and I get word that my program is moving to Manizales, Colombia due to unpredictable social and political situations in Chile. Shortly after this, in-person classes abruptly come to an end two months early…

I remember I was on a beautiful walking after lunch having a conversation about the pandemic. I felt my phone vibrating, receiving way more notifications than I was used to. My phone lock screen was full of incoming emails from Pitt, texts from my current roommate, texts from girls I am in a fellowship with, and texts from my parents. I remember sitting down reading the text from my roommate first; it said something like, “OUR LIVES, OUR TRIPS, Nooooooo…”, and this confused me. Then I read the messages from the girls in the fellowship. They were talking about how we will finish our project, what our advisor was going to do, etc. At this point, I decided to read through the email that Pitt sent out about canceling in person classes for the rest of the semester. This all happened on Tuesday of spring break…from this day on everything moved so quickly. It was very surreal.

For the last three weeks, since that Tuesday of spring break, my email inbox has been blowing up. Professors updating students on lecture style, notifying students of assignments still due, updated syllabus’, and unfortunate news for all students who were planning to study abroad in the summer. “All Pitt Study Abroad Programs for the summer of 2020 are officially cancelled.”, the email highlighted. I had thoughts of the coronavirus causing my Colombia trip to be cancelled, but I didn’t actually think this thought would become true.

I spent so much time studying Spanish, learning the grammar, and all the vocabulary related to technology and sustainability, but now I was not even going to Colombia. I was disappointed that I would not be able to put my language fluency to the test. I want to acknowledge the disappointed that many seniors have been facing as this summer was their last chance in undergrad to study abroad, but they opportunity was ripped away by a