

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Welcome again to another edition of Let's Talk Ed with Professor Chris.

I guess today we're doing international week.

I do have a great student here with me today, Mr. David and we're gonna be talking about his experiences as a college student. Maybe in the US since we're talking internationals?

So, we'll get information here. Stay tuned, and if you haven't subscribed yet, please, please again, please do subscribe.

Okay. Hi David.

DAVID: Hello.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: How are you doing?

DAVID: Doing well.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Thank you. Thank you for coming.

So we're gonna start a little bit about talking about ourselves and maybe I'll background a little bit.

Sorry, where are you from originally?

DAVID: Ahh well, it's hard for me to answer that because I was actually born in the US, here.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

DAVID: But when I was born, I didn't stay here for very long. And so actually moved around quite a bit. So, originally I went to Taiwan, then lived in Guatemala for about seven years and finally going back to the US.

So around the Pacific region.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

DAVID: So yeah, so my parents are from Taiwan and China, so mostly Taiwan when people ask us, we say, Taiwan.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay, so you are more international than myself or maybe let me see if I can challenge you a little bit.

So I was born in Germany, but I grew up in Ghana.

DAVID: Oh.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Ghana West Africa. That's where I grew up and do have family in England, but I didn't really live in England.

I just visited England, so I have that little connection there and then to the US, so.

DAVID: Okay.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So that's some like, okay, so you are an American, Taiwanese, Guatemalan.

Okay, I'm a German, African. Okay, right. That's the International as it gets, so that's good. That's very good.

So, let's get right into your experience here in the US so far as school goes.

So you did you use that high school here in the US or just college?

DAVID: Actually, started as middle school.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Oh, Okay.

DAVID: Yeah, so, so I ended my fifth grade in Guatemala and then went straight into the 6th grade. Actually, I start in the middle of the year in 6th grade, so for 6th grade I think I only have half a semester compared to a regular student and then from then on I just went to high school and then work and then college.

Not a traditional way.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right. No, that's interesting. That's interesting.

So you actually had opportunity, you know, to go to school here together, some fundamental basics in terms of oh you know you were not too surprised like most international students were like oh wow, this is the US, where do I start?

You actually have that fundamental background.

DAVID: Right.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So that's good.

Let's fast-forward to college. Like when you finish high school and you were working and we're going to college. What was your motivation? What, your parents say, you have to go to college. Is that...

DAVID: No, actually I started work and then after a couple years of work, actually more than a couple years probably ten years, ten to 15 years, and then I decided, I do want to start college. It is not something that my parents pushed, it is mainly my decision right there.

Uh, I did what I do want to start something new. Something I was interested in.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

DAVID: I knew the right after col... right after high school, sorry... usually some students are not, they don't know what they want to do.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Correct.

DAVID: Yes. So, that's why I started work first, and gained work experience and some time for me to figure out what I wanted to do. And then once I figure it out and then I started college.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: That is very good. I like that you took that opportunity because that's I'm gonna focus on that a little bit.

DAVID: Okay.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: One of the first interviews we did was the question was college or no college and the reason I actually wanted us to discuss that was because a lot of students are asking that question right after high school. Do I want to go to college, you know? And I've always, I don't think I had an option. It was like high school, go to college, right?

DAVID: Right.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: But I think now it's a very, very good point that you mentioned. My only fear is when students have that option, college or high school and they don't go they find some work to do and it's paying them some money.

That money might not be good enough, but it says they feel like they getting money that they forget completely about college.

DAVID: Right.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: But I also know, and I'm sure you know as well, that college is really the next step to really developing what you want to do.

DAVID: Right.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So tell me a little bit about when you left high school. What, first what were you doing and how did that help you decide to actually go to college?

DAVID: Well, let me start with the high school part...

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: ...because I know that in high school they you like two different tracks.

One is if you want to go to the workplace right after high school or if you want to college you get a college track.

I actually was in the college track in high school, so I did everything on the subjects that they require and everything, but just after graduating I decided, you know, I'm, I want to get some experience first.

I don't know what I want to do in college either, so I started working actually for someone who was introduced to us at work at an independent garage.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

DAVID: That's a mechanic.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yeah.

DAVID: Now, I'll be serious. I didn't know anything about cars back then. But, you learn as you go, too.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right.

DAVID: So, I work him for a couple of years, 10 years, 15 years. Uh, the pay was Okay. But eventually I decided that I want to do something more.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right.

DAVID: Uh, there was that motivation for me that I wanted to, maybe, get a better job, a higher pay. Those were motivations for me.

And, I knew that if I wanted the job that I wanted, I needed actual college degree to do that.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Alright, that's actually what I'm closing on because, very good... I didn't even know we were gonna go there, but that was very good.

Now, let's talk about, since you've gone to work and then you go to college, what was some of the challenges you faced?

DAVID: Oh, well, first. I've been at work for a long time.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right.

DAVID: So, the culture of school and doing homework, it's been a long time. So, I had to get motivated again to do the schoolwork and all that.

But it for me it was actually a little bit easier because I actually enjoyed doing that in high school, which is a rarity for some students.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yeah.

DAVID: So getting used to that again, uh, it was a challenge.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay, right. So that's I definitely, you know, we'll go back and talk about the college, no college. Taking time off. Trying to find what it is that you want to do, and then you know before you go to college.

So, in college, how did your friends, professors, or vice versa, you... did you see yourself as fitting in terms of culturally, like your background. Did you think people look at you differently because they didn't think you were an American, even though, like I said, you know, if you didn't tell me, you actually born here, you know, I'd be like oh, he's from Taiwan, you know?

That's, so he's very international, but that's good to know.

In college did you face, do you think people either perceived you differently because of your background? Was that part of a challenge that you went through in college?

DAVID: Uh, there is always some of that.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

DAVID: Uh, that people perceive you a little bit different.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right.

DAVID: Now for me especially, I'm older than a lot of the students having been in industry for over a decade already.

But as far as fitting in, I've really never really took issue with that.

For me of working together with people with different ages, especially in community college where you have more diverse type of people.

So for me, I didn't really have an issue with that.

As far as perception and race, racial perception and general perception, I didn't really take that as a challenge or issue.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: No, that's good.

So, let's talk about when you worked in industry, you had some idea you're like, Okay, I definitely wanna go to college. How do you decide on, and you could have gone straight to a four-year school, right?

Actually, let's start from what are you studying right now? What are you studying?

DAVID: I am studying aerospace engineering.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Engineering.

Okay, so I intentionally asked that question because I want to backtrack now.

So, when you were in the industry, what made you think, Okay, now that I've got some experience, aerospace engineering is what I want to do.

DAVID: It was something that was interesting in that when I was younger, I mean, I'll be honest, my parents did push me a little bit on what subject I wanted to do.

But if you talk with some the Asian parents, you will see that a lot of parents, they want you can do either going to medical field. That's the biggest thing. So yeah.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: We just talked about that, right?

My area is you gotta be an engineer. You gotta be a lawyer or you gotta be a doctor.

DAVID: Ah, but my parent was, especially my father, he was stricter. He was like because he was a doctor.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

DAVID: And he was like, medical field.

Nothing else, right. But engineering, especially aerospace part. It was something that was interesting when I was little.

So, I could go to medical, but I was like, if I wanted to do something I might as well do something that I'm interested in.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right.

DAVID: Rather than something that is pushed onto me.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Then, the next question is now you decided aerospace. How do you think of, let me start with the community college before I transfer?

DAVID: Yeah. Well, the main thing for that was financial. It was much cheaper for me to go through a community college, do my first two years, getting my associates and then transfer to State.

Uh, now some students want to go straight to a four-year, that is fine. Because for them I think a lot of the thinking is if you are in the first year of your college and then you progress through the years and would much easier because you already know the culture of that school and all that's much easier to progress. Uh, that which is fine, that is one option.

But that's not the only option, right?

So you can always go to community college, get your two-years degree. Umm, for my case when I was here they were saying, do engineering and an associates. So I did both.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right.

DAVID: Yeah, and then go to a four-year. Now the transition part, the college did help me.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

DAVID: Community college did help me on the transition to four-year.

As far as the subjects taken, there is a little bit of catch up. When you go from a community college to four-year, but that is to be expected.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay, Okay, Now, this is... So how far are you into your program right now, In aerospace?

DAVID: I am actually doing my second semester of Master's degree.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay. Wow. Wow, that's very impressive because I remember I think when I just started here, Mr. Michael introduced you to me and it's like, I mean, you know, he loves you. We've got your pictures all over the place. You're like you're like a celebrity now.

So you know that's that's great.

But you know, I mean, I'm going to stand here very quickly to say this. I didn't say it, David said it. Start from a community college. He did mention finance. Great. The other component for that for me is a smaller sizes.

Okay, when you start this whole process, whatever carrier is, you start it from the community college. The finances is definitely there, but also the smaller sizes. So when you transition, right, it makes it easier.

So, I'm talking as I'm close by, just kind of want to bring that point before I forget then come back to you.

What are the opportunities for aerospace now that you're... have you started looking at opportunities for aerospace as you're getting closer to the program, finishing the program?

DAVID: Yes, there is always again the option of going into industry or if you want to do research. Uh, which area leaning to right now is going into industry.

But there's always the research industry, too. So, it's never a just one straight line to something, there's always branches to different options.

Umm, what I wanted to do is... whatever opportunity comes to me...

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right.

DAVID: So, I'm interested in both area because there's an area in space.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

DAVID: There is an area in aerodynamics. Okay, right.

Which area? Right now, I'm more focused in with the aerodynamics area.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

DAVID: So, what I'm doing right now is the computational size of aerodynamics. Which means that, you know in engineering, it's never just one side. Everything just comes together.

You get the computational area, so for computer science, a little bit of that, then you get the electrical engineering. But electrical science, it all comes together a little bit. It's never just one thing.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yes. Right.

DAVID: Which for engineering it's mainly a collaborative subject.



O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: No, that's good. That's good.

So, you know, I started off this interview and I was trying to find exactly what angle we we're gonna go in and you've shared, you've really inspired me. You know, you've shared more than I thought we were gonna, and you know, so that's great.

That's that's very great.

Before I wrap up though, you know, again, congratulations on all that you're doing. You know, I really admire the path that you took specifically, you know, after spending all this much time in an industry, but then saying, you know what, I need to go college. I have to go to college.

Yeah. Are your parents happy with the aerospace? Even though you didn't go to medicine.

DAVID: I mean yes, they're happy.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

DAVID: As you know, for them, as long as I know what I want to do and I can be successful with it and then they're happy with it.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: I think that's very, very important. You know, I ask that question, because many, many at times, and Sarah and I waited just talking about that. Our parents have this tradition of either... what they are, and so we have to become that. Or, you know, when we pick a track, they don't see how it's going to benefit or they don't know if it's gonna pay us or even if we can make a living out of that.

So I'm very happy that we actually have had this open, open discussion, open discussion here.

So well, that is that is really that is really it. Thanks for the opportunity to do this interview.

But in closing again, I wanna thank David for coming in here, with actually answered the question that with everything we're gonna be asking here one more time... college or no college?

I like his track or his stages in which he got to where he is right now. Taking some time off right after high school to kind of see, you know, what he wants to do and what did he do next was to say, you know what? I do wanna go to college. I'm gonna start at a community college.

Finance was his thing, but I said add, the finance are the smaller space, and the smaller

environments. Okay, that's also very big and also most importantly, his parents support for what he wants to do, I think is also very good.

So, thanks again for tuning into Let's Talk Ed With Professor Chris. Please do subscribe, and if you have any questions anyone that I have interviewed, please let me know.

Stay tuned.

David, that was great.

DAVID: Thank you. Thank you.