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Sustain Interview Project

██████ (M) interviewed by ██████ (G)

Interviewed on 4/16/13

G: Ok, we're rolling. ██████. Our friend ██████. Tell me everything. So, you heard me saying what the question is but basically, what happened to you after your experience in Sustain? Anything like that.

M: Ok. Um, Sustain, I'm not really good at intrinsically motivating myself which is why Sustain was hard for me. Um. I'm especially not good at intrinsically motivating myself when it comes to doing something I don't like. Like physics. (██████ laughs).

G: The word physics just makes me laugh. I'm that way.

M: No, it makes me laugh too. Out of fear. I had a nightmare actually that I was in physics again, it was so bad--

G: I'm so sorry (laughing).

M: I woke up and I was like, I don't have a physics final, right? I had to like double check. Um, so anyways I wasn't very good at intrinsically motivating myself freshman year, probably zero. I never really studied in high school so I was never intrinsically motivated in high school at all so um came here, it was hard. It was a really hard adjustment for me. All last year was. I hung out with the wrong people fall quarter and just like didn't do enough stuff and I didn't feel like I was really finding who I was. And then I joined Sustain and I made all these new friends and all these new people who do know how to intrinsically motivate themselves and do care about learning and can even intrinsically motivate themselves with physics. And, which is very impressive I thought. And so, it really, they all do things outside of Sustain also which I was like, wow you can do more than one volunteer activity? It doesn't stress you out? So, anyways and then I didn't really quite realize this until I came back to school maybe half way through fall quarter of this year is that, I realized that now I've learned how to intrinsically motivate myself more. I really now more care about my grades I guess is what I would say than I did freshman year and I realize that I can motivate myself to get good grades doing homework that's not suggested problems. Really reading, taking notes, and really caring about how much I'm learning and really liking what I'm learning. And I realize I like it when I'm good at it and I'm good at it when I study. So that really helps me I think. And I also do a lot of volunteer activities now. And I'm really busy. Today it's from 8-10pm. Like 8am till 10pm today is my day---

G: Woououow.

M: Um, it's really fun. Actually, I really like it when I'm busy. I find that I manage my time more well. Which is what I found out in Sustain also. I'm the, I'm not, I guess I would say I'm not the project manager, um, in any of my clubs now which is something I really liked about Sustain is that I was able to be a project manager.

G: Did you say you are or are not?

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M: Are not. No. I mean I'm doing QL Plus club, the biomedical club with ██████████ and ██████████. And ██████████ is the president and ██████████ is treasurer and I'm VP of communications, which I really like. I really like sending out emails and talking to people and doing like PR I guess, I don't really know--

G: Yep!

M: Maybe a broad definition of PR. But I really like that, I'm good at it so it's fun. And I'm also teaching with Sprout Up who ██████████ is the lead of that. And I'm lead instructor this quarter, a little nerve racking. But I'm teaching two second grade classrooms.

G: Wooow.

M: It's so much fun. Yeah. And then I'm doing Sustain like I was a TA last quarter but um its not as a conjoined group I guess I would say as we were. I think there's a certain sense of responsibility that comes with being a pilot group versus the second pilot group. So. They don't seem to have a lot of direction in their project and there wasn't much I could give them because I was an outsider so the things I would say they would take but you can't always listen to someone who doesn't really know what's going on. So.

G: Yeah. Tell me what you think, I'm curious to know what um, do you have any thoughts about why you weren't motivated intrinsically before you know you said in high school and as you arrived. What do you think that was about?

M: Right. It was never required. I never um, school was really easy for me and if I took AP classes I never had to study, never studied for finals--

G: Even AP classes?

M: Yeah.

G: Wow, ██████████.

M: I never had to do homework or I don't know its just, the way I had been taught is homework is due, turn it in. And if you didn't turn it in you wouldn't get a good grade. So you would do the homework, you would make it up, cliff notes, you know like--

G: You would make it up like? Create it, you mean? Fictionalize?

M: Yeah. Like if it was answers you would just look for the answer in the back of the book or something like that.

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G: Ok.

M: So, high school was really easy for me. Even though I took college classes at the community college during high school it was still just memorize this and you'll be totally fine. And I took a nutrition class and a philosophy class and they both were, I don't know, didn't require much internal direction. It was all pretty much handed out on a piece of paper.

G: What did you mean you got in with the wrong people?

M: Um, a lot of my friends from fall quarter got kicked out of Cal Poly freshman year--

G: Oh, wow.

M: They were just kind of my neighbors next door, people around me. They smoked a lot of weed, drank--

G: Got it.

M: Did a lot of drugs.

G: Ok.

M: So, not good influences, they all were not chemistry majors, I mean not to be all uppity or anything but it's a hard major. I would take a lot of math and physics. Chemistry is not easy. I'm not very good at chemistry classes--

G: Is it your major?

M: Yeah. I'm really good at math. Math is my thing.

G: Ok.

M: Chemistry is halfway my thing you know what I mean? So--

G: How did you choose that?

M: My older sister was biochemistry major and chemistry is what I was really good at in high school. And I TA-ed for a chemistry class in high school and it was really fun and--

G: Did you do more, I'm sorry go ahead.

M: Ok, I like knowing what happens with small stuff and not always, I like knowing what other people don't know. And no one really knows chemistry so that's what I like.

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G: When you studied chemistry in high school did you study that beyond, you know, in a different model than the rest of your classes in?

M: No. It was the exact same.

G: Ok.

M: Yeah. It was just more interesting. And I didn't get bored of it. I got bored of a lot of classes in high school, yeah.

G: Ok. So, um--

M: Oh, and I can't memorize things. Which is, my memory is really, really bad. That's why I don't like biology. That's why I like chemistry because it's proving things. Which requires math, which is not memorization either.

G: Right. Problem solving.

M: Yeah.

G: So that's pretty interesting stuff. What else is on your mind when you look back about it? Back at your Sustain experience, or how you've changed, or if you've changed.

M: I think I've changed a lot. I was really shy. I don't know if you remember this but the beginning of Sustain I was really shy. I didn't say anything and then ██████, I don't know something about ██████ just makes me want to talk to him--

G: Yes. Totally.

M: So, I don't know he boosted my confidence I think and I became more of a vocal person.

G: Wow.

M: Yeah. And now I like to take charge of things. So yeah, good stuff. I don't know, I'm really glad that I did it. It didn't really help my GPA at all, yeah not really, no, but it really helped me as a person, which is more important than a grade. I think. Because it's something, you can get a grade in anything. I think it's pretty arbitrary, I mean, you obviously earn your grade but it's still arbitrary compared to an A at say, like a community college, not also to be degrading but they're a little easier at community college versus here. Like an A here is quite difficult. An A at community college, I mean I got A's and I went to class once a week, so.

G: Yeah. Anything else in terms of your take away or anything you've thought about?

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M: Um, I don't think I would have made it this far if I wasn't in Sustain.

G: Really?

M: Yeah. I don't think I would have had the backing of professors that I feel like I have. Um, yeah I don't know it's always like not I would say a cushion but I would say a support system that I still have even though I'm not in Sustain anymore.

G: That's nifty.

M: It's always nice to be able to walk around campus and be able to say, hello ██████, hello ██████, you know what I mean?

G: Yeah.

M: And your friends are like, you call your professors by their first names? You know them? And I was like, of course I do.

G: Yeah.

M: Yeah, why don't you? (██████ laughs)

G: What do they say?

M: They're like, oh I'd never do that, no. And I was like, really, I call all my professors by their first names even the ones not in Sustain because I feel like people prefer, I don't know if they prefer it or not, sometimes I do.

G: Yeah. How have you described your Sustain experience to your friends or family?

M: They think it's weird. (ginger laughs.) Um, one of my friends he's very kind of harsh. Not always, but. He's one of my best friends. He said, it's such a hippy program, because I said we don't really get assigned grades based on the work we do it's more the amount of effort visible in our work. And we was like, that's bullshit, that's not right. And I was like, no it is right because the amount of work that you put into you getting an A will get you an A and they can see that. Like I didn't put any work into physics and that's reflected into my grade. So I think it's not necessarily like if I put in any amount level of work I better damn straight be getting As. So I don't think it's that bullshit to be assigned grades based on effort. And it wasn't really based on effort but it was more based on passion and drive.

G: Yeah. Did you keep fighting with him or did you walk away?

M: I was like, you don't get it. (██████ laughs.) I'm not a very confrontational person I guess, so if that's what he thinks, that's ok.

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G: Yeah.

M: Um, my other friend, my best friend ██████████, she's my roommate, um she thinks the idea of Sustain is really good but it's not her type of thing. She doesn't do a lot of sustainable things, she's a business major so yeah it doesn't really apply as easily to her I think as it does a science major or an engineer, the concept of sustainability.

G: Yeah, that's interesting. How about relationships?

M: With people in Sustain?

G: Yeah. Or just any impact, just kind of consider that as a category. A football field sized category of things to reflect on. Inside, outside, still, before, whatever.

M: Ok. In it it's really fun. I like being able to have a lot of friends when I walk through campus and you can say hello--

G: And you said some great stuff about this in terms of your relationships with professors, yeah--

M: Yeah, so very similar to that. I like having friends like ██████████ and ██████████, I think they're two great examples of awesome people. ██████████ and I we climbed by Foothill and Highland. That orchard that's up there. We climbed under the barbed wire and picked tons of fruit, like so much fruit. And then we came back down and we like ate it. It was really fun. And then we went on a hunt for the avocado orchards because we wanted some avocados because they would be so good. So then we went on this adventure and it was this really long road that was all the way through the back road through the architecture graveyard. It was the coolest thing and I don't know, someone would have said lets just turn around right now but he was like, no lets go look and see where it goes. Which is something different I think than most people have. Is the amount of curiosity, yeah, and also ██████████'s like, I just know ██████████ a little more than ██████████ because I do more things with ██████████ like the whole QL Plus thing takes up a lot of time so, um. He's also really good at managing his time. Really, really good. And I'm amazed sometimes how he does all of what he does in the short amount of time and he still gets As and Bs. He's a very good model of who to be like. Which is interesting because he's my age, my grade. From almost the same place as I am, weirdly. So it's very interesting to see the difference I think.

G: Yeah.

M: And same with ██████████. She does everything also and manages her time, and yeah, it's amazing how they get these leadership roles really quickly and so such a good job at them. Yeah.

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G: Yeah. It sounds like you're managing your time really differently than you were.

M: Yeah! I definitely think so. I start to-do lists a lot. I have so many! (██████████ laughs) Which helps me. And I just hang out in the library, so, I'm more productive when I'm here than anywhere else.

G: Yeah. Oh, I'm really glad to hear all of it.

M: It's fun. I think seeing the progress from freshman year to now. I think it's huge. Really big.

G: You said you don't think you would have made it.

M: I don't think I would have, no.

G: Why do you say that?

M: Well, I hung out with the wrong people. Freshman fall quarter, so, I think I wouldn't have found Sustain and if I wasn't in Sustain I would have just kept hanging out with them doing delinquent things and not really, I wasn't happy with myself so I wasn't really enjoying it. I really love Cal Poly and the area but I don't think my grades would have let me stay or I don't think my parents would have let me stay.

G: Do they have any thoughts or what's it like to talk to them about your Sustain experience? Your parents.

M: They, they really like it. Yeah. My mom is amazing. She's such a good teacher. She teaches Math to people who haven't passed algebra yet who are students in high school and high school delinquents that kicked out of high school and stuff. So, really tough job but it's really fun talking to her about my teaching with Sprout Up and then also the who intrinsically motivating from Sustain which I think she thinks is really cool. So yeah. She took her, she got her masters in Math education I think and so just listening to the different study tactics that she has and then I'm able to offer insight too, from Sustain. It's pretty cool.

G: That's really cool.

M: My dad, I mean, he's like an accountant. So he doesn't really know anything about intrinsically motivating. (██████████ laughs.) So, yeah. He's intrinsically motivated by April 15th. So, yeah.

G: (laughing) It's somehow in his core, yeah, so I wonder who he is today. The day after tax day.

M: Yeah. He's so happy right now. He works across the street from Chipotle. And

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that's my family's restaurant, we go to Chipotle like everyday when we are home and they know him there because he goes like everyday for an entire month.

G: Oh, wow.

M: So he snapshots me every time he's in Chipotle and they're like what are you doing with your phone? And he's like, oh I'm snapshotting my daughter, she's in SLO and we both like Chipotle, da da da, and now he sends me the workers like saying hi to me and stuff.

G: That's fantastic.

M: I don't know just the relationship with my parents after growing through Sustain. Coming into my own I think is a lot better.

G: Is it?

M: Yeah.

G: What was it like before?

M: Um, my mom is a very tough love person so like, it's very irritating when I was a child. Like my knee dislocates a lot so I've had two knee surgeries and she's like, well the next time your knee dislocates you can just put it back in yourself, right? And I was like, no. No, I'm not sliding my kneecap back into--

G: Ouch (laughing.)

M: Yeah, I'm not doing that. Just like that kind of thing. Like I have allergies also when I go home. And she's like, well you can still go to school, just power through it, which is very irritating but now I have that same philosophy like I don't care if I have allergies I still have to get all this stuff done it won't do itself. Yeah. So we kind of butted heads in high school a lot. Like very teenager.

G: Sure.

M: My dad, he's a softy. He's really, not calm, he's pretty frantic a lot of the times. But he's a very laid back kind of guy. So. Yeah. My relationship has pretty much been the same.

G: Cool. I'm glad to hear from you on all these things.

M: Yeah, it's fun. I like talking about my experience in Sustain because it's so awesome I think.

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■■■■■ (M) interviewed by ■■■■■ (G)

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G: I feel like I've said this to more than one person but it keeps happening. There's such brightness from you--

M: Yeah!

G: You look bright! I don't know what else to say. Or how to describe what I see.

M: I feel so much better and healthier about myself.

G: Everybody's eyeballs look so awake! Yours do surely!

M: I did get up really early (both laugh)

G: Maybe it was the 17 cups of coffee? Yeah.

M: Yeah it might have been the 4 oranges I ate for breakfast.

G: The 4 what?

M: Oranges that I had in class all over my desk. So I don't know, it's really fun to watch myself from that point of view from freshman year to now. I mean it's biased because it's me looking at myself, but I think it's a big change.

G: Yeah. Cool. Thanks girl.