

Spring 4-9-2013

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Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

H: So, --but you heard me say the big picture question really, like—you're looking at me like I'm Barbra Walters. Yeah no. What's happened to you since Sustain? What are your reflections on it now? —anything like that, in that general category.....

K: So I should start talking?

[laughing]

H: You can start talking..ok

K: Um.

[laughing]

H: This is awkward

K: Yeah—pretty awkward...Um—okay, um, I knew what you were going to ask, so you'd think I'd be prepared to say, but no...um, okay

H: No cause it can be a conversation—it's okay. Okay.

K: Um...

H: I genuinely want to know!

K: Like my sustain-related experiences since Sustain or just my life since Sustain?

H: Your life since Sustain . . .So there is the like 'what happened to you? How are you? What have you been doing?' and then ultimately the question is, 'do you see anything connections between that and your sustain—but you can do one thing at a time. What's life been like?

K: I have been really busy for like, forever, so um, I have been, like especially last quarter I tried to take on a million things and then like ended up doing everything like 80%--you know how that happens...

H: Yeah.

K: And so, I don't know, I don't know, but before that, um, espeiall like fall quarter I was really like trying to do like the, keep sustain things in mind in my clases, and I think I did. Um, especially cause none of my classes were history classes in the fall—they were all, like not related to my major, and so I tried to keep things in mind and I don't know—I think it worked. ..My favorite part of sustain was like our relationships with the teachers, and so I've been trying to do that by like going to office hours and stuff

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

H: Office hours of your Sustain teachers or your teachers now?

K: No—yeah, my teachers now—because I think that like was really cool, I think it changes a lot when you have a relationship with your professor cause then it's more than just like teaching, um, and learning—it's more of like a process, and you know like the—cause all professors here care but if you don't—if they don't know your name, they can only care so much, but um, so, yeah, I've been able to do that in my German class cause it's really small. I'm taking like German language and so the class size is really small and there's only one German professor that I've had, so that has been cool, and I've noticed a difference in that class just cause like I have a friendship with him, like more than just class. And that's just—that was my favorite part of sustain. And obviously you can't do that in every class. Like, if it's huge then that's not gonna happen, but—yeah, and then um like my history teachers, I'll go into their office hours and talk to them and um, like I had a history teacher last quarter who's really into—like her thing is German history and so I talk to her about like how I'm gonna study abroad and she has—I'm going to Berlin—and she has--

H: --are you really?

K: Yeah--and she has spent a lot of time in Berlin and she told me, like, where to go and stuff like that. And after that she definitely knew who I was and ... what I was into, so that's cool.

H: What's the Berlin thing about?

K: Um, I'm going to Berlin, in the fall... [laughing] Um, I started taking German this past Fall, and I'm like really bad at it, but I'm trying to learn German so I don't like die when I go there—yeah, I'm going to be there from August to December. And I'm going to one of the universities in Berlin.

H: What made you decide to do it?

K: Um, I've always wanted to study abroad, and for my major we have to take a language, and I took Spanish and like forever, and I was so over it, so I just decided to go for it and take German, and I'm really glad I did cause German history is like my favorite, especially like WWII--

H: --Ooh, fun.

K: Except I took a class last quarter that was um German literature in English translation and it was from-- the class is like "From Bismark to the Bunker," it was called, so it was like everything kind of before World—well, before then end of WWII --and it was super interesting, and we talked a lot about like right before WWI and then in between WWI and WWII. And those, like—especially like Expressionism and everything in the --it just, it's really interesting and a lot of takes place, a lot of the cultural stuff takes place in

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

Berlin, which is on of the reasons I wanna go there—and I've also heard it's a really fun city, like a fun city for young people, so ...I'm young—and fun--

H: You are young. You are.

[laughing]

K: So like that's exciting—but it's also really stressful cause I have a lot that I have to do before then

H: Yeah

K: Yeah—and I also didn't do—like I didn't realize when the application was due so I ended up doing it really late, which was totally stressful—but I got in! so--

H: Good job.

K: It was good. It was like I thought it was due April 1st and they were like, 'This is due march 1st' and it was like February 25th and I was like "oh good"

H: 'Let me just get on that—yeah'

K: Yeah...anyway, that's my main thing from Sustain. Also, um, I think I've tried more to, like, make connections with my classmates because I think before I would just like if I knew someone I would talk to them, and if not I would 'alright, I'll just stay here and look at my phone until class starts' and then, yeah...but I've tried to make connections with people, which is great! Cause then you have someone to study with, and complain with, if you know, stuff like that, um, which has been good.

H: And how is that connected to your Sustain experience, do you feel like?

K: Well, I--like one of the great things about Sustain is that you know everyone in the class and especially by Spring quarter, you have a relationship with everyone in the class, or at least you know them well enough to be friends, and so that changes, that changes a lot because you have people to talk to about the class, people to get help from, or just like someone to ask what the homework is, and um, and it—and then it also helps, I think, with class discussion-- if everyone is friends, then, you will say whatever you actually think, which is, like that's so rare in college classes like us—like in a normal class I might know like one or two people—I might know the faces of some history majors, but that's kind of it, and so, um I think that's great—and especially if you have both—if you know the teacher and you know the class—I have that in my German classes cause not that many students take German so now we're in the third level, we've all had class together, and I think it changes the environment completely—in a good way, which I love, and so—but that happens in Sustain best that I've ever seen it. And it reminds me of, like, high school when you know everyone and you – know like what people are

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

einterested in and what they're studying and stuff like that, which I think, especially for class discussion which I already said it just changes completely—if you're not all just like trying to participate to get your participation grade—you actually like talking to each other, and talking to the professor and, um, building on previous discussions and stuff like that..

H: Do you remember the, um, conversation that we had when um –

[laughing]

--do you know what I'm about to say?

K: I think so, but go on...

H: Was it ██████████?

K: What—who? Are you talking about with ██████████?

H: ██████████—okay—when ██████████ was—boy, I've had them mixed up in my mind that means—when ██████████ was presenting--

K: Yeah—when he was trying to decide what to do for—

H: --Yeah

K: --his, what was it called? 'action thing'

H: Yeah Yeah.

K: Yeah

H: What do you remember about it?

K: --I just remember

H: --Do you know why I'm thinking

K: --I was in a really bad mood

H: Or you were in a bad mood?

[laughing]

K: --and I was super grumpy with him

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

H: See it's interesting because the reason that I brought that up is that you said 'it's so much different

K: Yeah

H: To be friends with people

K: Well, yeah

H: --and when you said 'friends,' though, what popped into my mind was you interacting with him

K: Yeah, I mean, we, ██████████ and I are friends, and I had talked to him about his project before, and I think I was just really pissed off because that was like, we were supposed to know by that day what we were doing, and he didn't know, and I had like spent all this time working on mine and he's like 'help me,' like wanted someone to tell him what to do—and I didn't want that to happen

H: You pushed back at him, though

K: Yeah

H: But you pushed back at him in a way that I couldn't, as the teacher,

K: Yeah—cause we were friends, and we'd hung out and like and I don't know, I think with most of my friends, I do that stuff, I'm just kind of abrupt with people, so it was fine—and he thought it was great cause it helped him figure out

H: --it totally helped him!

K: --his project. Yeah. Yeah, I was thinking about that the other day—that was such a funny thing.

H: It was excellent.

K: Yeah.

H: Yeah

K: Yeah, um, Yeah—and of course if I didn't know him, I wouldn't be able to--that would be so rude—I can't do that. And just—I wouldn't have done it, and he wouldn't have—yeah. So yeah, exactly.

H: What I remember about it is that you didn't let him get away with smoke screening anything

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

K: Yeah

H: So when he asked a question where he didn't take responsibility for it,

K: --yeah

H: --you put it back on him 'no—you have to decide that'

K: Yeah. . . .That was funny.

H: That's a stand-out conversation in my memory.

K: Mine too—I--like when he finally came up with that, I was like, 'I—I rock!'

[laughing]

H: It's really true—I was like, I was 'that was all you—I'm out—that was all you!'

K: It's funny cause I think everyone clapped at the end

H: Yeah! It was great.

K: That's ridiculous—but yeah, exactly that's the kind of thing that can—and then even things like, like not that extreme but just like if someone doesn't know what they want to do for a project, and like I know—I know ██████████ and I know what he's interested in, and I know, like, what the assignment is, like you can't do that if you don't know the person. I mean, you can, like if, when you try to have, like, small group things in other classes, like it works to an extent but, like especially if you're—if the teacher says 'okay, get together and talk about your ideas' then like if you don't know the people you're not going to be like 'wow, that's an awful idea' like you can't do that—you're not—you're gonn be like 'oh yeah—I like that'

H: 'oh—that's interesting'

K: No one every says anything except for like 'oh wow—that sounds great!' or like maybe like 'oorrrrr—you could try—but no—I like your—but' --it's all polite and you can't get anything done that way, and so yeah I think that's cool. And at the same time it's the same if you have a relationship with a professor, like um, my German professor is the one that I took that lit class with--and our final—our final project reminded me a lot of our thing in 145 cause he basically said like 'write whatever you want about what we learned.' And most people were like, 'what?'

H: 'come again?'

K: No—can you please give me the—and so, um, but it was super cool because he was able to, like he had enough of a relationship with us where he could be like, ‘that doesn’t sound that interesting’ or like something like that where, where if it’s a professor that you don’t know that well, then, you wouldn’t—you wouldn’t have that same kind of—but that project was really cool cause I...didn’t really know what I wanted to do? Then I like checked out like 10 books from the library and I was like narrowing it down—and it was great—it was super fun to write, and that, that was, that was awesome because like I wouldn’t have been able to do that without our English 145 experience because—and no one else in the class did stuff like that—they like came up with their thesis and then found research and wrote about something boring

H: So you took 10 books out of the library for your German project?

K: Yeah—for my German project. And I didn’t know what I—I mean I kind of knew what I wanted to write about, um, shell shock, and how just because we watched the silent, the silent film called, ‘The Cabinet of Dr. Kalgari’ and it’s—it’s really interesting—it’s a German silent film that was made right after WWI, and it’s about this man who has a—I don’t know what they call it...it was a German word, I don’t remember what it was—but it was like this, he was like a sleep walker, kind of and he—he was kind of like a zombie and he would wake him up at—and he would take him to like, um, carnivals and stuff and then like wake him up and have him, uh, tell people’s future, sort of, and then he would go back to sleep and then it turns out that throughout the whole movie he’s like, he wakes up during the night and like kills people--

H: --oopsie

K: --he like predicts their death, and then kills them and the Dr. doesn’t know—anyway, it’s this whole thing—and like, it was interesting but no one really understood it, but then we read this article about it that said it was like social commentary about shell shocked people and how like they were sent into WWt--WWI and were doing this like senseless killing and then would come back and just be like, ‘I don’t even know what I—I like don’t know what I did’ and they would have—were shell-shocked where they just like, their like whole mind would just kind of turn off, or their body would turn off and just—anyway, so it was really interesting, that connection, so I ended up writing about the whole culture of the Weimar republic, which was government, the name of the government between WWI and WWII in German and um how, how—we read this book called *Steppenwolf*—I don’t know if you read it, maybe—um, and they had this whole like emergent culture of, like, jazz and a lot of drinking and more open sexuality and stuff like that, that was—never happened before, so I ended up writing about um how like the people who were—just like the normal civilians who didn’t go to war also had a kind of cultural shell shock, because they were like, were completely like helpless and couldn’t do anything but also just shocked by what like the government had done, especially the people who were like intellectuals and artists before, to have like their whole country just turn to war—anyway, I ended up writing something I’m like super interested in...

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

H: It's really interesting!

K: Yeah...and our topic was—

H: --Those connections are cool.

K: Yeah, I really liked that paper. And our topic which was like 'write whatever you want' and I had the skills to do that, whereas most people were like about some random historical thing that wasn't interesting [laughing] ...that's rude... but yeah

H: And you're not in relationship with them, so you didn't tell them

[laughing]

K: Yeah. I didn't—I told—

H: You said, 'yeah—that's great!'

K: One of my friends were in the class...they just were like 'yeah, I wrote it in like an hour—it was fine.' I'm like, 'Well, is that interesting at all?' I spent probably like twenty hours on mine and they're like, 'no, but I finished it.'...yeah.

H: Yeah.

K: Anyway, that's that.

H: Super interesting—to hear what you're studying now.

K: Yeah—and that's like my thing. I'm really into German history, so that class—even though it wasn't a history class was a lot of history along with the literature

H: Do you have other reflections about your sustain experience?

K: Um

H: Good or bad.

K: Well, I really—

H: Good or bad or a third thing, right?

K: I was just not into Cal Poly before Sustain, really—well, before like that time. I—like fall quarter I just really didn't enjoy it here at all.

H: Oh really?

K: Yeah—I don't know. I just wasn't very happy. Really, like I didn't want to leave home and I didn't want to leave my friends and stuff like that, so I just wasn't open to being happy here either and so and my classes were like good, but I didn't have any relationships with professors or like classmates. I kind of did, but not really. And I came from like a really great high school where I was used to having all these relationships. And then like most of my friends went to small liberal arts colleges where they had tiny classes and where they were having the same sorts of experiences that we had in high school and I was just like bitter and not happy. And um I was real—I was seriously considering transferring, so Sustain was great because I like created this network of people who I could take classes with and professors who cared about us and knew my name and everything and that was like exactly what I needed and like, and even, like I think even now that I'm not in Sustain I could find that, which is great. That's why I'm here now. I probably would have transferred if I hadn't found—and I also made really great friends in Sustain and that was—I hadn't made really great friends yet. So Sustain was great—I'm the biggest supported, so...

H: Yeah—and I notice that I said 'do you have anything to say "good" or "bad"—and the interest of my—of the question really not—I mean, I'm super thrilled you had a—

K: --yeah.

H: --that it was a good experience.

K: --I don't really have anything bad to say about Sustain.

H: Yeah yeah no, yeah. And I'm not here to dig that up. I really—I think the overarching question is just wanting to know what has been the impact, so I think everybody left like, 'wow—look at what happened to everybody!' and it was positive

K: --yeah

H: But then there's this question, like, 'well, what did happen?'

K: Okay.

H: What did happen to you all—

K: Um

H: If you can capture any of it...

K: I think there were like a few of us like me who had like really like I could tell—I could see in myself what happened, which I'll talk about in a second. And then I think there's the people who like don't really think they like changed very much. They just like

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

really enjoyed it, and enjoyed making the friends and everything and enjoyed the classes—and that's also, like that's also significant though, because a lot of people don't like school. And so, if people spent two quarters doing something they really liked then that--even if you don't have some like meaningful change, it's still relevant. Like I think ██████████—if she comes—she can talk about it, but she wasn't like super into all the like 'let's talk about this for hours' thing—she just wasn't into that, but she still really like Sustain and like she and I met in Sustain, and she's my best friend now

H: Is she really?

K: Yeah. We, I mean, I'm either like with her or asleep. [laughing] or in class . . . Yeah—yeah so even people who didn't have like a super like 'this is what happened to me—I'm a changed person' still enjoyed, which, like I said, is still significant. But like for me, I like I said, it was it made me want to be here and it created a network of people who I care about and who care about me and who care about me staying at Cal Poly and stuff like that, which I didn't really think I had before. And then also like I had a really great high school experience, which taught me to love learning and love school a lot and so, but I think if I hadn't had that, Sustain would have done that for me. But, I think for me it just kind of reminded me, 'see—you do really love school' and like classes are great and learning is great and like, this is what I love and so since Sustain, I just, I'm really excited about every class I'm in because I love it and I and like I think in fall quarter I was just kind of got in—of last year I got in the mindset of just doing like the minimum of what it would take to get a good grade, and like taking my notes and kind of like zoning out and um, but like in Sustain you're kind of—well, not forced—you're not forced to do anything but it kind of forces you to be engaged and to care about it.

H: What do you think forces you to be engaged? That's interesting.

K: Well,

H: --cause you said 'forced—well, not really forced'—so

K: You don't have to do anything in Sustain, but like all the classes were very discussion based and we would know if someone didn't do the reading, like you know, and you see that they're sitting there not talking and um so you like are held accountable for that but in a good way, like I think that it just like encouraged me to do like put in the extra effort, which I love doing, but sometimes I forget. Especially if like, I don't know—even now if I'm in a really boring class that I'm not interested in it's just hard for me to like motivate. Like I was, I took Healthy Living in the fall, and it was just [laughing] so boring and like no, I didn't do anything in the class

H: I'm only laughing because I don't know what that is.

K: It's a—

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

H: --you just said it like ‘healthy living’

K: Healthy Living—it’s like 200 people and you learn about—it’s like a health class.

H: Like ‘eat fruit’? ... or like...

[laughing]

K: Yeah—it’s like, ‘did you know that if you eat fruits and vegetables you’re healthy?’ and stuff like that.

H: Was it like that?

K: --Yeah. Or like, ‘This is what gives people lung cancer, like stuff like that...’ so if I’m in a class like that—those are the classes that I just don’t do well. Like, everyone’s, ‘oh—that class is an easy “A”’ but I got like a “B” in it because I just like—

H: Interesting.

K: Cause I don’t care at all. But then like my German--

H: --It’s cause you didn’t know that fruit is good for you.

K: Yeah.

H: Sorry—that was sarcasm

K: No—exactly—

H: I apologize . . .

K: There were things like most of the time I just did not do the readings because I didn’t care at all. But then like my German lit class was really hard but I got an “A” in it because I cared about it enough. And I think Sustain reminded me of classes like that where I cared. Like you have to try—I would have to try really hard, but I want to because I’m interested in it. Like anyone can passively get a degree, you know, you can fake your way through it, which is sad, but it’s possible. You won’t get A’s but you’ll get C’s and that’s fine, but I don’t want to do that. And I think Sustain reminded me of like actively participating in my education—that’s so corny.

[laughing]

H: It’s not corny if you mean it.

K: I really mean it. Yeah, and so, I haven’t been super involved in Sustain just cause I’ve

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

been really busy with other stuff—

H: --You mean this year?

K: Yeah, this year. So I haven't really been able to like meet the new students or anything but I want to when I have more time. And um, I really think it's a great thing. I think as many people as possible should get involved in it. Two of my WOWees are doing it, so—

H: --Oh that's fun

[laughing]

K: Yeah—I tried to get all of them to do it and they're like 'haha okay—stop talking about Sustain' [laughing] But two of them—so, anyway, I'm a big supporter. I think it—I think it changed me positively and other people maybe even moreso, which is--

[cell phone buzzing]

H: Oh that's you—you don't have to--I thought that was me.

K: Um,

H: Any thought about your—and it's okay if you don't have any—I know because I'm the one interviewing it's easier to talk about the classroom stuff.

K: Mmm—my community project was great, we—like we had a lot of fun, and we got close as a group. We didn't like really get that much done, really, like we worked a lot but like I don't know—not that much happened, which was fine—and they were fine with it. They just wanted us to do whatever we wanted and we, like we helped them with the grant, which was a big thing but like not that much came—like I don't think they ended up getting the grant so not that much came out of that, and then we built like an irrigation thing and so, for how much we worked it doesn't really seem like so much happened, but, um it was really cool to like have that extra thing to do and it was cool that like we could put as much into it as we had time for—like there wasn't like 'you have to do this amount of stuff' so like some weeks we didn't do anything and some weeks we were there like at the farm building at 7 am and stuff like that, which is cool—

H: --yeah

K: I think the most significant thing for that was that it—like I got really close with the people in that group. Like I don't think I had any classes with ██████████ and maybe I did, but like ██████████ and ██████████ and ██████████ like I didn't really have any classes with them, and I never would normally and like they're all engineering or something like I wouldn't have classes with them, but I got really close with them and—

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

H: --did you say ██████████ and ██████████?

K: Yeah—and ██████████.

H: And ██████████

K: And then it was me and ██████████ and ██████████

H: Oh—okay.

K: Yeah. And we, like we still hang out sometimes, and so I think that was really cool cause we were able to connect—and especially it was cool because like I'm a history major and so what situation would I ever be like working on an apple farm?

H: Yeah!

K: I didn't know anything either, like when we went to go build the irrigation system [laughing] like ██████████ and ██████████ and I are just like 'okay—like tell us what to do' and we're in like tennis shoes and they're in like their work boots [laughing] and like we were just like 'okay—let me get a shovel' It was pathetic, but it was a cool experience

H: It sounds fun, actually.

K: Especailly cause like ██████████ is—I forgot what his major is, but it's something in Ag—and he know all—like his family has a farm and everything

H: Yeah

K: So he know all that stuff, and so isn't, like it—it, okay—this cool, okay—so, that was an opportunity for him to be like [hand slap hand slap] 'this is how we put in an irrigation system and I designed this thing and this is how it's gonna work for us, like for the farm, and then I took a history class—we had one history class that all of us were in—and so, that was like, like I wrote a history paper with ██████████ and ██████████, and so like that was an opportunity whwere I was like 'guys! You don't know how to write a history paper!' And like taught like, taught them some things about that and so like in that situation they were like, 'wow—you're so good at this and then at—and then we were on the farm and I was like, 'I don't know, like I literally don't know anything about this' and so like they were—

H: --yeah

K: --and they had like, like I think ██████████ had just taken a class about like crop irrigation, so they were just like, like it's, it was, it's really cool that they were in a situation where whatever his major is and a history major can collaborate and definitely learn from each other.

Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (K) interviewed by ██████████ (H)

Interviewed on 4/9/13

H: That is cool.

K: Yeah.

H: K.

K: So that's something

H: That's good.

K: It's all interesting stuff—anything else on your mind about it?

H: No.

K: Okay.

H: Unless you have more questions..