

Spring 4-12-2013

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Sustain Interview Project

■■■■ (N) interviewed by ■■■■ ■■■■ (G)

Interviewed on 4/16/13

G: Here with ■■■■ ■■■■.

N: How's it going?

G: So tell me anything. Here's the thing. We sat down to talk about these interviews and we were like, you know hey, what do we want to capture? And the burning question from everybody is, what happened? you know? What happened to you do you think? In your experience in Sustain, and how are you now? What's kind of been the take away or the impact for you of having done that experience? So really, anything you have to say about that. Because we just want to know about you.

N: Ok. Well, for me what happened was um, because it was the first year doing this program, Sustain kind of started off slowly. No one really knew what was going on. We had like that week where we just met and kind of just did games and such and um, everyone just kind of started to get that feeling like, is this program actually going to be worth it for us? Um, and then I don't really think it like took off until ■■■■ kind of centralized us. Set up the (mumbles) room and room 202 A and B everyday in order for us to all basically always be there um, having other people help us out. I know I was in there almost everyday for like 4 hours. Doing physics. And other work, you know, hanging with everyone. Getting closer. Um, so, it kind of felt like overall just like we did know there was the group project in the back of our mind, we did have weekly group meetings and such like saying this is what we'll do, but, I think first off I know you guys did warn us: do not be over ambitious in your group projects. We found that and just working with the dining coms in general is just not going to work ever. The meetings we had with them, it just seemed, it was actually just a waste of time. So what we wanted to get done with the project did not end up coming out at all so we just did a food drive. I felt kind of like a failure a little bit.

G: Did you? How was it different than you expected in terms of working with the campus dining? Is that who you were working with?

N: Yeah. So, I mean, we were talking with them and they were basically like, we will, they just didn't take us seriously, we're just students. And so they were just like, you know, they just basically told us to go away. They didn't really want to do anything.

G: (laughing and with a funny voice) Go away.

N: Well, not specifically in that way but you know got the general diss. And I guess going back to classes, we just got caught up in doing specific work for those classes and all our other classes and I mean I guess that's just what happens where you have a period of time where you're working really hard and then all the sudden mid terms are coming around and it kind of seems like the group project just drops off the radar for awhile and I don't really know how to fix that.

G: Yeah. Do you still look at it like failure? That group project? Is that how you see it

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now? Or how do you see it now?

N: I mean, it was a learning experience. So its not necessarily failure. I know I said that earlier. But I had high expectations for what we could do and they were not fulfilled. But in the end it was a great experience. Every time I have a job interview they always ask me, what is Sustain? And it's always fun talking about it.

G: What do you tell them?

N: Um, I tell them that its a fun experience, it's and integrative program where we try to have each of our classes relate to the other as well as coming together to do group work, group study, group work, so on and so forth. Working on a group project throughout those two quarters. And I feel like college in general you get a lack of group projects where everyone collaborates because the projects we do have usually having one or two people doing the work and the rest kind of slack off. This kind of forced us all to do something.

G: That's interesting. I haven't heard anyone make that differentiation so your experience of the group project inside Sustain was different than your experience of group projects outside Sustain.

N: Yeah.

G: Tell me about that.

N: Um, well it's because we did have those weekly meetings. It just seemed like because we were working with a community partner it was a lot more serious. Like there's repercussions if we didn't get something done.

G: I see.

N: Because we are helping a non profit who is doing their best to do something for the community--

G: Right.

N: And we like to give to the community of course the group project is all hypothetical and you can slack off until the last minute and then pull something together and get that C.

G: Yeah. That makes sense.

N: Um another thing I guess I'd like to address is, us in Sustain, in order to be successful means you have the group come together as a whole in the beginning. I was talking to some of my friends who did this Sustain program this year and they said that they didn't

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really start coming together until the beginning of this quarter. The end of last quarter, the beginning of this quarter. Which I feel like really deters the students from the program that did join. Um, how many students are in that program right now?

G: I think a similar number.

N: A similar number?

G: Yeah.

N: I was expecting there to be more.

G: Were you?

N: Yeah. I was expecting we were going to get a hundred.

G: The magic hundred. Everyone wants the magic hundred.

N: I guess so! I guess it's a nice number.

G: Yeah.

N: So, um, when did you guys establish the specific room that's going to be open everyday at the same time for students to go in and--

G: You know I actually wasn't involved in it this year.

N: Oh, ok.

G: So some of it is a matter of what's available through scheduling. So it's not always like a, it's not always a buffet of choices. (laughs) You know?

N: Yeah. I just, we need that central location where people can start organizing around.

G: Yeah. You mean the way we did it last year with check in and check out? Is that what you mean? Or studio time?

N: Um, I mean, just in general like everyday there's a study hour for just any student that wants to go in.

G: Oh, so you mean the thing you guys organize for yourself?

N: Yeah. I feel like that was a main thing that brought us all together. And really made us Sustain.

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G: And you felt like it should have held on in the design?

N: Yeah.

G: Carried through? That's interesting.

N: Because I have classes with a lot of the people from Sustain. Actually I just got out of a lab with, I'm in a group with ■■■■ ■■■■, ■■■■, it's just so much easier to work with them because we already know, we're so used to working together. We know how we study how we do everything.

G: Yeah. I've seen them both. They seem like they're doing really well.

N: Yeah, I just feel like we need that group camaraderie or else people get um, you know we're all busy people and we just get caught up with our own lives.

G: Yeah.

N: Like, and I have a lot of stuff I'm doing, that I'm a part of that--

G: What are you involved in?

N: Um, I'm in a fraternity, I'm involved with the Sierra Club, and Power Poly Coalition, um, which that generally takes up all my time as well. Its just trying to hang out with friends, go on hikes, you know? So on and so forth.

G: Yeah.

N: Because I'm actually running for a couple positions through the fraternity.

G: Are you? What are you running for?

N: Um, Secretary and Vice President of Philanthropy.

G: You want to do both?

N: Um, either or. We get nominated--

G: Oh, ok.

N: We come up with a speech, we talk to the past position holders--

G: I see.

N: Then they vote on us.

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G: Is that typical for somebody your year to do that?

N: Um, yeah.

G: It's exciting.

N: Going into junior year generally you get a high position of authority based on how much work you've put in.

G: And you enjoy it?

N: Yeah.

G: What do you like about it?

N: I've just found that, last year I kind of of slacked off and didn't do a lot. Actually I guess I was more involved in Sustain at that point. Um, and I just you know, I slacked off and didn't really have a drive to like, didn't really you know, was kind of feeling down like why am I in this fraternity. And then I started planning events and helping out and it's a lot of fun when you plan an event and it works--

G: Yeah!

N: It works out and everyone has a good time and they know you were part of the process and that you have the influence to make it how you wanted it.

G: Yeah, totally. I'm really interested in that. That's exciting to hear about for you. That you captured that for yourself. Do you have any other thoughts about your Sustain experience or, you know I think our interest is really can you recognize any um, I'm trying to think of the right word, just again, how would you answer the question, you are answering the question, but how would you further answer the question, what happened to you do you think as you went through that program what happened to you there do you think? And has there been any kind of glide? From it? For you? Any kind of lasting impact, or lasting influence that you would characterized as connected with your time in Sustain?

N: Um--

G: It's totally possible that the answer is, uh-uh. (laughs) So it's not, you know, just any thoughts about that.

N: I feel like it was kind of a weird transition like, into Sustain and like half way through the first quarter I feel like I really became a part of Sustain. As I said, ■■■■ was the biggest proponent for me getting all organized. And then we were part of Sustain and got

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used to it and then the next quarter was like a culture shock. Like back to lecture--

G: So you mean, fall?

N: Yeah, fall.

G: I see.

N: Back to lecture, book study, tests. Go.

G: Yeah. How was that for you?

N: Um, I had some pretty awful classes. I did not like my philosophy class. I did not like my architecture history class. I liked my architecture teacher but it was literally just you have 6 power point slides about 60-70 slides, 4 or 5 pictures on each, memorize. And I don't think that's an effective learning style. And I don't know how else you'd teach that class, but--

G: Yeah, interesting.

N: Um, so I don't know I think I just brought, it's a lot easier for me to do group projects. And form camaraderie with other students. I kinda just end up taking charge.

G: Do you? Was that true of you before?

N: Not really.

G: What were you like before in a group?

N: Um, I'd like put in work but I'd always want someone else to be the leader.

G: Why was that?

N: Um, I have a little bit of anxiety. I always like to be the one doing most of the work but if something goes wrong not get blamed for it.

G: Yeeeeeah. I do know about that, I mean I know what you're talking about.

N: So now if I fail, or if it doesn't go the way I wanted then it's not because I didn't put in the work.

G: Wow. Have other people recognized that shift in you?

N: Yeah.

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G: What have they said?

N: Um, I think this is one of the reasons why I actually got nominated for these positions in my fraternity. They've kinda seem me grow.

G: Yeah, that's really exciting stuff. I know that tension just in life around feeling drawn to something and wanting to go do your best but then you know almost getting toes up to the line and then being like, ooooooh, its almost worse the more you want it. You lean, and you give all this time and yeah, so that's really interesting that you kind of like dove over the line. Sounds like?

N: Yeah, it's a good feeling.

G: Yeah. That's really, really cool. I'm glad to hear all of it. Anything else to throw in? It's all great stuff.

N: I think that's it. If I think of anything I'll email you or something.

G: Great. Thanks for giving me all this time, ■■■■. It's really good to see you and I'm really happy for you.

N: Yeah. I'm having a good time. A lot of things are going right for me.

G: That's great. That's really, really great.