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Sustain Interview Project

██████████ (GU) interviewed by ██████████ (G)

Interviewed on 4/16/13

G: I'm here with ██████████. Tell me anything, tell me anything about being in Sustain. What reflections do you have about the experience. So what do you think as you look behind you, as you look ahead, you know, nice big open, and then we'll figure out maybe a place to focus maybe as you talk.

GU: Ok, um, well for Sustain it was like an interesting experience I mean it wasn't like the typical like the professor taught some stuff which was kind of tough for like many of us adjusting, like especially for physics. That was a whole--

G: Yeah.

GU: There was a whole resistance against it. Um, As for like other classes it like worked out well like for either way for like presenting or doing the stuff we had to do. Um, I had an interesting time. I really enjoyed my community project.

G: What was your community project?

GU: The garden at the elementary school.

G: Oh, ok.

GU: Yeah, so I really like it um. And then even though we were like a small group we were really able to like really do great with that project. Um. The, it was a lot of us structuring our free time accordingly because um, I had a lot of free time like Tuesdays and Thursdays where I was I had nothing, you could say I had the free time to either do work or not--

G: Yeah, or not!

GU: Yeah (laughs) so it was pretty tough just adjusting to now having all this free time and now what am I going to do with it? Um, at first I would kind of slack off at the beginning of like the first three weeks I was like, "oh, there's not much going on, " but then once the quarter started picking up I was like I can't do that. At least winter quarter was kind of chill. Spring quarter I had programming that I was taking outside of Sustain so that was, during those free times--

G: Wow. That's a lot.

GU: I was preparing. Yeah. Um, and so um, so with the Sustain classes um, I don't know which were kind of like my favorite ones but like, they were all over the place--

G: That's probably a weird question to answer sitting across from me, that's ok, you don't need to answer. Strike that from the record!

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GU: Yeah. (laughing)

G: Do you feel like it had any impact on you?

GU: Um.

G: Or if you do, how would you characterize it?

GU: It had an interesting impact in terms of like meeting more people kind of thing because I was already, I had adjusted to the school system having like a group I could rely on. So, like adding to those groups I already had that I had formed during my fall quarter. And adding a new group it was kind of like balancing all the different groups that I belonged to. Um, so I think it did have an impact, because I was more adjusted to like learning by yourself kind of thing.

G: Ok.

GU: So for me it wasn't like a shock going from one to another one--

G: Ok.

GU: Once I think I had a once I felt that freedom I was like I think I can work around certain things. Um, so it was kind of like--there wasn't that much shift for me as there was from fall into winter and spring, um, I know that I, talking to other people they were like used to this whole thing and learning independently. I think for them it was more of an impact than it was for me. But, how would I categorize it? Um---

G: You can always choose another question. You know, on the game shows, pass is always an option.

GU: (laughs) It's difficult to categorize because I was kind of used to it but at the same time I felt that I kind of wanted to help out the other people who were kind of like not used to the system.

G: Yeah. So what do you, when you look back on the experience what do you see there for yourself? What are your thoughts as you look back on being involved in it?

GU: I wouldn't have regretted, um, I know at first I was kind of iffy about doing it because I had been talking to some of my other friends, like they had heard about the program and were like it sounds kind of sketchy kind of thing. (both laugh) And I know that a few of them like some of my engineering friends they went to talk to advisors to see what they would recommend. I kind of like was like ok I guess I just give it a shot type of thing.

G: Yeah.

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GU: And also, I mean the other thing that had initially had me kind of like go for it was the fact that I was twelfth rotation--

G: Oh, right.

GU: For the upcoming quarter and I knew it was going to be really tough getting classes.

G: Yeah.

GU: So I was like, I'll just give it a shot and see what happens and um I had talked to ██████████, ██████████ and ██████████ and they said oh it's fine to--

G: Yeah.

GU: Give it a trail and see what you think for spring quarter. So I was like, ok, I'll just give it a shot. Why not? So then I went in and I heard like other people talking about how they had similar situations like how they were like 12th rotation or other people who were actually, um, were like this whole concept of sustainability. And, then once I started learning about all the different programs or projects we could do I was like, well this could actually, I could get something out of it, not just go into class and kinda like do all--

G: Yeah.

GU: Be different, act different tot the system, but you actually get to apply what you're learning into a real like project type of thing. And I mean coming in as a freshman you kinda, you don't really know what you're doing. I mean sure, we have to like propose a major and stuff but sometimes I mean like its good to explore other realms. And so um so I was just like trying to get at least the fall quarter was just trying to see different clubs and try to see where I would belong. And trying out Sustain I was like oh well its a whole different concept of learning and then with the project I was like I can put something in my resume like I can say, oh well I worked in this project I mean maybe it doesn't really relate to my major but--

G: What's your major?

GU: Electrical Engineering. But I can say well I actually have team managing skills and working with other people like that would boost up the chances for something on the resume.

G: Yeah. Did you learn anything about yourself during the process in Sustain? Through that experience?

GU: Um, I think I learned more about myself like because I had an idea coming in as a

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freshman you're like I have an idea of who I am in this world kind of thing but at least like from what I got from English 145 the whole like questioning yourself, trying to see like, because I know like for English 134 I took it outside of Sustain but like they had already, they had initiated that whole concept of education and this whole realm of education. And so with English 145 it game me more of like that thinking process, getting to really know myself type of thing. So I think Sustain really helped me with that, that whole concept of I can really try to find myself with in a way and because of the whole different trying out new things and just going um with like a new system of education--

G: Uh huh. Anything in particular that you've learned? Or that you see in yourself that you didn't see before?

GU: Probably better study skills. Because I know with the whole time management I have to really be on top of my stuff and not slack off in other areas and still kinda catching up with other stuff.

G: I'm giggling because I have a guess at what you were doing with your free time based on your inquiry project. (he laughs) Should I stop the recording? (both laugh)

GU: At least winter quarter because I know spring quarter I had a lot of programming--

G: Mexican soap opera. So solid.

GU: (laughing) Yeah.

G: I was excited to see the work you did there. I think it's interesting to stop and look at something where you go well nobody else, you know everybody else would look at this and say it's a time waster, but if I'm interested, why am I interested? What is there to be...interested in? You took a pretty cool risk there I thought. (both laugh a little) Yeah, I was happy for you about that.

GU: But I think it's the whole trying to find yourself in of thing. Like, just like, at least I like to taste like lots of different things. Like I don't just like, I know lots of my fellow students, classmates I mean, that I see in most of my classes like in EE especially, they're really anti social to some extent. And then like, they're really like narrow minded they just like go in class, learn the EE stuff and then go back home and then continue to do their EE stuff and like for me I do do that but I don't just keep it there. I branch out to other stuff. And like I'm involved with different things on campus. I get good tastes of different stuff.

G: What are you involved in right now?

GU: I'm still involved with a dancing club, it's called, the traditional Mexican--

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G: Oh, neat. Folklorico?

GU: Yeah. That's the one. So I'm still involved with that. Um, I'm also involved in this Latino um club that like we do a lot of community service kind of things.

G: Yeah.

GU: But at the same time we also try to promote higher education to Latino students. We've been talking to the Vice President about like trying to diverse this campus more and he's all down for that. He's like giving us money here and there for like some programs. Like for example, every year we have this Chicano youth conference where we invite like high school students to come here and we give them workshops for like, to promote higher education because many of them they don't have the resources so they don't know. So we do that and the Vice President heard about it this year and he's like more interested and he wants to learn a little more about it. So we're putting some power point and stuff like that --

G: Wow, that's really cool! Have you always been involved in that?

GU: Um, yeah, I was involved my first year. I wasn't that active as I was this year--

G: What's made you more active?

GU: Um, I think it's because I was elected to be Vice President--

G: Interesting...

GU: Yeah, because I wanted to have a position back when I began here but I like I ran for a position but like I ran for two positions but the votes split half and half and the other person got the most votes. But I was like, I just went to their general meetings. But now I'm the Vice President so I have to be involved in everything.

G: I see. That's exciting! That's really cool stuff. Well, I'm excited for you. What else can you tell me? What did it feel like to transition back into traditional model in fall?

GU: That was really interesting because I mean like with the whole Sustain and the whole time frame, like I really had a lot of time to do all that time managing but then like now I have to back to actually listening to class like pay attention kind of thing. (both laugh)

G: Pay attention! (laughs)

GU: Um, and I sometimes, at least fall quarter I caught myself a couple time like drifting off and not paying attention. So then um, it was kind of ok but at the same time I felt like I wanted to go back to the Sustain model just like let me do the learning kind of thing on

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my side. Especially for me I'm more of that kind of like self taught. I know for some classes its like really difficult like some of my EE classes. I really have to like really go to lecture and then really go home and question everything and then go back and ask questions type of thing.

G: Yeah.

GU: So it was a so-so transition. Um, I guess once midterms hit I was like I have to get back to the old model. But for the first three weeks at least I really did miss the old system of like being in Sustain. It took a little more getting back used to it.

G: Yeah. Cool. Any other thoughts or any other reflections about your experience?

GU: I really loved it. I mean at first even though I was iffy about it I really loved the whole outcome of it and I really got to meet really awesome people and then I really got to know a lot of the professors um more, I know, I remember many were like saying who Pete was like, ooooh, whatever but like even though he was kind of like out there sometimes I really did get to know him, like he was really more helpful, like during his office hours instead of class. (laughs) Because in class we did many demonstrations and (laughing) they were helpful, some of the demonstrations, not all of them. But like I know he was more helpful in office hours than, I know that not everyone went so the people that went really knew that he was helpful in office hours and those people that didn't go they're like, yeah, he's not helpful.

G: So you were taking that initiation inside Sustain.

GU: Yeah.

G: Interesting. Do you do it now?

GU: Go to office hours? Oh yeah.

G: You've always done that?

GU: Yeah, I know that fall quarter freshman year you're kind of scared to like go and walk into someone's like, ah, I don't even know them--

G: Right.

GU: And like with winter and spring I was like, I need to do this, I need to try eventually. And for like physics I really had to do that, actually go in and once I got to know him a little bit I was like ok this is not to bad and just continued to do it.

G: That's very cool.

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GU: I guess that's the other thing I got out of it.

G: That's actually a really big deal.

GU: Yeah.

G: And you're still doing that. I really don't know the answer to this question, do you see your friends doing it? Do you have other friends around you who also are going to office hours now?

GU: Um, I think they do. I know that like at least the other ██████████ because I was really close to him, um, he always goes to office hours and he's always asking questions. I know he kinda did it at fall quarter but he does it much more after Sustain ended.

G: Yeah. I think that's exciting to think about for you. That's cool. That's all great stuff. Anything else in your head jostling around in there?

GU: Hopefully the program continues on because I mean I know it's tough getting people into at first but once they really go through the experience they realize that it's really helpful.

G: Yeah. I'm so glad. I'm glad it was helpful for you.

GU: Thanks.

G: That's really great. Ok man, that was great. Thank you for your time.