

Oral History Transcription

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Introduction 00:00

Emily: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this oral history project. Uh, we want to remind you that this may be published as part of the Oral History Archives project for Dr. Gloria Lopez in our ethnic studies methodologies, uh, class at California State University of Chico, and we need your permission to publish this transcript in part or in its entirety. Do we have permission to record this interview?

Chris: Yes.

Emily: Thank you! Umm, now we'll get started.

Chris: Okay.

Emily: I am Emily Kincheloe, and I will be asking half of the questions today.

Gwen: And I am Gwen. I will be asking the other half of the questions in this interview, and we are here with Chris! Chris, can you please tell us your full name and your position in Associated Students?

Chris: Yes! Hi. My name is Chris Sullivan, I am the Associated Student Body President for, of course, the Associated Students.

General Background Information 00:51

Emily: Awesome. Okay, so we're going to start with some simpler background questions. Um just to give a more general, like, introduction of who you are. Can you start with a little bit about where you came to Chico from? Maybe where you went to high school and, like what made you come to Chico?

Chris: Yeah, absolutely. Uhm, just to kind of give you a little background about myself, I was born and raised in Inglewood, California, LA, so SoCal, Southern California. I initially went to high school there at Inglewood High. And actually, our high school was partnered in, in a partnership with Chico State. So I was able to kind of uh go to Chico State, explore with a lot of my friends from high school, and then um take a trip, for like a couple of days, tour the campus, and then, yeah, kind of just got a good idea of what Chico State was, of course, I went to other colleges, but at the time, when I was doing my applications, I got into a couple of colleges. I wasn't I would say I was definitely up there, like when it came to, like, you know, academically, my GPA was good. But I definitely wanted to as first generation, definitely wanted to pick something that wasn't as intimidating financially, and so Chico State definitely had the better financial aid package. [pause] And I also got into EOP. Yeah. And just a little bit about EOP, they have a summer Bridge program where you're able to stay on the campus of the university that you got admitted to for about roughly two weeks. at the max. So, I stayed in Whitney for that time being and I met a lot of people in the process, and so it kind of made my transition into my first year a little bit easier, knowing some people.

[pause]

Major and Undergraduate Info 02:46

Gwen: So, what was your major as an undergraduate? And what are you studying now?

Chris: Okay. So, my major as a undergraduate was sociology. It definitely was um something that I kind of just threw out there, I was curious, I was very curious, and I wanted to learn a little bit more about, you know, just people and society. And so, I chose that route. Initially, starting out, it was a very impacted major at the time. Pre-COVID. And then once I got into it, I was like, how am I going to, like, what am I going to do with it? You know, I had those questions, and of course, I talked to a lot of people. I took this class called Jobs in the social mar-, er, jobs in the sociology market er, yeah jobs market, or job market class for sociology. And from there, you know, I kind of really

got the understanding of that. I decided to pick up a minor in, uh, multicultural studies and also ethics justice and policy because I was actually looking to get into criminal justice, at the time I actually wanted to kind of get into more of not law enforcement, but more of like the FBI at one point [laughs]. But umm yeah, I was just kind of just exploring my options. So now I'm currently a graduate student. My journey there was definitely interesting. I made that last-minute decision. As first generation, you, you finished your degree is one thing, but trying to figure out what you're going to do after that was another, and so I was in this dilemma of, like, okay, so what do I want to do next? And all I was doing in my last semester of my, of my final year in undergrad was just trying to figure out, okay, maybe I'll do grad school. Ask around, ask questions about this program, which is the Social Science Program, and once I got a lot of recommendations, it made a little bit more easier for me to do that. And I was also running for Student Government at the time, too. So, I actually became - I actually got elected in as the director of Social Justice Equity for Associated Students, uhm, while going- transitioning into grad school and graduating at the same time [laughs], so I had a lot of things going on at one point all at once. But just to kind of wrap back to answering the question, yeah, I got my grad - I'm currently in grad school for Social Science program. My first emphasis was on career and life planning, so I got my certification in career counseling. And now I'm focused on college student success and equity, focusing on higher education because I have a goal to go into higher education. Moving forward.

[off mic from Gwen to Emily] Oh, sorry, I had a question.

Gwen: I want to ask a question. So, I'm sorry can you repeat your- can you repeat your one of your minors now? Or sorry, not your minor. Your...

Chris: My grad program?

Gwen: Yes. Sorry.

Chris: Yes. So, I have two focuses or yeah, specializations in there. And one of them is career and life planning. Where I just recently received a certification to be a career counselor, or if I want to go on that pathway, I can do that route. And also college student success and equity in higher education.

[Off mic from Gwen to Emily]:

Gwen- Okay, I think I'll save it.

Emily- Okay.

Gwen- I'll save it, sorry.]

Chris: No worries.

Initiation into Associated Students 06:10

Emily: Okay. So, moving on to the next question, then, you kind of answered it a little bit in your last answer, but when exactly did you join Associated Students?

Chris: So, I actually, yeah. This is not actually my first year joining associated students I've actually been a part of the previous government affairs team, which was 2023 to 2024 of the year. And I was the director of Social Justice and Equity, initially. And in that role, it was really fun., really fun, I got a lot accomplished. There was a lot of things I've learned, and it actually motivated me to venture further into, you know, student government and advocate at a larger level.

[pause]

Gwen: What made you join A.S. when you first came to Chico?

Chris: So, the funny thing is, I didn't know anything about it before I was introduced. And so, you know, this whole time, you know, the whole time understanding, like, this whole time, I was just like, "Okay, this is new to me." You know, it just seemed very new, especially since coming off of COVID. When I was initially, when I initially heard about it, I was like, "Oh, okay, this is something different." I heard of, like, ASBC in high school, you know, I wasn't involved in that, but it was more of like, okay, I've already been in previous leadership positions on campus or a campus leader in different areas of mentorship. So, when I initially heard about it, I was like, "Okay, this is cool." And it came with a scholarship [laughs] and, you know, also, it definitely created a lot of opportunities of professional development.

Associated Student Involvement 08:02

Emily: Cool! Okay, so you just mentioned that you were a campus leader in, like, different areas, can you maybe expand on what areas?

Chris: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely so I'm going on my sixth position on campus as a student employee or just in a different position. And so, I had a various amount of positions at Chico State through my undergraduate experience and currently up to this

day. And so, my first one was I was actually the stage manager for the production manager, or Stage Manager for the Production Manager of the School of the Arts for Chico. Started out doing that, and then while I was doing that, I also worked for the First Year Experience Program to be a mentor, a Peer Mentor. I was actually introduced to that through an ELP class, which is crazy. And so, I had that mindset to kind of focus on helping students. I definitely thrive and, and want to help other people who are experiencing similar backgrounds, like myself, and you know, I always thrive for success and so that's my way of giving back is, like, you know, showing that support. But I also say I did that First-Year Experience program, Peer Mentor, then I transitioned to another mentor role with, not with the first year, with the REACH, and became a Peer Mentor for that program for about three years. While still working with the First Year Experience program, which is down the hall over here, which is crazy, as the event coordinator. So, I would help put on the Town Hall meetings, so I was a part of the team that did the first virtual Town Hall meeting during COVID, and then the first in-person coming back from COVID for that too. And yeah, that created a great dynamic. I also started while I was doing my role as Director of Social Justice and Equity. I also started working for the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities as a graduate assistant. And in my time doing that, I helped develop a ambassador program. I kind of the whole outline and stuff, it'll be kicking off very soon. Of course, when it comes to developing programs, it's a lot of barriers, especially with the campus budget and, you know, understanding, you know, the limitations of that. So, I did that while in the role of Director of Social Justice and Equity and then once I got my role as President, I kind of let go of like you know, being the graduate assistant for that office just for, you know, work-life balance. Of course, I'm a student first, so I have to kind of keep that in the back of my mind as I do these roles.

[pause]

Gwen: Um, just a follow-up question. Do you feel like your help on campus has influenced you to focus on student success within your major?

Chris: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. It's actually, it's opened a lot of opportunities for me to support others in the process, too. I feel like we never stop learning. So, there's always, like an opportunity to, like learn more about student success while you're

focusing on it. And so, you know, one of the things that helps me is the more involved I stay in, the more it helps *me* personally as a student. You know, I learn the resources, I learn how to navigate certain situations by, you know, um, being introduced to it, being exposed to it. You know, not many students have that opportunity to know so many resources that we have and that we use our student dollars in. So.

Differences between A.S. President and the Director of Social Justice and Equity Positions 11:48

Emily: Cool. Thank you. Okay, so kind of to, like, circle back to what you were mentioning about your time as the director of Social Justice and Equity. Uhm, so since you were that like before President, and you were involved in A.S. before President, how have those positions, especially like that position, been different from Presidency, like, not just in your role, but like in the way you handle situations?

Chris: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. I feel like, for being the role of Director of Social Justice and Equity, you're representing students. You're representing all the students, but you're digging deeper into the more cultural aspects of it. So, the things that impact students, a lot of the things that marginalized groups don't get a chance or aren't taking advantage of in regards to, like certain spaces. You're hearing those concerns and you're focusing on spreading that awareness and also figuring out ways to innovate. So, my role as Director of Social Justice and Equity, some of the things that I worked on or some of the things that I focused on with spreading cultural awareness. So, I would have display tables in the BMU, when the first floor of the BMU kind of started that full calendar year of having cultural heritage months, that focused on different cultures and made it very interactive, you know, that was one of the things. Also, spearheaded a position with now the current Director of Social Justice Equity, but she used to work at the CCLC, her name is Aishwarya Gowda. And we started a cultural fashion show, which is now, which is now, like a reoccurring thing that will occur now with the Cross-Cultural Leadership Center. And in that, I funded that, I helped fund that event in that role, but also participated as a model, you know, and that was a cool thing. Also, we had a culture-related food shelf that we developed. So, we're actually the first school in the CSU system to recognize that we need cultural ingredients in our food pantry. So, I participated in allocating up to, I think, around \$1,200 to the Basic Needs Food Pantry

here at Chico State and start that with the Basic Needs office as Director of Social Justice and Equity and hoping that it continues at a larger scale moving forward. So it was more of those initiatives, those are just small amounts of the many that I did in that role, but those are great highlights.

[pause]

Gwen: Thank you. [Emily: Mm-hm.] Very interesting. Wait so, sorry, follow-up question to that. So, in the pantry, what type of food would they like, give, if they didn't? Like, because I know that you said that you helped them get more ethnic ingredients into the pantry.

Chris: Okay, I could walk you through that process, like, like, how we did it.

Gwen: Oh no, I just want to know, like, what foods were there before.

Chris: Oh, it was, so it would definitely be, like, kind of like the, like the basic things, they get donations from different stores, you know, but culturally specific. So, we have international students that come from different countries that don't have access to different foods. We have students that, you know, that are undocumented that come from, you know. It's, there's definitely a lot of perspective on it, and a lot of that is not really offered generally.

Gwen: Oh, I did not know that.

Chris: So, one of the things we did was, we kind of put out a survey last semester. I think we collaborated with the Office of Equity Diversity Inclusion, the CCLC, and, of course, A.S., and we generated a survey just asking different cultural groups, you know, what ingredients you would like to see, what are some things that resonate with your culture that you would like to see in the pantry, and we kind of based it off of that.

Gwen: That is so cool. Thank you.

Presidential duties on the Board of Directors 16:02

Gwen: So next question, can you please explain some of the duties that you possess on the Board of Directors? For example, what would an average agenda look like for your meeting?

Chris: Yeah, absolutely. I actually have an example one physically from one of my recent board meetings. But if I could kind of, pretty much break down to you, kind of like a general understanding of what the board of directors is, is it's a conclusive decision-

making body for overall operations of the Associated Students Organization. So it focuses more on the financials, the comprehensive corporate decisions, And it's chaired by me, the A.S. President, voting members that are comprised of six elected student representatives, the University Vice President of Student Affairs and Business and Finance, and a faculty representative, who is currently the HFA, Humanities and Finance Representative, our Dean, Dr. Tracy Butts. Yeah, and the A.S., not the A.S., the Board is directly responsible for upholding, approving actions of network of committees, of comprehensive corporate affairs of the organization. And we have these meetings currently this semester from bi-weekly, next week, bi-weekly um from 2:30 to 4. But it's on our Associated Students website, if you're ever interested, it's on our Government Affairs page. But those we handle corporate affairs, so a lot of things, for example, and I'll pull up this agenda real quick because I think it will be a great way to showcase that. [pulls out agenda from his folder to show Gwen and Emily] Right here. And so, what a typical one looks like, and I kind of want to show y'all, but this is a typical Board of Directors agenda. And it focuses on, of course, we have our call of order, we recognize our Mechoopda land recognition. And this is all public record, and so any student can sit in on the board meeting, make a public opinion because we're um, associated students operates on student dollars, it is a nonprofit corporation, multi-million dollar nonprofit corporation that focuses on the students. It's for the students by the students, and so a lot of these corporate affairs is focused on information that's focused around the students. So, for example, we will talk about improvement of committees, [pause] right now we're dealing with, what was it, a new law council, law council for the corporation that's focused on things. What else is on here? Sorry. Yeah, proposed signature policy updates, review of investments, local agency investment funds, Board-Designated funds. But there's a lot of umm, a lot of transparency that comes into these meetings. So, this is how we properly showcase how student dollars are being used through this corporation. So it's a lot focused more on the corporate side of things. 18:27-19:26 As president, I know we have another committee, which is the Government Affairs Committee that focuses more on the advocacy, what are the student concerns, what are some things that we can do to support students moving

forward. So that's like, that's how they differentiate between the board of directors and the Government Affairs Committee.

A.S. President Responsibilities in CSSA meetings 19:50

Emily: Cool. Thank you. So um, more on your roles as President like your responsibilities.

Chris: Mhm.

Emily: So as A.S. president, you also attend California State Student Association meetings or CCSA meetings.

Chris: Yes!

Emily: To represent CSU Chico and have student and social interests heard. What do you think is important about these meetings and specifically, like, your participation in them?

Chris: Absolutely. I have a whole segment that really defines what CSSA is, and you know if you don't mind me pulling it up real quick, I think it's a great way to define it. And I've been giving my committee presentations about, you know, what Cal State Student Association is about and what my duties as A.S. President is about, you know, in that role. And to kind of, like sum it up, it's a place where all A.S. Presidents and their constituents, which could be the Commissioner of Legislative Affairs which is currently here. But we represent the voices of all, what is it, we're at like 14,600 students. So, I represent the voices of 14,600 students when I'm in that space. And it's a lot of questions about campus connections, how are, what are some things are going on campus? We have system-wide affairs that occurs there. We also have our Board of Directors meeting separate, so it's a different board of directors meeting because Cal Student Association is another organization, nonprofit organization that is a large scale [bumps microphone] sorry, equipment. But pretty much, it's a student-led organization that strives to improve the lives of the CSU students by advocating for student needs, it engages students in system-wide, state, and federal higher education policymaking. So, for example [pause] Before I actually give that example, to sum it up, CCSA is recognized by the CSU Board of Trustees and the California Legislator as the official voice of the students that go straight to the CSU Chancellor for recommendations. So, it's very important, you know, when we focus on issues and voicing those concerns

because we have an executive board for CSSA, so there's a president within that, too. So, we have a president that represents us at CSSA. Yes. [laughs] And so to give you an example, recently, we had a policy that came out from the Chancellor's Office called the **Time** Place and Manner policy, and it raised a lot of concerns with students, staff, and faculty, due to the timely way came out, and also the consultation to it, you know, how quick a turn around that consultation had to be. And one of the things that the Chancellor's Office had to do was reach out to CSSA and request for review, and nine points were made to that, only three were utilized. So, not all recommendations are taken completely, but it's still a process, and it's still the official voice of the CSU students.

21:50-23:08

And so, sorry, to answer what I do as A.S. president, I'm required by my corporate by-laws to be there, it's compiled of all 23 A.S./ASI presidents. We meet once a month to provide receptive information that helps advocate for changes that impact us as students and also bring back campus important information as well. On our Associated Student website, there's a CSSA update that I provide a blog that is provided by, I now delegate that blog to my Commissioner of Legislative Affairs, Madison Kelly. She creates the blog of kind of like recapping information because we want to be as receptive as possible to what's going on there. Not many students are aware of it, and it's the hard thing that not many students are aware of it, by the time students are aware of it, they're on their way out of college. Same with me [laughs] and so, yeah, we have a couple of events that go on. We have our California Higher Education Student Summit where we lobby with the California Legislative Office. We have CSU Hill Day, which advocates at the federal level, which I will be going to DC next semester to do that on behalf of students. And yeah, that's pretty much that, in a nutshell. Sorry, that took too long.

Current Issues Addressed in the CSSA that affect Chico State Students now 24:35

Emily: No, you're totally fine, take all the time you need. That's the goal we want an oral history here [laughs]. Okay, so building off of that, are there any like specific things that have been brought up in recent meetings with the CSSA that you think are affecting Chico State now?

Chris: I know there was a recent, there has been a recent conversation about, you know, this is all public records so one of the topics that we covered at CSSA is, you know, kind of reflecting off of Title Nine. The CSU system had received an audit on that, and so that audit required the CSU system and all the schools in the CSU system to meet certain recommendations that were under evaluation. And so, not recent, I just came back from CSSA this weekend. I was in CSU Monterey Bay. So yeah, I just came back from there and they were asking questions about that. Another thing specifically is, like, understanding, where are some issues that are going on in your university that we can help support you in? And so those are some of the things and some of the concerns. Also, there's been conversations on solidarity, you know? How are the Chancellor's office utilizing or taking our voices as students seriously? That was one of the questions that were talked about recently in our recent meeting. But usually, it's to bring student concerns to a larger scale and see where similarities are being met.

[pause]

Chris's role as President and involvement 26:12

Gwen: So, you've already answered this question in the beginning. So, I'm just going to tell you the overall question that I was going to ask and my follow-up question. So, in our first meeting, when we were just getting to know you, you mentioned that you have participated in a lot of activities on campus. You shared those with us. So, my follow-up question is out of all the events you have participated in, which one of those have mattered to you the most?

Chris: Mm. Ooh. Okay. That's a good one because I participate in a lot. And I feel like in the role as President, because I did mention some of the things I did as Director of Social Justice and Equity, but in the role as President, one thing I've learned is that you're representing the students but you're not with students all the time. So, it does take that away from you sometimes, you know, with the time because you're working more with professionals. And so, there's moments where I'm in areas where I'm the only student, you know, speaking on behalf of us as students. And so, it could be viewed like that at events, too. And I think one of the most important things to me currently, I think one of the most important things is would definitely be, you know, CSSA. Definitely CSSA. I think that external aspect of it, because what I've learned as A.S. president is

that you're focusing on the external issues or you're representing at the external level. And so we have our Executive Vice President here that can definitely pick up on some of the things internally, which I'm actually working on doing right now is just how are we, he's helping me with a task currently setting up an event that highlights student concerns, like, you know, a couple of tabling opportunities that will ask students, like, what are your biggest concerns? You know, what are some things that are going on that you'd like to see? How can we support you moving forward? And so right now, I can't say that currently as President, that I have one thing that really, has really caught my attention as an event because there's still more opportunities moving forward from here. But I can say the most memorable ones are the opportunities that I've had already. Like, I did orientation, where I spoke to about 6,000 people, introducing myself as President. I've done speeches in regards to, like, leadership, you know, focusing on, like, you know, here we are and where we need to go to next, and how can we pave the way for those after us? And so, there's been a lot of opportunities and they're limitless. I definitely need to jot them down more often, you know, but there's definitely more opportunities to come that you'll hear about. And the goal is to get that out there, and pave the way for other people. My goal is not to be seen by, or, seen the whole time just being me, but to push my team out there because not only do I represent students, but we also have a team of 16 other representatives that support all students. So making sure that those inclusive opportunities are there as well.

Gwen: Thank you. So, you said that, you know, like, you represent the students, but you wish that you were around the students more. Do you think that your presidency would be different if you were around students the whole time instead of just like professionals?

16.31.189

Chris: So, it's an interesting balance. Unfortunately, you also are a student. So, you have to make time for you also a student and you're also a human being. And then you also have your own personal, your own personal barriers that come with being that, especially if you're first generation. And so right now I'm trying to figure out, where's that balance? You know? Where can you be available socially, but also, you know, make sure that you're making sure that voices are being met, you're being seen, you know.

So, it's definitely a hard balance, especially when you're figuring out that part. I'm pretty sure next semester; I'll have a better hold of it. But of course, it's the school time, and you want to make sure that you're academically thriving because we're here to be students, of course, most importantly. And so there's definitely times where you probably don't see me in common area as a student, like what the students are more in my office, you know, focusing on, you know, any concerns because there's definitely things that come up that, you know, I have to kind of, focus on back in. And it takes away from my role as being Present because I'm focusing on the internal issues.

[pause]

Gwen: Would you like to be seen as a student or more as a President?

Chris: So.

Gwen: [laughs]

Chris: There has to be both, because sometimes, you know, you can be seen as a President, but there has to be that reminder that you're also a student. You know, you're student President. You know, students have to trust you to know that, hey, you're making decisions for me as a student. You also have to be a student, too. And sometimes people think I'm a professional because of how I carry myself, of course, but also just how long and how many people know me behind the scenes, you know, because of my longevity here, this is going to be my seventh year at Chico State. [laughs] So I've been here for quite some time, and, you know, a lot of people know, "Oh, that's Chris, ok." Dah dah. You know, so, of course, it's gonna have that attachment to it.

Thoughts and Experiences Being a First-Generation Student and Mentor 32:00

Gwen: Thank you. So, Oh, next question. As a first-generation student myself, I would like to say thank you because you're very involved. But since you are a first-generation student, too, do you think that you have become somewhat of a mentor to those who have been in a similar position as you?

Chris: Absolutely. Absolutely. The goal is to, you know, influence as many people as possible. I feel like I came into this role because I wanted to showcase that you can do way more. You do way more with what you got, no matter where you are at, you know, And, you know, every year, I've somehow managed to make myself busier [laughs] on

the scale of busyness. But there's some semesters when you got some semesters where we don't. Of course, being first year, you're constantly learning. And I think this is one thing I mentioned earlier, but we're always constantly learning as people. And- And it's a process. But overall, I feel like the people I've met along the way, they see what I'm doing, and they say, oh, Snap, you know, this is really influencing me to do the same. I've had people who are currently now in leadership positions, you know, that I seen when they were in their first year, and they seen me, you know, doing certain things, and they're like, Wow, you know, I just kind of want to get where you're at, or, you know, Oh, I see you or I see them, and I'm like, Oh, I see you, you know, you're doing good. So, it's a great heartfelt conversation, you know, when I do see people in the similar areas I'm in.

Emily: That's very inspiring. It's really cool to hear [laughs]. So, you've been A.S. president since the beginning of the school year, so it's not been a super long time. But what have been some of the successes and challenges that you've encountered since the beginning?

Chris: Yeah. Um Actually, I've been in A.S. president since last semester, which is surprising to think about.

Background Gwen and Emily: Oh! [laugh]

Chris: My term actually ended as director of Social Justice and Equity May 15, and it started May 15.

Background Emily: Oh okay. So technically last semester [laughs].

Chris: And so last semester. Yeah, so technically, as soon as my role started, started out with [smacks mic] Sorry, I keep smacking the mic [laughs]. I started out with meetings. I started out having meetings with people, not people with my executive director. Started having meetings with President Perez over the summer. I started having meetings with the Vice President of Student Affairs. I started having meetings with my Director of Government Affairs just to learn the role, you know, learn, you know, what's different between this role as director of Social Justice in Equity and this role as president and understand, you know, what my goals are, you know, dig dive deeper into more specific and realistic goals. And those definitely, that was definitely a challenge. [pause] Sorry. That was definitely a challenge because [pause] being specific and

realistic because you only have nine months to do it. You only have, your term is practically, like those two semesters. Both of those, was it if I could actually be specific about it like 32 weeks? The term is 32 weeks to get really what you want to get done?

Background Gwen: I would just say two semesters*laugh*, the whole school year.

Chris: Yeah. And so, what I've encountered, you know, is a lot of professional development, but also making sure that I'm facilitating a functioning team, you know, I'm the leader of that team. I have 16 other representatives that support students in different areas. And so it goes down to that and also ensuring that, you know, that the corporations ring well, you know, because we're student. I'm pretty much the chief executive officer of the associated students. And so, there's a lot of back-end things that you have to focus on. Of course, there's a lot of advising and guidance in that. So, it definitely supports you in that formation. But it's also, I guess the setbacks on that is just understanding. You know, if you haven't been exposed to that previously, it's a lot of learning and questions that you have to ask. And I'm a very, like, observant person, so sometimes I can find myself not asking enough questions because I'm still trying to process and figure it out. And so, yeah, sometimes, those aspects of it, too. But it's also like, you know learning your own your own self in the process. You know, sometimes you experience impostor syndrome or your self-doubt moments being in this role because you're like, am I doing enough? Am I, like, am I being seen in this light? Am I being seen as a leader? So, you have those questions in that process, you know. But the good things behind it is that you see the progress. People appreciate your hard work, and sometimes it may not be seen by everybody, but people see it.

Chris's thoughts on Chico State's future and his own 37:21

Emily: Cool. Okay, so then what are some of the goals you have for the remainder of the school year since you have, more to go [laugh] than you've already done, essentially.

Chris: Okay, cause if I go super specific, you're like, what is that? What is that? What is that? I'll kind of start out with this pitch of not pitch, but it's something that I usually, I emphasize a lot. And it's my core values in my role previously as director of social justice inequity, and currently now, but more alternated into the role of president. And it's to advocate [laughs] I got a little wristband right here. But it's to advocate, unite and

understand. And what advocating is for is advocate for changes that paved the way for not only as you as students, but those after you. Unite in collaborations, events, opportunities to connect and bridge the gap between students, faculty and staff, and Admin, and [short pause] also [pause] programs, support programs and stuff like that. And then understand, understand what is impacting us as students, you know, policies, what policies are impacting us, how can we voice our concerns? Where are some ways that we can ensure that, you know, that we can, you know, have a word in that as well. And those are kind of like my three things: advocate, unite and understand. And I feel like through that, that's kind of thrived. You know, whenever I'm thinking about something new, you know, am I applying those three things to it? [long pause] Let me get a picture. Sorry. This is cool. I'm actually getting like a—.

Gwen: [laughs] So just to follow up from the last question, do you feel like you are done growing here at Chico? Because you're on the topic of some successes and challenges because I know that you've climbed the top of the ladder pretty top- pretty far the top of the ladder pretty far. And, like, how far do you think you'll go here at Chico?

Chris: You know, I was asked this question personally on a personal level by a couple of people. And they were like, you know, why are you-, you made everybody proud, like, for example, my sister, last night, she was like, You made all the family proud, why do you keep doing what you're doing? You know [laugh], like, what's keeping you going? You know? And then I had another question is, like, what's next after this? What are you doing next? You know, you've gotten here. But what's your next plan? What are you planning on doing? And so, sometimes, like, when I think about it, and even now, I'm like, you know, I'm doing it for myself, you know, I'm making a name for myself, but also, you know, also for the people that look up to me, you know, the people that have supported me, and they invested their time and effort in ensuring that I get where I can go. You know, those people I owe it to those people, too. And I want to do the same for others. So, I think that's one of those answers for that, but also kind of wrapping back to the question. I feel like I feel like I'm still learning. You know, Although I'm at this point, there's a lot to learn in this role. There's a lot to learn moving. There's a lot to learn even when you finish, when you get your degree. What's next? You know? Like, so it's that aspect of it, too, you know, your personal development, you have to figure out what's

next for you, and how can you navigate through that at a level of, of continuing to go because the grind don't stop, you know, even after college.

Gwen: Thank you. I had a funny comment to say, but I forgot [laugh]. Um Oh, I remember. Because, like, you can only- like, like, you just can't stop growing. So-

Chris: Absolutely.

Gwen: Remember us when you become President. Please remember us.

Everyone: [laughs]

Chris: I appreciate that.

Gwen: Um, so another follow-up question or a different question that I want to know. All this talk is making me feel very influenced. Is Presidency hard? Is it complicated in any way? Like, is it easy?

Chris: There's weeks where I'm like, I can't get any busier than this. [laugh] I always surprise myself. But it's not easy. It's definitely not easy because you're learning. You know, you're learning about yourself in the process, you're learning what you're comfortable doing, what you're not comfortable doing. And, you know, sometimes you have to get used to get comfortable with being uncomfortable in certain situations and conversations. And so, it's all about professional development, your personal growth, you know, at the end of the day. And sometimes there's some days where I'm like, you know, like, [laugh] am I doing this correctly or am I doing this right? But as long as you are reaching out and expressing your concerns, being vocal about it, you can do it. Anybody can do this wrong. You know, anybody can be a leader.

Gwen: Thank you. And what has it been like working with President Perez and the Administrative Cabinet?

Chris: It's been fun. It's been fun. There's definitely a lot of conversations that I have and getting to know them at kind of like at a more personal level, but also in a way that so when I have these meetings, I'm asking them, how can I support you and how you can support me? These are my goals. How can you support me in these? You know, and that's the question. It's like, oh, well, how can I support you specifically? One thing I learned about President Perez, he's very specific. He's like, "I want to know specifically what's going on". "What is really"- like, "Let's dive deeper into this", you know? And he's a person of action. He wants to get it done; you know? And so, I've definitely ask him I

asked him for advice a lot, you know, in regards of, like, you know, what is the role being present? Because I eventually want to venture into that role, you know, a eventually, you know [laugh], administratively in that role. And so just learning about him on the back end, learning his cabinet, his cabinet, working with his cabinet. I've been familiar with him since my previous role as director of social justice equity. So, the transition was easier, and I was a familiar face, and I was familiar with a lot of the professional staff and administrators. So, it's been a great transition on a personal level. And everybody knows my work ethic. I'm going to get it done.

Emily: Okay, so we're almost out of time, but I want to ask a final closing question. So, do you think Chico State is, like, moving in a positive direction regarding social justice and representation? And if so, like, what do you think is, like, maybe some things that still need to be done, like, progress that still needs to be made?

Chris: Mm. I had this conversation with our University Diversity Officer, he actually came to speak to my class, because I actually take a class currently right now that's focusing on equity, leadership, and policy and higher education. And he's spoke in that class. And the similar question was asked was, like, do you feel like there's a lot more that needs to be done when it comes to EDI work, you know, or just equity diversity inclusion? He's like, Yeah, it never ends. You know, someone always needs help, you know, or someone always needs to be represented in a way, you know, and that's just how the system is, you know, presented to us and navigating through that. And so, when I think about social justice, there's always going to be some issues that occur. I mean, there's a whole world out there outside of Chico State that impacts not only Chico state, but also the students. And so, when I think about that, there could be something that occurs, that impacts the students that we have to act on it. You know, so I feel like there's always going to be opportunities or not even opportunities, but there's always going to be moments where there's going to be more needed from Chico State. As of right now, in forms of the advocacy, the campus, the University has been doing great and vocalizing, but also listening.

Emily: Okay, cool. Thank you so much for doing this interview with us. We really appreciate it. I know you have to get to a class, so we'll end it there. But good luck with the rest of your Presidency. We wish you the best of luck.

Chris: Okay. Yeah. All right. I would like to do a [laugh] quick video recording with y'all.