

Oral History Transcript

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Narrator: Jasmine Gonzalez (June 19, 2004-)

Interviewer: Logan Dawson
 Piper Loden

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[Logan Dawson] Hello. My name is Logan Dawson, and today is Wednesday, October 30, 2024. It is 6:30 in the afternoon. My partner, Piper Loden and I are conducting the interview in the Meriam Podcast Studio in Chico, California. We are here with the Student Coordinator of the New Student Orientation and Transition Programs, Jasmine Gonzalez.

[Piper Loden] Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Oral History Project, preserving Chico State Voices for Change, which aims to narrate the history of community activism at Chico State. We want to remind you that this may be published as part of the Oral History Archives project for Doctor Gloria Lopez in my Ethnic Studies Methodologies class at California State University Chico, and we need your permission to publish this transcript in part or in its entirety. Do we have permission to record this interview, Jasmine?

[Jasmine Gonzalez] Yes, you have my permission.

[Loden] All right. We will go ahead and get started. First, we're going to talk a little bit more about your personal background and your decision to attend Chico State. So, our first question for you is, why did you choose to come to Chico State?

[Gonzalez] Yeah. So, I decided to come to Chico State, so I'm actually from Willows, California, so that's about 45 minutes from here. It's not too far but there's really nothing in Willows to put it short. So, my family and I- growing up would come to Chico a lot, whether it was fried groceries, back to school shopping, all of that. And all in all, Chico State was the closest university to Willows. I'm a very family-oriented person, and I really wanted to continue to have that connection with my family back in my hometown. So, I thought that the best option for me was to attend Chico State, not only because of that, but it's also super affordable. It was in my budget. I was able to attend here comfortably, unlike other universities. And I visited Chico State a couple of times during high school as well for some outreach programs that I was in, and I just really loved Chico State. When I was in those programs, I really felt a sense of community

already. While not being a part of Chico State, which was really nice. Not to mention, the environment here is super nice. Campus is beautiful. So, those are just a few reasons as to why I chose Chico State

[Loden] Right. And what did those programs... What did they entail of? What did they look like?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so I was in Upward Bound during high school. Upward Bound is like an outreach program for high school students to get to know what university life is. It specializes in just connecting students with university life, letting you know what it is and a few of those topics. And Upward Bound would entail of a program during the summer where high school students would be able to come attend a university. And in my case, it was Chico State University. Over the summer, and we would just get to connect with other students, learn about what university life is, connect with other high school students as well, and overall, just form that sense of community within each other and get to experience what Chico State is. And yeah, it really helped me make my decision.

[Dawson] So, you said that your hometown is in Willows, and you said that it influence your decision to come to Chico and that it's just close by and affordable. How was your family influenced you and your values and goals? And also, are you a first-generation student?

[Gonzalez] Yes, so I'm a first-generation student. I think a part of my decision as to why I came to Chico State was because of that reason, coming from a background where university isn't really a thing in my culture. It's introduced, but a lot of my family and culture just can't afford it or go through with it. So, it's all relatively new. It was a little bit scary. So, with that in mind, like, not having family that could guide me through such a, you know, transitional period in my life, I felt that I needed to be close to home just in order to get that sense of sense of support, I guess, if I were to go somewhere farther away, I wouldn't really have that support. Nonetheless, my family would not be able to guide me through university life because of those reasons. But yeah, I would say my family and culture definitely did have an effect as to my decision as to coming to Chico State. They didn't really tell me to come to Chico State. They motivated me to go to university, but I feel like because of our background, because of my history, a lot of it just drew me to want to be closer to home, and Chico State was that option for me.

[Loden] And did any of your other family members, if you have any, go to Chico State?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, that's also another reason, actually. So, my brother, older brother, actually came to Chico State, graduated with a Bachelor's. He's now in his Master's getting his Master's here at Chico State as well. And I also have another older brother that decided to join Chico State. So, I think it's a family legacy now, we're just all going to Chico State, trying to get our degrees, get educated. And it was definitely a sense of comfort, knowing that my older siblings were here as well.

[Loden] Right. That's awesome. Yeah, it's nice to have the whole family here as well. And so next, we're going to kind of transition into, like, mainly your academic journey and some of your decisions, like when it came to your major. So, one of the questions we have is, how did you decide your major? I know you kind of were an undeclared student, if you want to touch a little bit more on that.

[Gonzalez] Yeah. So, coming into Chico State, I was undeclared, so I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I experimented with all of the general education areas that we're required to take. I took a variety of different areas, a variety of different subjects as well. I got to experiment with different things, get to see what I like, what I didn't. And that process took me about a full year and a half, I would say until I ultimately decided to major, double major, in art education and art studio, and now I'm potentially getting a minor in Spanish. So, the journey into really knowing what I wanted to do took a while. It took a lot of experimenting, as I mentioned, but ultimately, I got here. Yeah.

[Dawson] What interests or passions led you to become an art major?

[Gonzalez] Yeah. So, as I mentioned, I tested the waters in a lot of different subjects. I thought I wanted to become a biology major. I really like science. It's really influential, and I find passion in it, but I just couldn't see myself doing it for the long run. So, I felt that way for a couple of other subjects as well. But growing up as well, I always had a sense of connection and strong passion towards art. I think it's a beautiful study to get involved in. It's amazing. I absolutely love it. I could say so many great things about it. But I also have a strong passion for education. So, it's also another reason as to why I'm in the position I have now. We can talk more about that later. Yeah, I really value education. This might stem from my culture as well as a first-gen student. I feel very blessed, very grateful every single day that I come to campus. Even if I'm on campus. I was talking to Piper earlier, if I'm on campus from 8:00 A.M. To 11:00 P.M. At the end of the day, I always have this sense of gratefulness, passion that I'm able to experience education because not everyone can. And ultimately, yeah, that just made me want to share this passion for education and share another passion of something that I truly love, which is art. So, combining both of them is, yeah, why I chose it.

[Loden] And on campus, are you, aside from your job title, are you part of any other on campus organizations?

[Gonzalez] So, I'm in a few things. So, I'm an alumni for the Educational Talent Search, ETS. It's also another outreach program. I was in high school, and I'm an alumni for them. They're a great program on organization on campus as well that helped me succeed. I'm also an upward bound alum, so they have an office here at Chico State. I'm a part of that. I'm in a few clubs. I would say at the moment, I'm most active in Clay Club, which is our ceramics club, as well as the Art Education Club, so clubs oriented towards the things that I like most.

[Dawson] So, now we're going to switch gears again into campus organization involvement. What made you look or what made you decide to join the orientation team? The first place.

[Gonzalez] Yeah, good question. So, I decided to apply for the orientation position coming in as a first-year student here at Chico State. So, our hiring process begins during the fall. So, it was

my first fall and ever semester on Chico State campus. And word was going around that the orientation leader position is a very prestigious position. It's competitive. So, I was really scared of that. In high school, I was the type of person that was a little bit nervous to get out of my comfort zone with a little bit of I was scared, I guess, to try new things, get out there. And I felt that way coming into Chico State. Ultimately, I try to rewire my brain and tell myself that this is a pivotal moment in my life where I should really expand and grow and push myself. It took a little bit, but I definitely pushed myself to apply. It was yeah, it was a little bit nerve racking because some people were telling me that they were just surprised. I was applying as a first year, and they were like, "Oh, you're going to apply for it? That's a very prestigious job. Good luck". So, I was a little bit nervous for it, but in the end, I decided to do it because I wanted to push myself. In reality, I did not think I would get farther in the position. I used it more as a tactic to help myself push myself and grow. And in the end, it just gave me a whole bunch of different rewards. I got the position, and I'm at the position I'm at now. So, really, it was just a matter of wanting to push myself. So, that was it.

[Loden] And what did the team look like your first year? What were your opinions about, you know, being a part of that team dynamic?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so I would say it was one of the best teams I've ever worked with hence my third year now. It's really great. Orientation really provided me that sense of community and sense of belonging on campus, which is something as a first year I was really earning for. I really needed this. Coming in, again, as a first-year student, especially. The team was amazing. Everybody brought different skills, different qualities, and we all had the same mindset of wanting to help incoming wildcats, students that are interested in education. And it was really empowering to see all of the different great minds that we had on the team to share different ideas, get to know each other, and just form a family bond as well. It was a great team. I love that team. Yeah. It was great.

[Dawson] How long have you worked for the orientation program?

[Gonzalez] Yes. So, I've worked now for a total of two years. I'm going to complete my third year now. So, I've basically worked with the orientation team for the entirety of my years here at Chico State.

[Loden] And what positions have you held in the program, and what were some of your main responsibilities related to those positions?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so my first year, I applied for just the senior orientation leader position. What that entails, it's just an orientation leader that helps incoming students again. So, we do a variety of different things on the team. You help guide students. You let them know of different resources, different things that we offer on campus to best guide them as they begin their journey here at Chico State. And as an orientation leader, you're required to give presentations, give influential feedback, as well as help students get into the classes that they need for their fall schedule as well as the spring. So, it's a lot of just onboarding processes for incoming wildcats. So, again, helping them register for classes, helping them get a sense of belonging on campus, and then giving them those resources that they need in order to succeed. And that's basically the

first position I had. After my first summer with the orientation team, I applied for senior staff, so orientation leader, senior staff. Um, it's basically, like, the next step- step up. This title basically entails assisting the new incoming leaders. So, as a senior staff, I was there to guide all of the new hires that were on our team, and that was that looked like helping with recruitment. So, helping with the group interviews, helping with tabling. And then in the spring, it was a little bit more of one on one, getting to know the team, helping them in the class that we require as training during the spring, and then being acting as a guide and role model in the summer and just throughout the whole process of getting to know the new hires. And then this summer, I applied for the student coordinator position for the team. And this position entails a little bit more. So, it's a lot more background work. So, I'm doing a lot of great things, I would say, it's really fun. I'm hosting interview sessions, so I'm getting to know the applicants one on one. Getting to know how to navigate those processes as well. I'm also going to be helping teach the training course that we require in the spring, so I'm going to do a little bit of teaching there. Yeah, a lot of the background work of just the program in general. There's a lot I can go into if you need me to, but...

[Loden] And what is the application process looking like this year? Have numbers maybe increased since your time in the program?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so thankfully, numbers have increased, which is great. So, we're seeing a lot more of an influx of students that are interested in the position. So, I think we've been doing things right. Yeah. So, in previous years, it seems like Ever since COVID, you know, COVID happened. Some things happened there. Numbers kind of dropped in applicants. And it's normal. It makes sense. And ever since then we've been climbing a little bit up. And this year, so far, we've actually surpassed the highest number that we had in previous years by like over 20. So, we're seeing a lot more of attention for this position. And it's really great to see how much the program is truly growing, and it's been nice to see that through my process is working for orientation as well.

[Dawson] So, you said that you interview people. I'm just wondering, what are those interviews? How do they go?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so we're going to get to those actually starting this Friday. Whoop. First interview. But those are initial first interviews and group interviews. So, it's a group of applicants. About 25 applicants. We get to get to know them, and ask difficult questions. We have a variety of different activities for them as well. And in this initial interview, it's just a lot of getting to know the applicants and getting to see if they would match well with the position. And as a student coordinator, I would Whoops *the microphone falls on floor*. I would facilitate a lot of those activities, lead the presentation. Yeah, facilitating and coordinating those types of things. And then after this initial group interview, we're going to move into individual interviews in which we will, as a team, collectively decide our strongest applicants and then conduct individual interviews where there'll be more formal and more just generic interview questions, getting to know the applicants a little bit more and seeing what they bring to the table. So, it's really nice being on the other end this year.

[Loden] Right. And what did your interview process look like?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so my process is a little bit interesting. So, my first year when I applied. I actually was not able to make it to a group interview. So, we had to accommodate a specific- just individual interview for the first initial interview, which is totally fine. So, it was a little bit different. I got to meet one on one with the team. Initially, I was about the same process as well. So, I met with the team for that first interview, and then after that, they told me that they wanted to hear more from me. So, then we went into a more formal interview. So, the process is about the same, mine is just a little bit different because of accommodations that I had to make.

[Loden] Great. And with the orientation program, have you had any specific mentors that have supported you?

[Gonzalez] Yes, I have. I would say everyone on the team has really just been a great support to me and just everyone around us. Like I mentioned earlier, the environment we have, we have catered as a team is just super uplifting and empowering. So, I would say everyone that I've met so far with the orientation team has really contributed to my success and just, you know, growth as a person. Other people that I'm really grateful for as well are our director, so Sean Ryan, he's a really great, welcoming person that's there to support you. Even if it doesn't have to do with the orientation team position at all, he is there to support, and, you know, he's always asking how you're doing, getting to know you, wanting to stay up to date with how you're doing. He really motivates you. To do your best. And then Alessandra, as well, she is one of our program coordinators. She's also amazing. She is very supportive. Everyone on the team, as I mentioned, is just really kind and there to support one another.

[Dawson] Sorry to jump backwards a little bit. You said earlier that your background has prevented you from being as likely to go to school. I was wondering what that background is.

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so I am Hispanic. So, I am of- my family's from Mexico. So, yeah, our culture is just a little bit different. We grow up a little bit different. Seems like we tend to have families more early on, and that kind of prevents us from, you know, branching out and growing as a person educationally. But it's also a money thing where you know, a lot of times in my culture, we're just not really able to provide that type of education for our family. Yeah, I'm from Hispanic culture. And Ya.

[Dawson] Also, you said that you were doing a spring training course. I was wondering what that entails.

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so we do, because of the position, it entails a lot. You have to be very well rounded about Chico State, well rounded about just knowing how to orient new incoming students. So, what that means is that we had to implement a spring course, a three-unit course, we meet twice a week. And it's just a course jam packed about everything that incoming orientation leaders need to know in order to best be there to support our incoming wildcats. So, we learn a little bit about general education requirements, graduation requirements, familiarize ourselves with a little bit more of what students need to know in order to succeed academically. And on top of that, we also let them know a lot of different resources. We familiarize them with the resources we have on campus that way when they have a student looking for a specific

resource, say, they have a disability that they need accommodation for. They know what resource to reach out to, and what resource to give them. So, it's a lot of, yeah, just getting to know Chico State what we offer and preparing them to be able to exert that to the incoming.

[Loden] When you were in the program, were there any specific challenges that you have experienced during your time during that training session?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so the training can be pretty rigorous, I would say. There is a lot of yeah, the course really does take a lot of effort, and you have to put a lot of time into it, I would say, in order to actually grasp the information that we are teaching. So, I would say it was challenging at times just because it's a little bit different from your other courses, right? We might be taking major related courses that we're more inclined to, and then we have this course that is just talking to you a little bit more about Chico State, but it's more for the position. So, it might be a little bit of what you want to prioritize, but in the end, I really think it was really influential, and not only did it teach me how to work with this position, but it taught me a lot about myself as well. So, there's more to it rather than just a course you have to take in order to be an orientation leader.

[Dawson] How have you grown throughout your time working with the program?

[Gonzalez] I would say I have grown a tremendous amount. I'm super proud of my growth. As I mentioned earlier, I was- I was very timid and a little bit scared of coming into Chico State, just university life in general. It was all new to myself, and I was a little bit nervous on how to navigate that. So... I lost my train of thought. Can you repeat the question, please?

[Dawson] Ya, so I was wondering how you've grown.

[Gonzalez] Oh, yeah, growth. Right. Right. So, jumping back on there. Yeah, I was a different person coming into Chico state, and applying for Chico State was a first step of stepping out of that comfort zone and getting myself a little bit scared because being scared is okay, at times, it pushes you to grow. So, that was a first step that really just pushed me to want to try and do different things. And then ever since then, I've just been on a- on a role, growing, learning a whole bunch of different things. I've learned a lot through this position, whether it was boosting my confidence. I'm a more confident person, and I'm able to say that. I feel a lot more professional. I am in contact with a lot of professional staff on campus, and it's important to learn about how to navigate that professionalism, so I've been practicing that. Additionally, some public speaking, as well. We do a lot of public speaking with the orientation team. It was definitely not my strong suit. I do not like giving presentations. I do not like speaking in front of a lot of people. But the position really pushes you to try, get to know what public speaking is, and just, yeah, it teaches you to understand the things that you're a little bit scared of, and it pushes you to try them and then overcome those fears and then just- just grow. You just grow a lot. Yeah.

[Loden] And did you see similar growth within the rest of the team?

[Gonzalez] Yes, I would say everybody grew. So, everyone, again, had different qualities coming onto the team. Some were already great public speakers. Some of them struggled with it. Yeah, we all just had different qualities, different strengths, different skills. So, you could definitely pinpoint the things that other leaders were stronger at, and what leaders were a little bit

weaker as well. And then at the end of the summer, you really got to see how each individual got to grow with their individual weakness that they had. And in the end, we all just became super powerful. We're all super super strong, great people, and we all grew from the weaknesses that we all had, I would say.

[Dawson] Do you enjoy public speaking more now than you did before?

[Gonzalez] Yes, I do. I mean, I'm doing it. Is this public speaking? Yeah. In a way, in a way. Yeah, I like it more. I definitely do. I think it's really fulfilling now, actually going in front of a lot of people and having the opportunity to express myself or whether it's teaching or, you know, sharing information that I know. I think it's really nice. Yeah, I've definitely learned to grow to love public speaking a little bit more. And it's all thanks to this position.

[Loden] And what impact has working for the program had on members of the campus community? You said you interacted with, like, professional staff. How do you interact with them regularly? What does that look like?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so now as a student coordinator, I have to do that a little bit more. We have to get in touch with them, get to work with them and get to understand their role on campus, that way we can convey that to our orientation leaders, so they know how to work with them as well. During the summer, we work with professional staff almost every day, whether it's college advisors, just academic advisors in general. We have to get to know them as well as how to communicate properly with them. And yeah, just a little bit more about the student coordinator position. I have to do a little bit more of that. So, sending professional emails to them, getting in contact with them, and also meeting one on one to share influential pieces of information that they might need to know in order for them to be comfortable with the summer program that we have, as well as our winter program that's coming up. So, it's a lot of communicating, and you definitely do have to practice that professionalism when you are speaking to them.

[Dawson] What was a- what was a memorable or impactful experience that you can remember in particular about your time in the program?

[Gonzalez] Oh. I feel like I had a lot of memorable moments.

[Dawson] I'd love to hear all of them!

[Gonzalez] Oh. Okay, I'll share a few. Let's see. I can start off with one of my best moments I had with the team. I think it would be just I mean, every day, every day we got to learn something new. Experience something new. Our workdays are long. So, we get to see how we're doing throughout the day and just connecting with each other as well. So, every day, I would say holds a special memorable piece. I really liked when we had dance parties. So, our job is serious. We do important things on campus, but we also like to have a little bit of fun, and I think it was about almost every Friday. We would have a dance party. So, in the auditorium, where we host our orientation days, at the end of the day, when everybody was gone, we would have, I don't know, he's like the specialist for media lights, all that stuff music. He would put these really fun lights around the auditorium. He would oftentimes put smoke as well. Right? Was it like- what is it called? You would do, like the disco- Disco fog machine. It was a fog machine. Yeah. And then they would just have music blasting from the speakers that we have in there, and it was just

a team just laughing. If you had a tough day, it was pretty nice to just de-stress and dance, be goofy with other team members and kind of be unprofessional, but professional, if that makes sense. Right.

[Dawson] What are your workdays like?

[Gonzalez] Yes, during the summer?

[Dawson] How about both?

[Piper] Both.

[Gonzalez] Yeah. Okay. So, during the summer, Yeah, our workdays are pretty long, so they entail a lot of different things. So, they start at around 7:00 A.M. If they are in person and 8:00 A.M. If they are virtual sessions. So, we do have different sessions. I can talk about them more, as well. First, I'll talk about the in-person session, so we meet at 7:00 A.M. We have that first hour to prepare for the day. So, we do morning duties, where we set out tarps for check-in, where we set out flyers for people to park. A lot of just those logistical tasks that we have to get done before our guests arrive. And then at 8:00 A.M. Is when check-in starts, so that's when everybody starts coming into the auditorium. Every leader is assigned a specific major for the day. So, I know, Piper is a business major, and she was oftentimes or most of the time with our business students because she was able to best lead them as a business major. So, Piper was with business majors. She would spend the morning getting to know them, talk to them, ask them questions, where they're from, really connecting with them one on one to allow them to just get comfortable with Chico State. Yeah, that's what it would be in the morning, and then after that, we would proceed with some presentations. So, orientation leaders would then conduct presentations. Again, this information is about academics. So, requirements that they need to know resources that they might want to familiarize themselves with as well. And then also just some bonding with them. I know that I like to do yoga with my students, so I would like to do some form of activity with them to, you know, just get them comfortable with myself. I know the first day on campus can be really intimidating. You don't really know anybody. You're coming here, oftentimes alone. So, I really tried to make those connections with students. And my way of doing so was by doing yoga. So, connecting with them, it was super fun. And then the rest of the day is a lot of presentations. We host workshops. So, we do workshops of all different kinds of topics. We have a safety workshop where UPD comes in. If students are feeling a little bit more worried about their safety or our parents and guests, they can go to that workshop, learn a little bit more about that. We have other workshops as well, for example, the WellCat Workshop that we have, where students get to familiarize themselves with the WellCat Services that we have on campus, like the pharmacy, our counseling center, and whatnot. So, yeah, it's a lot of autonomy that we allow our guests to have, as well as our incoming students to choose what they are most interested in. So, we provide them with a lot of different options in hopes of them, you know, getting to know a little bit more of what they specifically want to know more about. We have lunchtime, great time. And then after that, for the last portion of the day, we move into major advising. So, students meet with their specific major advisors, familiarize themselves with the courses that they need to know that they should be taking, requirements, whatnot. And then at

the end of the day, the last task is for them to start registering for classes, so we have our academic advisors present, which help them register for those classes. And then after that, we have some root beer floats for students to take home, and then they are free to go. We also have an overnight program, if you want me to talk about that, too.

[Loden] Yeah, go ahead and tell us a little bit more about what the overnight program looks like during the summer.

[Gonzalez] So, the overnight program, I believe, started about two years ago. So, it's a program where students have the opportunity to stay on campus overnight. This program is a little bit more- I would say it's a little bit more fun for students just to start connecting and bonding. We really distract them from all of the, you know, logistical important stuff that we talk to them during the day, like academics, resources. And instead, we cater a really fun activity night for them. We go to the WREC where they get to familiarize themselves with the WREC. So, what we offer there- I know the WREC is a great attraction that students are always super interested in getting to know. So, we take them over there. They have choices on what they can do. I mean, they just can venture throughout the WREC, you know, get to know it. And then after that, we provide him our dinner option at the dining hall here on campus, so they get a sneak peek about what it might look like if they're staying on campus. And then we have some nighttime activities where we take them to the hub where they can connect with students, play different games. And then they get to stay in one of our residents' halls. So, yeah, this is also a great opportunity for students that are going to be staying on campus for their first year, first semester, whatever it is to get to know how it feels, to stay a night on campus. So, a lot of it is just really allowing them the opportunity to connect with what they're going to be doing for their academic journey here at Chico State, and also a fun opportunity for them to just have a good time.

[Loden] Thank you. And compared to the summer, what does your daily job tasks look like throughout the school year?

[Gonzalez] Now?

[Loden] Yes.

[Gonzalez] Yes. So, I'm getting to know my position a little bit more. As I mentioned earlier, it's a lot of logistical things. So, right now, a lot of our efforts have been put towards recruitment. So, we've been recruiting for a while now, having to do a lot of tabling, as well as handing out flyers, posting flyers, where we can and can't post fliers, a lot of those things at the moment, getting the word out there, checking on applicants, getting our interview sessions ready as well. So, it's a lot of yeah, background work, getting the room set up, getting our material set up, our interview questions. And after this, we're going to move towards working on our winter session. So, we have a winter orientation for students that are joining us in the spring. And my position really requires me to think outside the box and see if there are things that we can implement, things that we can make better, things that we can fix. So, we'll do a little bit of that for the winter. That'll be like a little mock test for me. My main role really is in the summer. That's when I work most in my position, leading, guiding the incoming leaders. So, I get to test that out in the winter. And then in the spring, that's going to focus a lot towards getting the summer

program ready. So, working on our overnight program, working with the parent and guest schedules that we have making our calendars, a lot of that as well as helping teach the UNIV 389 class, which I think is going to be so fun. So, you know, it's going to push me to also understand how to navigate Canvas because we're going to use Canvas, how to make lesson plans. It's going to be great for me, I would say, because I do want to be an art educator. So, it'll help me in the future. But yeah, teaching the class, and then in the summer, it's a little bit different from my previous years. Instead, I'm going to be leading the team. So, being the figure that orientation leaders can look out for if there is an issue. And again, just a lot of the logistical background work as well.

[Loden] Right. And you were talking about those skills that you've kind of acquired throughout your time in the program. And you were kind of touching on it a little bit, but could you touch a little bit more on how your time in the program, what skills that you've gotten are going to lead towards your future?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so this position is really helping me, specifically for my career goals. I want to be an educator. Even if I don't go into art education, I am also thinking about getting a master's degree in higher education because I love university so much. This position has allowed me to understand what it is to, like, work in higher education. So, it's allowed me to learn more about that. Yeah, it's really helped me understand as well. Like the age groups that I want to work with as well as an educator, you kind of have to decide. And I really like to work with our young youth like ourselves. I think it's really nice to be able to connect with them. We're at different stages in our life, and I really think that this stage in our life is a place that I really want to help lead people. So, help me in that sense, grow in familiarizing the things that I want to do, so it's really helped me pinpoint the things that I like most and value career wise, as well. So, yeah, did that answer your question? Okay.

[Dawson] So, you said there's you guys do orientation for people that are starting in spring as well.

[Gonzalez] Yes, we have a winter session that takes place. It's like a few days only. In the summer, we have days like every day. Well, Monday to Thursday from June to July. And in the winter, we do not have as many students wanting to come to Chico State. It's normally in the fall where we see most students coming in. For the spring, it's a lot of transfer students, so it's a little bit less, and we only have about five days. So, it's way less compared to what we do in the summer, but we do offer that for our students that are transferring over now.

[Dawson] What advice would you give to students who are interested in joining your or any program on campus?

[Gonzalez] Yes. I- just a generic piece of advice I would give to students, in general, would be to really just push yourself and try different things and get out of your comfort zone. This is advice I wish I could have told myself at the beginning of my academic journey here at Chico State. Advice I wish I could have, you know, also known throughout my academic journey before Chico State as well. Just really test yourself. It's okay to be afraid, try different things, push yourself. The outcome can be great. It's amazing. I have had a really great outcome because of

that advice that I kind of accumulated over the years now. But it would definitely be just to, you know, push yourself, get out of your comfort zone, try new things, and have a good time. Smile because we're living life, right? We're just trying to get by and get educated. We love school.

[Loden] Yeah. And would you find that throughout the day you would get really connected with students by the end of the day? What would that connection look like?

[Gonzalez] Yes. So, I would say I would get pretty connected with the students that I had every day. I have classes with some of my students, like this semester as well, which is really cool. And it's really nice to see them remember you as well. So, I would say we remember most of my students, perhaps not by name, because we see over thousands of students over the summer. So, I'm not going to remember everyone, obviously, but I do remember their faces, which is really nice. And if I see them, I smile, they smile back. Yeah, it's really nice getting to see that a lot of your students do remember you. I've had students come up to me, like, "Hey, Jasmine." and you know, asking how I've been. It's really nice to see that they remember you and that you might have had a positive impact on them, whether it is for their academic journey or just, you know, in life. I think it's really nice. So, I got to know my students really well. I think it was really nice the connections I've made. And, you know, I still see them from time to time in my classes, and it's nice to have that sense of familiarity, like getting to know each other.

[Dawson] In what way has this role allowed you to build relationships with faculty or staff across the campus?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so there's a lot of moments when we do have to reach out to faculty and staff. So, during our final training, our orientation leaders are required to get to know the [cars?]. So, the specialist for the college for the colleges that you're going to primarily be working with. So, you get to meet the professional staff that works with the students that you're going to be working with. So, you get to make those connections and really understand what the college that you'll be working with is, what they advocate for, what they do in order to best support the students. So, you do spend some time, a good amount of time getting to know those faculty. And then during the summer, you just every single day, you have to work with faculty as well, again, so you can work with academic advisors. And everyone on campus is super nice and welcoming to work with. So, you see them every day, you get to know a little bit more about them every day as well. So, yeah, you definitely do regularly work with them, and I would say my experience with all of the faculty I've worked with so far have been pleasant. They've been positive and nice, and they're all really influential people that are potentially doing a good job that I might want to do in the future.

[Dawson] What about students? Have you made any meaningful friendships with other students?

[Gonzalez] I would say friendships. I don't think I've gotten too close to my students. I think it plays a little bit of a part of professionalism when it comes to our position. I can't really be the student's friend because of what my position entails. If I wanted to, I think I could. You know, there's students that I met that are a part of my college as well that I think are really cool. I mean, I have students in my class that we get to talk to as well. So, I wouldn't say I've made strong friendships with my students, but I've made strong connections, where, you know, we're able to

meet, talk to each other comfortably. Yeah, and feel comfortable in that sense.

[Loden] And how has the orientation program evolved since your time doing the program and being there?

[Gonzalez] Yeah. So, every year, something changes. There's always different implementations that the current coordinators like to change and improve. I would say yeah, a lot of it is just ways on trying to improve our day to day activities. So, how can we make our experiences for our guests and students as best as possible? So, we receive feedback from our guests. We look into it, we brainstorm and see different things that we might want to do to, you know, accommodate to any things that we saw stick out during the summer. So, it definitely shifts every single year. You could definitely tell we switched some things up. And again, it's just every year, there's always something new to change, something that we can work on. So, I would say Yeah, we do change regularly.

[Loden] And in your role currently, what are ways that you've been trying to improve the program?

[Gonzalez] Yes, so something that I really wanted to improve for the program is our Spanish program. So, again, I can really tie into that because of my cultural background. I am a Spanish speaker. And again, just coming from this Hispanic background. Again, you see a lot of families that have never experienced education, and it can also be a journey for the parents and guests themselves. They oftentimes are a little bit more nervous than the students because they also have no idea what their student, their child is going to get into. And I can definitely relate to those stresses. I've seen it in my current family as well. So, some things that I really noticed in these past summers is, we definitely need to put more time and energy into our Spanish program. I really want to advocate for my people and my culture. So, I want to create more of an influential program throughout the day. It's really great. The fact that we have a Spanish program is amazing. Not every college or institution does this. So, it's nice that we have that already, but I am trying to find ways to improve it, so make it more of an empowering program for the family, the students, and the guests. Providing them with all the resources that they need. So, it has been a lot, there is a lot in the works for it, but that's something that I'm really trying to work on this summer. Definitely improve that program because it's close to my heart.

[Loden] And what does the program look like? Does it differ a lot from the regular program?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so it's a Spanish program catered just to our Spanish speakers here on campus. So, you'll see them. The program is just a program in itself. So, what it kind of is is we offer it certain days. So, people that are interested in it will come during those days, and we will disperse that group separately. So, they go in a different direction rather than our other parents and guests do. Previously, it's been one location where we have Spanish presenters coming in talking to them from different resources on campus. But it all seems to be a little bit stationary in one place, and that's something that I really wanted to change. I see that in our typical parent and guest program that we offer, it's a lot of engagement. We're moving from place to place and getting to know more faculty. There's a lot of just moving around rather than in our Spanish program, it's very stationary. It's very in the same place, and pretty straightforward. And yeah, I just want to

bring more energy, more enthusiasm, more things to do with the Spanish program rather than just lecturing certain things in Spanish to our parents and guests because they're just as important as our other parents and guests, so I want to offer them the most influential experience as possible.

[Dawson] In what ways does Chico State create a welcoming environment for incoming students?

[Gonzalez] Yeah. So, I think Chico State does a great job with community. Again, so in high school, I was a part of these outreach programs that allowed me to step foot on campus, and they got to meet a few current students, mentors that would help here and there. And getting to know them and then other professional staff as well was really positive. They really created a very strong sense of place, a sense of community. And I think Chico State does a great job offering that as is, even when you aren't a student or a part of Chico State in general. Everybody is super nice. Everybody seems to love education, which is great. So, they do cater a very strong sense of community. We offer a whole bunch of different, again, finding your community resources. We have the new Affinity centers that are starting up. So, we have, like the cross-cultural leadership center. We have El Centro, which is new here on campus that advocates for, again, also our Hispanic students on campus. A whole bunch of just different resources that really advocate for different communities on campus. And ultimately, I feel like that draws students from different backgrounds in, and it just really allows you to feel a sense of place here.

[Loden] And a follow up question for that is, how do you help students find clubs or organizations that align with their cultural or personal identities?

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so during the summer, we really do work with students one on one. Our groups are relatively small. We'll have from, like, six students to maybe 15, 16 students in our group. So, we really do have the opportunity to connect with them, one on one. And in that time, we do ask them a lot of questions, like, what are you looking for? What are things that, you know, motivate you? What are, you know, things that they like? And we learn more about the students as the day goes on, and then we offer them the resources that we think best fit for them. On top of this, we also have our presentation that we give to all of our students that includes a lot of the different cultural resources we have, like the affinity centers, a lot of different resources, again, that students might stick to. That's why we try to give them as much as possible. For example, we range from ARC, the Accessibility Resource Center, we introduce that to students. We introduce the Cross-Cultural Leadership Center. So, if students are looking for a resource to find a sense of community, different cultures, that's a place to go. So, we do present them with a variety of different resources that we have. And our hope is that at some point, they will identify the things that they're looking for and make note of the things that we are, you know, handing over to them, and also just working with them one on one and giving them more specific recommendations as you get to know them.

[Dawson] What is one resource on Canvas that you feel is most underutilized by our student community?

[Gonzalez] Ooh. I feel like a handful, maybe, but we can. I would say our health center is... I

just don't really see many students go over there; not really know about the things that they offer. I think yeah, the Health Center offers great things. They have a variety of things that range from, you know, planned parenthood. They do just offer a whole bunch of different resources that students definitely should be aware of. They have a pharmacy that has medication at discounted prices compared to our local, you know, pharmacies at Chico State. It's a great option. Not only is it because of the price, but it's on campus, so it's accessible to students as well. Yeah, I think the Health Center is a great one that students really should look into.

[Loden] And what's a resource that you highly value and that you would recommend other students to maybe use or look into more?

[Gonzalez] I think I'm a little biased, but I really like the orientation team. We're more of an organization, I would say, but I really love the orientation team. You get to learn more about like-minded people as you- that are encouraged about education that are encouraged to help incoming students as well. Great people. So, I would say yes. This is one that I really, really like on top of it. I would say just more of clubs that I am really inclined towards. So, my art club, such as a ceramics club, I think it's really nice to get together with people that share the same interests as you. But yeah, I think it all just matters in- the things that you like most. And for me, it's art and education.

[Dawson] How do you handle situations where a new student feels out of place or disconnected from others?

[Gonzalez] Yeah. We oftentimes do see that in the summer. It's important to know how to work around that. I would say giving the student an opportunity to work more with you individually, so get to know them a little bit more, put that effort in. Yeah, try to connect with them more one on one, I would say. Obviously, if the student seems a little bit stressed or not in the mood of wanting to communicate at the time, which is totally understandable, we see that as well. We give them that space. A lot of it is really just reading the student and seeing if they are wanting a little bit more help, and if that's the case, we'll jump right in. I'm happy to, you know, step aside and talk to a student one on one as well, if needed. I know a lot of students also do require that. Yeah, and just being that support system for them as well, definitely embodying yourself as a person that they can trust and rely on and ask questions to. So, Yeah, just display yourself as a person that they can talk to.

[Loden] And how do you hope that the orientation program will continue to evolve in the future? Like, what kind of legacy are you looking to leave on the program?

[Gonzalez] So, I really love the Spanish program. I want to work with the Spanish program. So, I really do want to leave a lasting impact with this specific program. That's one of my goals that I'm working on right now. Yeah, I think I just really want to advocate for my people, my culture. So, I'm really going to try my best to, you know, start up the Spanish program, you know, make some things a little bit better than we already had. And then hopes that our incoming coordinators or incoming leaders that do decide to continue with the program will continue to carry on those things that I really value, and I find very important. But, yeah, I think I really want to leave a lasting impression with our Spanish program. And all in all, just a lasting impression

on our incoming guests and wild cats.

[Dawson] What role do you think diversity and inclusion play in a successful orientation program? And how do you support that?

[Gonzalez] I think it's very, very crucial. You know, we don't just see one culture attending Chico State. We see a variety of different people with different backgrounds. And it's important in our hiring process as well. You know, getting the word out there to certain populations that we don't really see are represented. And that's kind of when my job kicks in when I need to identify the populations that we don't really see applying to become an orientation leader. We try to find ways to connect with them. Connect with those populations. So, whether it's advocating at a club. So, we can go to one of our cultural clubs and speak at them, encouraging the current students that are in that club to apply for the orientation leader position, and explaining why it's super important to have that diversity because we see again, a whole bunch of different people from different backgrounds joining Chico state, and it's important to have people that they can relate to in order to find that sense of belonging on Chico state. I always find it easier to speak to people that have the same upbringing as me, the same cultural background as me. When it comes to making connections. I always seem to navigate myself more towards those types of people. And I feel like that's the case for a lot of people as well. So, having those options for students to see, "Oh, I think I share the same cultural background as them, I can see similarities with them." I think it is super important. So, again, everyone's needs are met, and those one-on-one connections can be made and advocated for.

[Loden] Great. And what aspects of Chico States values or culture do you find most meaningful to share with our new student population?

[Gonzalez] Do you mean like resources or...?

[Loden] It can be more of just like the different ideas we have on campus along with, for example, education, like how we value our education, what that looks like in our campus community?

[Gonzalez] Yeah. I think our diversity and inclusion, our diversity and inclusion is something that we really take pride in. We have recently started up those affinity centers that we have. We had a few already, but it seems like we are catering a little bit more representation of different cultures that are then created into resources for the students with those cultures. So, I see a lot of different again, resources that advocate for students of all different backgrounds, and I really do think that if a student comes here, it will be able to find that sense of belonging, that sense of similarity in one way or another through the countless resources that advocate for diversity and inclusivity that we have.

[Dawson] And then one more question, how do you balance being a leader and appear to the students you work with in orientation? Because you were talking earlier about how you can't just be friends with them.

[Gonzalez] Yeah, so during the day, it's a lot of yeah, working with the students professionally. So, being that person that they can look up to and talk to comfortably. It's a position. So, it's a job, you can't always become friends with the students right away. If your relationship with the

student progresses outside of the position, that's totally fine. But in the position, itself, your main role is to be that role model for them and share resources that they might need to know. I feel as if you were to share a friendship during the position itself during the day, it might steer you away from the purpose of advocating for all the students, not just one. So, I think it's just a matter of professionalism during the day, giving your interests to all of the students, not just one that you seem to connect more with. Yeah, sharing with all of them, making it equal. And then, again, if you seem to have strong connections with a student that you meet, and you want to make a friendship with them, I would say that's completely understandable outside of the position.

[Loden] And do you remember the orientation leader that you had? Did they have an influence?

[Gonzalez] Yes. I do remember my orientation leader. I think their name was Jamie. I'm pretty sure. Yep, curly hair. I remember Jamie. Jamie had an impact on me. I was super super nervous at my orientation day. I was with the- what's it called? My mind blanked. But I was on campus with a program for Summer Bridge. EOP. There it is. I was with EOP for Summer Bridge during the summer, and we had our specific EOP orientation day that day. And I remember Jamie was my orientation leader, and I was super stressed. A lot of emotions that day. Again, it was a lot of just learning what university life is, and it was really intimidating and nervous. But Jamie was a very fun, friendly, and funny person to help guide me and be the first face that I meet on campus. So, I will always be grateful for the impact that Jamie had on me. I think, yeah, they really provided me with details, resources that I needed to know, as well as being that figure that I could look up to and feel comfortable reaching out to. So, shout out to Jamie.

[Loden] It's so nice to see your growth throughout your journey at Chico State and your time in the program and your influence and impact that you're leaving on the program. And thank you for your time today. Is there anything else that you'd like to add to the interview?

[Gonzalez] Um, no, thank you for taking time and interviewing me. This is really special, and I appreciate it. So, thank you.

[Loden] Yeah, of course.

[Dawson] All right. Thank you so much for coming. Thank you so much for letting us interview you.

[Gonzalez] Wow, yes, thank you. It was really a great time. I really appreciate you both. I wish you all the best.

[Dawson] Thank you.

[Gonzalez] Thank you.