June

27:05 + 17:02 = 44:07

Interviewer: [Recording 1] Well, June, thank you for coming in today. The goal is to ask some questions about your own transition, when you graduated from Midwest University, the degrees that you garnered here. And, of course, there will be a series of questions for you to share about your own transition after college from school to work. Thank you.

June: Perfect. So, as you mentioned, my name is June, and I graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor's of Arts in Spanish and a minor in International Studies.

Interviewer: Very nice, very good. So we'll go ahead and start with the first question then. So you have this bachelor's in Spanish and you have it in International Studies. I know those concentration advisers well. Now, and you've completed this task as part of your undergraduate experience, you graduate, you complete the degree. These are what we called scheduled events, or basically rites of passages that helps you move along your journey. How did you feel about your transition from school to work? You garnered these two degrees, and then so tell us about that transition from that last semester and up to, leading up to work.

June: OK, so I am kind of unique in my situation where I didn't go into a traditional working field, if you will. I had, so in my last year at the university, I studied abroad through our Central and Global Intercultural Studies Program in Spain. And I had an amazing experience. And there I was gaining credits for my degree at Midwest University. And when I returned, I had to finish up my last classes at

Midwest University in order to graduate. And I just felt when I came back to campus like something was missing. My passion has always been Spanish and integrating myself in other communities, Spanish-speaking communities in particular. And so I wanted to go back. I desperately wanted to finish the work that I had been doing in Spain or in another country. And so I decided to join a program, which I guess is working too, but I wasn't paid like a traditional salary. So I went to the Dominican Republic. And I was working in an orphanage with orphaned and abandoned children for six months. And I wasn't really paid that much. Basically I had to use my own money to kind of fund what was going on there. I had housing; I lived in the orphanage with the students in like a separate home with other volunteers. But we had to pay for our own food. Other than that, everything else was provided to us. So after leaving the Dominican Republic then I also had this big gap in my life about eight months where I was just really trying to transition from being in the orphanage so long and coming back to America. And it was very, very difficult for me. Another thing is that my family didn't really understand all the things I had gone through and how I had changed and grown through that experience. So for eight months it was a pretty low point for me where I was really trying to do soul searching and figure out what I wanted to do with my life and where I needed to go next. So then I immediately decided why not come back to Ann Arbor and come back to the university. I've already established connections with faculty and already have been a part of programs and already have a degree. So it would be a lot easier for me to come back here and then try to figure out what I want to do.

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So now I have a position with the Midwest University Community Scholars Program, which is a living/learning community on campus in east quad. This program I was also a part of my freshman and sophomore year. So it really provided the foundation of what college was like for me and has always been a home. And so I decided to come back to that home and go to the opposite kind of end of things as being a staff person. And through that position I've learned so much about what actually goes into a lot of the programs that we plan for students. When I was a part of it freshman and sophomore year, I just attended these programs. But now I actually see the logistics of how the programs are actually established. And in the fall, I'm looking forward to applying to go back to school. I really want to get a graduate degree in social work, so I'm looking towards those kind of programs. And I feel that the time that I took off from school really allowed me to hone in on what I wanted to go back to school for. And I feel that time was necessary in order to get to the point where I am now. And one thing that really kind of shocked my parents. They have a very traditional mind-set of you go and get your Bachelor's; you go and get your Master's. You continue and get your doctorate. You don't take breaks in between schooling. So I had to convince them that I needed that time for growth and exploration before returning to graduate school.

Interviewer: Sure, sure. Awesome. Now let's go back a little bit and tell me a little bit. You said, during that six months where you pursued your passion in the DR, they provide housing but you pay for food. Did that come with health benefits too?

June: Yes, so there was a clinic in the orphanage and if we ever needed to go there for dental reasons, for health reasons, we could go there for free. The thing is that the clinic that's in the orphanage is only, is very limited in the things that they can provide, so if anything that was really traumatic, needed medications, need to be seen by a better physician, if you will, then we had to go to the capital to do that. And so the capital was like an hour drive away. And there is where we would be treated.

Interviewer: Wow. Now tell me about this now. What's interesting is, so you're there for six months. You have to fund your own food and probably personal necessities, how do you make that happen?

June: Yeah, so, technically we didn't have to fund our food but unfortunately the food that they provide in the orphanage is very, is low grade. It's very much the same kind of meal every single Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. It's very predictable. If you don't like those meals, which we got tired of, even though the kids have to eat those meals unfortunately, then what we did is, our program allowed us to travel into the city. Every two weeks we would get transportation into the city, and that's where we would go to the supermarket. We could go grocery shopping. We can eat food at restaurants and things like that. We can buy personal things, toiletries. And yeah, we probably made about a hundred dollars a month. So once again, not like a lavish lifestyle, which is why we had to have our own money kind of to sustain our living. But other than that, we were kind of, we were not necessarily in a city. We were kind of in, I don't know what you would call it. It was like a place created within the outskirts of the city. So this orphanage was literally constructed

in an area that is not somewhere you could like locate on a map or that it has a name or a town or anything like that. It's like, I don't know, I sometimes kind of compare it to where kind of people just take land, they take over land and they create something there. And that is what it is. And so, yeah, it was really interesting. Because a lot of people wanted to know where I was located or wanted to send things to where I was located. But it can't necessarily go to where I was because I didn't have an address. But we had a mailbox in the city that we would go to. That's where people could send things to us.

Interviewer: Wow, that's interesting.

June: It's kind of difficult to explain.

Interviewer: So in learning a little bit about your transition from school to work and you get two majors, you successfully complete two majors. Were there things that you thought would happen because you graduated from Midwest University?

June: So I, along with a lot of my colleagues, we thought that having this degree from Midwest University would automatically open up all of these doors. We would have to turn down job offers, if you will. And it was not the case. I know friends that graduated with degrees in engineering and friends that were pre-med, friends that were in the dance school, friends that had an array of majors. And after we graduated, it was kind of like we were stuck, kind of what you talked about earlier about just the state of the economy was not at a place—and currently still isn't at a place—that could really support all of these students graduating. And this is also something that's not just happening currently in the United States. This was,

when I was Spain they're like having all of these protests currently because of the economy is not supporting a lot of students that are graduating. And so that's what we thought was the hardest thing. We said we have these degrees now and no one is trying to hire us.

And for me, after I came back from the DR, I ended up working in Office Depot. And I was very angry and just very frustrated. Because I'm thinking "I have a bachelor's from Midwest University. I should not be working here!" And, don't get me wrong, I am a humble person. But I was thinking "The qualifications that I have, why am I working at a cash register? I don't need a degree for that." Most of my counterparts didn't even go to school. And yet we were fighting for the same jobs. So that was a transition that was really difficult. And another thing is just Ann Arbor is always an option for us to come back to, but the housing, the housing market is so expensive to live here. So great we could find maybe a job on campus with a professor that we know, but they're not paying us that much in order to pay for our apartments and the property taxes and things like that. So it was like a very difficult place to transition.

And they told me there are all these alumni associations. You can talk to all of these people, and I was trying to reach out to these people, but I wasn't really getting anything. I wasn't getting anywhere. And it was very frustrating. I like

wanted to give up at some point. And luckily the apartment where I live in now I

was able to live there rent-free by working through the apartment. But I'm just thinking like for my friends who don't have that opportunity, how are they able to pay to live here? And it's very difficult. A lot of people have to commute or a lot of people are living in Ypsilanti even though they're working here, things like that in order to have some type of job, to make some type of money.

Interviewer: Wow. So we talked about events that you thought would occur. Were there certain things that didn't happen that you thought would have during that period of six plus, that eight months after graduation?

June: Yeah

Interviewer: What didn't happen?

June: So what didn't happen is I didn't end up in a job that matched with my degree. I am very thankful for the position that I have now, and I love working with first-year students. But I have always missed the fact that Spanish is not directly incorporated into the work that I'm doing. That was the reason that I kind of left and went to work in the orphanage, because I knew it would be a direct

component in what I was doing. And even still I find it very difficult. I find like a lot of jobs are willing to hire me and I find a lot of opportunities on this campus. But still trying to integrate my Spanish-speaking skills has been so difficult. The jobs where they're looking for translators and things like that are not necessarily what I want to do. Like law firms are looking for translators and things like that.

But I am really focused on community development, working with youth and education. So that is one thing I found very difficult. And I was very disappointed

kind of in the Romance Languages Department is they really did not help to integrate what my degree was with a job or like providing me with resources to do so. And really I've just been researching on my own trying to see what I could find. But I feel that they should already have this knowledge. You have an alumni base. Why don't we know where they're working and what they're doing and what their contacts are?

Interviewer: That's a good point. Yeah, cause we are one of the largest alumni base in the country. We are over 400,000 strong. So yeah that's a good point. Yeah, interesting. Interesting. So let's see. So you're transitioning and I hear a couple of things. In terms of social support and strategies, you know, and I'm curious, because you're saying the six months you're there you make a hundred dollars a month. So it sounds like probably six hundred dollars total. Tickets are expensive. And they provided food but not the good food, so you want to go out to the city and get some stuff. So how do you negotiate in terms of support? I mean cause it sounds like you're passionate about the young people. But when I look at people on the front line, how did you, what kind of social support and strategies did you use during that period?

June: So like you mentioned, it was very difficult. One thing that I had to do is thankfully I had gotten scholarships when I was an undergraduate so that was what I kind of used to afford the life that I was living there, like going to the restaurants and buying things like that. But other

than that, I really needed support from people here. It was very ironic. I went away and I needed in order to make it there, I needed support from people here. So socially just really connecting with

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friends. I also had a blog that I wrote while I was there. And connecting with friends and family was like the most vital part to my success there. Because it was very difficult. Just in the fact that a lot of the volunteers were from different countries. So we had some volunteers from Austria, from Germany, volunteers from Spain. And it was just, it was different. Not only was I in a different place being in this different culture, trying to adjust to what it's like to be in the DR. But additionally your counterparts cannot necessarily understand things that you're used to from your own culture or things that you're missing or customs and things like that, because they have their own as well. And so I found that that was a very difficult component for me.

And then in additional, one of the major social stresses that I had at the Dominican was just what it means to be American. The traditional American is one that has blonde hair and one that has blue eyes, because that is what is in the mainstream media. That is what many people in many nations see in our movies and in the type of media that we provide them with. And so because I didn't fit into that traditional mode, it was also very stressful when the kids would prefer one volunteer over myself. Or sometimes because kids are very young, they're impressionable; they have things that they learn just from the media. So not even

their own thoughts, but just things that have kind of been fed to them. It was just very difficult, because even though I was thinking that I look just like these kids, because 90 percent of people in the Dominican are Afro-Latino, and so I'm thinking this is something that we are relating on. But it was actually something

they shunned. They would have preferred to be with a white volunteer. They thought that those volunteers knew more than I did and things like that. So that was another component that was extremely stressful and I had to deal with. And so just having the support, as I mentioned, from the U.S. was a way that I was able to get through that. And knowing that the kids needed me to be there and they needed to see that I, even though I'm not the traditional American, that there are black Americans in the U.S. And so just giving them that perspective I think was really helpful. But yeah, it was very difficult.

Interviewer: Good, good. So now let's visit what strategies and support you utilized. You're back six months later, and then you start a period of eight months. How do you navigate those challenges?

June: So a strategy that I used, a lot of them are based on social media, like trying to reach out to alumni and people on Facebook, via Linked In, attending a lot of seminars and alumni lunches and dinners and things like that. Just really reaching out to as many people as I possibly could but finding that there was not much success there. So what I did is I do what I do best is travel. When things start to get stressful, I just go. And I really just like enjoy exploring other places. So I went out to Philadelphia to visit my boyfriend at the time. And I also went to Guatemala to visit a really good friend of mine who was studying abroad there. And I just really needed some

self-exploration. I just needed to be with myself, be with other people at times and just really distance myself from kind of what was going on and the stresses of not being able to find a job. And so after that when I came back home, I just decided I will take whatever I can get at this point.

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Because it's just not seeming like I can do anything that like matches up with what I'm trying to do. So I started to apply to jobs in the local area. So I was applying to Home Depot. I was applying to Pier One, to Office Depot, to Petsco, things like that. So I did that mainly because of the geographic location, so I didn't have to pay for transportation. I could just walk to these jobs, and I could do the amount of hours that were needed to do to make money. And I was living with my parents so it wasn't like I had to pay for rent or anything. So that was kind of a strategy that I used, was just get some type of job so that your parents don't just think you are just sleeping on the couch with no plan.

And after that, I just started to build from there and started to reach out to the people in Ann Arbor and seeing if I could get any jobs here. And once I got the job that I'm currently working with MCSP then it was just like OK goodbye Office Depot. Let me move back to Ann Arbor. And then I got to apply for the job and the apartment. So things started to come together then, but it was just a period, this long period, it felt like forever to me that I had come from graduating and I had no prospects and I thought I was going to work at Office Depot forever. I just didn't see a way out until finally I got this position and it was like I could finally

do something that was paying me better. I was just making minimum wage there and so now this job that I have doubled that. And I was like, finally I'm being able to find a place that kind of appreciates me a lot more and values what I'm worth, if you will.

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And then in additional, I've just recently started a tutoring position where I'm able to integrate Spanish as well. And that job has like tripled the amount that I'm making right now within the MCSP program. So one thing that is difficult, a positive and negative, is that it may seem like forever, as if you will never got out of the low point that you are in, but after you just have one door open, then there are so many other opportunities that that can lead you to. Because that is like the stepping stone to prepare you for other things. And so as soon as I got that one step, I ran. I ran up all the stairs and was able to find a lot of other things that I could do.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's just surviving that nadir. So the undergraduate years provide an opportunity, right? To learn in and outside of the classroom. And you touched a little bit upon it. But to what degree did the academic component prepare you for gainful employment? You got two majors so how did they position you to get gainful employment?

June: OK, excellent question and so I'm going to veer a little off but still connect it, because I really want to say this point for this interview is that I was very disappointed when I graduated that I didn't take advantage of all the resources that the university has to offer. And I almost feel

that it was difficult because you don't know. You are a first-year student and you're a second-year student. You're so focused on classes, thinking that that is what will prepare you for the gainful employment. But that is not it. So yes, you're doing critical thinking and things

like that in these classes and you're learning to write papers and things like that. But it's really the things that you're doing outside of that that really are preparing you. So I, looking back in hindsight, I'm very disappointed that I didn't do research, that I wasn't like working, that I wasn't talking with more of my professors and like publishing things with them, that I was not taking advantage of all of these jobs on campus. Because when I graduated, I had never done research before. And positions I was looking for said, "How many years of research have you had? What have you published?" And it was just like I didn't know that I should be doing these type of things. I mean I saw Europe, I saw these opportunities but there was no one really pushing me. There wasn't a mentor that said, "Look, this is what you need to do. Start immediately and do this research project. Start working with this professor," things like that. And so it was very difficult after I had graduated, all of those resources stopped immediately. It was like you had all these opportunities to study abroad, to learn all of these things, and then after you graduate, done. And so now I'm currently doing research as well with a professor and so I'm trying to build up my resume in that way. But I think I did do some things that were helpful for gainful employment outside the academic.

Interviewer: No, it's not you, it's the academic [M: OK] professors, the advisers, to what degree

their positionality, the majors prepared you for gainful employment. Cause it sounds like you take responsibility. This is a question about our organization.

June: So one thing that I really appreciate working through the Spanish Department is that my professors, they are so great. That is the part that I love most about Ann

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Arbor is just my professors, because they have helped me so much. They've helped me in writing resumes, in recommending professors for me to do research with, in recommending places for me to get jobs and really just lining me up in ways that I can really kind of have a more impressive resume, if you will. And so I've always really appreciated that. I just thought I was taking this course and I needed to go to professors office hours so that they would know me so just in case I had problems in this course they could help me or think that at the end of it, what were all the things that June kind of put into this to do well. But outside of that, they've just been extremely helpful in showing the resources to me. The only thing I knew about like the Segis(?) Program or about studying abroad or about doing research or about getting these jobs were through my professors. They said, "I think this is a program that you will really like. I think this is a program that will really help you." And they kind of pushed me in that way to do those things. And so I think that's really where the academic support is extremely helpful. And unfortunately one thing that a lot of students don't tap into. We think they're just strictly here for our courses. But these professors have lives too. They have papers they're working or research they've done. They've been at other universities so they can help us when it comes to transitioning and employment and things like

that. So I think that's a really great way that they helped.

Interviewer: Well, good, good. Hang on a second. I've got to…. [Recording One Ends] All right. So before this little time out, you were sharing how in your particular case, faculty did a lot to connect you to their networks and that was beneficial. And so let's look at the social component because I want to come back and unpack that a

little bit. So in terms of social experiences, that's the learning outside of the classroom, how did that prepare you to find gainful employment?

June: So I would say, you mean like networking?

Interviewer: Yeah probably, I think that's what most people in the study have interpreted it so yeah.

June: So yeah. Yeah, I think definitely attending different programs that there were on campus so that I could be connected to other faculty members, other professors, other staff members on campus and really just reaching out to every contact that I had, I found was more beneficial than just reaching out in general to like the alumni network where people didn't really know me. So when I went to my specific professor, he recommended another professor for me to do research with, and that's whom I do the research with. And the director of the Midwest University Community Scholars Program, when I was a part of it as a student, I came back and talked to him and that's how I was able to get another job that I have on campus. So just really connecting with these different people and meeting with them and speaking with them and talking about my interests. Of course, sending my resume, cover letter and things like that. But I just really found that networking is the most helpful way to really get positions and really, in

order to obtain a job. Because really when you apply online, they really don't know who you are, don't have any connection to you and you're just a number. You look just like everybody else. But when you already have someone that's kind of

recommending you, and they're telling you about jobs that are not posted perhaps June 15 March

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or maybe your professor said that they were looking for certain types of students but normally are reaching into the undergraduate pool, if you've already graduated, then it's a great kind of way to get back in there after you have graduated.

Interviewer: Good, good. So here's what I wanted to unpack. And you just shared a little bit more. And help me understand, because I've got to go back and code this stuff. So every now and then, this is a way of making notes to myself. Cause what I'm hearing is, although it took about 12 months, right? Eight plus six, no fourteen months. OK? About 14 months to get where you're going, but it sounds like you have to persevere, right? Cause it sounds like in your case, faculty was helpful; however, and I don't want to tell your story, you give it to me, but this is what I'm hearing. I'm hearing that although I had these networks, I had to work with them for fourteen months to get to my final destination. Am I capturing that correctly?

June: Yeah, exactly, exactly. So it's not something that's immediate. It takes a long time to kind of establish it. And especially because people are on different schedules. So during the summer, people are virtually not in contact, so you have to wait until that cycle's over until the school year starts. But you can't wait until the exact school year where you want to work. You need to be

contacting them before that. But if you just realize that you got the contact during the summer, then you have to wait until that time. So some of the things unfortunately I wasn't able to start until literally winter semester. I was on campus fall semester but we couldn't establish that until, we established the connection fall semester, and then winter semester is when things picked up. So that's why now I'm doing everything on

campus, because finally I've established a connection that's made it happen. I'm here so that people can actually talk to me and this is where, now is when it's happening.

Interviewer: Awesome, so good, and that's good to know. Right, cause they're available but you almost have to work the relationships and understand their schedules and their times. Wow.

June: Exactly, so we, well myself personally—super available. On the other side—not so much. Barely, rarely able to get a meeting with them. So yeah, that's the difficult component.

Interviewer: Good, good. Were you able to use the Career Center at all?

June: So that, yes, I did use the Career Center in terms of my resume. They helped me tenfold on really helping to kind of capture what my focus was or really the fact that you have to have a different resume for each job that you apply for, which is one thing I think we don't learn when we first create resumes. We think this one resume, and I can send it out to all these places. But you have to have a different objective. Some resumes this job doesn't care that you worked at this particular place, but they more so want to know what did you do with critical thinking, what

did you do with leadership? So learning that the resume really depends on the job, because they should be focused towards what kind of job you're trying to apply for was one thing that the Career Center taught me a lot. They also have a lot of other networks and things with the Alumni Center. And I think I did go through with them and get some information about Linked In, but for in my personal

experience, it was not that beneficial to me, so the only way they really helped me was with my resume.

Interviewer: OK, good. Now did you weave them in that last year? Or did you try to use them afterwards? At what point did you consider them?

June: I used them my last year on campus. Yeah probably my senior year. And they were actually how I was able to find the position working in the Dominican Republic. I forgot to mention that. They helped in that regard, and then after that I just used other faculty members on campus.

Interviewer: Good, good. The last question when we thought about it, we didn't think, we said young people never worked before, they don't have careers, and we thought oh well the economy couldn't really shake their context. Now to what degree do you think when you entered this labor market, right? It has anything to do with your short and long-term aspirations? Did it influence it? Short and long-term career aspirations?

June: OK. Yeah, definitely. So short-term, I have realized what I want to go back to school for. When I had come out of college, I had no idea. I knew what I had a passion for, but I didn't

know how to translate that into a career. So really working with the first-year students as I do now and working with the children in Dominican Republic, I know I want to do something with Social Work and something with youth and development. But I had no clue before graduating that that's what I would be interested in studying. And then in long-term goals, I ultimately want to get my PhD, probably in Sociology. And I want to do a focus

on Latin America. Because I also took a lot of classes surrounding Latin America in my final years at the university and that was the component of the International Studies part of my degree. And so yeah, I've just realized that is something I really want to do. And coming back to a university and teaching students about a lot of issues that are going on there, looking at a global context, really trying to encourage students to go abroad, because that's how they can learn about the things that are going on. And students are future policy makers. And so being able to shape their thoughts right now will be so helpful to the nation once they're working in D.C. and making different policies about different nations. So yeah I think that definitely having these jobs even though it was a struggle, having those jobs and those positions really helped me to kind of narrow down my short-term and long-term interests from this like broad passion to actually a career.

Interviewer: So in terms of the timing into today's economic climate, how do you make sense of the timing in today's economic climate and it impact in the transition from school to work? You're welcome to talk about you and then you also said you also had a cadre of peers who you suspect, how do you make sense of that impact?

June: So I just think it was a really tough impact for us. And really students can never predict

how the economy will be when you graduate. Because I just remember my cousin who graduated 2000 maybe, 2002, 2003? And the economy was booming. It was thriving. He like had all these positions and didn't what he wanted to do. And there was also a lot of schools that he was thinking about applying to. And no offense to my cousin, but he's not the best student, but he was like getting all these opportunities for scholarships and things like that to go to school. So I'm

thinking when my turn comes, this same thing will happen. And it didn't. When I graduated, there was no one really throwing money. It's like if you want to go to this program, you're going to need to pay for it yourself was more of the mentality at that time. And so yeah, it just like really depends on the state of the nation when one graduates, which is completely unpredictable and can be extremely disheartening. Because you do all of this front work in college and you think that that is going to push you right into a career, and it doesn't. And what's especially becoming difficult now is that it's not even, not saying not a big deal to have a Bachelor's, but you look a lot more competitive if you have a Master's. We're reaching into this global society and so like the more degrees you have, the more competitive you can be. Because now the people that have a Bachelor's are the same ones that are working low-paying jobs alongside people that don't even have that education. So I think it just really depends on the climate of the economy, and it's nothing on our part, even though a lot of us feel that it has something to do with us. But it just literally is the state of where the nation is at that time.

Interviewer: And good point. Because even when you talked about your time at Office Depot,

right? And looking at that, when you find yourself a Bachelor-degreed individual with two majors in a community of other employees not having even half the credentials, you know, tell me a little bit more about what do you think to yourself when you're in that space?

June: So there are a lot of thoughts. One thing is that I think I'm very fortunate. As much as I'm feeling why do I have all these talents and I have this degree and I'm

working along the side of someone that doesn't have those credentials that maybe barely graduated from high school and that is raising a child by themselves, I think I'm so fortunate because this is just one moment in time in my life. I know that I will be able to find things. I'm just like at a little bump in the road, but I'll be able to have other opportunities just because I've already had these networks on campus. Other people don't have those opportunities. They didn't get a network on campus. They didn't graduate from college. So this is it for them. So as much as I'm sitting here complaining because I'm tired of asking people do you want paper or ink with that purchase, this is what some people will be doing for the rest of their time. So I felt very fortunate, and I had to take a step back and realize that that was something that was only temporary for me. Additionally, I finally see what it is like to have a salary that barely, barely pays for the expenses that you have. How are people working on minimum wage, which is like 7.20 or something, and they have families and they have rent and apartments. A lot of these workers have two and three jobs, and it's like how are you able to take care of your family and work that much to sustain the living? And yeah, I just think

that like I say, we're very fortunate, some of us that we don't have to do that and that we're not in those circumstances. And we really don't realize that some people have to do that without a choice. And that is the fate of their lives. And so I'm sitting here complaining, but then I could come to a job that pays me $14 an hour or I can find another position that will pay me 20. When I still know my co-workers at the time that are still working there at 7.20. And to get a raise of 7.50 or another person I was working with who had been there for a year got

$8.00 and he was happy. It was like "I'm never leaving Office Depot now, because I'm at $8.00." And so, yeah, those are like the main thoughts that I think about, and at times I still think about the fact that I know if I go back there, probably the majority of the people that were there at that time are still there now.

Interviewer: Awesome, awesome, what a story. Tell me, this one talks about collecting information. Is there anything from your point of view that we can do to improve the transition from school to work for upcoming graduates?

June: Definitely. I think that the last year is the most vital. I think, well really in the beginning is really important. If we just, so the thing is that the university does a very good job at pushing out all this information. Telling you, go, there's this Study Abroad, apply to this scholarship, there's this research opportunity, but does not do well at making the connection for students. So I think if we had some, if students had some kind of mentor they were talking to that makes a connection saying, "This research position can help you get into graduate school or can help you to do this type of work." If they're making connections to how studying abroad can help you in your job to

have a global perspective or things like that, I think it would be really helpful. And especially in the senior year, there's so many pressures, there's so many things that you can do. There are so many like Job Fairs and things like that. And then really like coaching and mentoring in that last year is vital. And then beyond that, if that's possible, so like have a mentor that is kind of working with students until they find some kind of placement, job placement. Because it's just difficult to have all of these resources and all of this opportunity and you just don't know which one to turn to. And for me in

particular, I just didn't know what I wanted to do. And so someone helping me saying, "OK, at least start with this entry level job and maybe it will help you to figure out what you want to do in the future." Or, "Go to this program and maybe it can open your eyes to what you may want to do with the rest of your life would be helpful." Because it just seemed like we had to make a decision right then and there forever. It wasn't like, this is just going to be a stepping stone that will get you to your final career or that final destination. It just seemed, it seemed so daunting, like make the decision now. Are you going to grad school or are you working? Where are you going to be working? What are you going to be doing? And we really didn't have like the training to help us prepare for that.

Interviewer: Awesome. Well, thank you.

June: Yeah, no problem. [End of recording 2]

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