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Liz Norell - You are listening to Tiger Stories, a podcast from Chattanooga State Community College. This is the place to share the stories from our community, with our broader community. At Chatt State, we believe every member of our campus, students, faculty and staff belongs here and because we know that belonging matters, we are excited to share the stories of those who make up the unique, diverse and supportive community on our campus. You will often hear people on this podcast talk about Chatt State as having a feel of a family. We are so proud to be part of an institution that welcomes people from across the community to come here and pursue their dreams. We hope you will enjoy hearing our stories and maybe even some day, you will want to share yours with us too.

I am Liz Norell and I teach Political Science on the Main Campus of Chattanooga State. I feel so lucky that I get to be on this campus, working with our students and my colleagues on the faculty and staff. We get to witness powerful transformations happening on our campus all the time. And so I am excited to get to share this conversation with you. Without further ado, let's get started with today's conversation. Okay, so we're gonna do something a little bit different today than any other podcast episode we've done so far, we're gonna have a conversation between two students, so I'm going to ask you to introduce yourself first.

Nick Jung - My name is Nick Jung. I've been a student here at Chatt State for somewhere right around two years and I'm finishing in December so.

Liz Norell - Awesome and.

Destiny Warner - I'm Destiny Warner. I've been a student since fall 2018. So this is the midpoint of my second year.

Liz Norell - Yeah, it is cool.

Destiny Warner - I'm pretty stoked.

Liz Norell - And we're gonna talk to both of you today because you met each other over the summer and realized that as someone coming straight from high school is that right Warner.

Destiny Warner - Yes.

Liz Norell - And someone coming back after not being just in high school Nick.

Nick Jung - Right.

Liz Norell - That you shared a lot of things in common and we thought that was interesting and it would be fun to have a conversation. So I'm gonna start by asking you Warner to tell us how you decided to come to Chatt State?

Destiny Warner - Well there's a lot of factors that made me choose Chatt State. It was either between here in Rome State because they were both equal distance roughly because I live in Dayton but my sister had been enrolled here and she had pretty good luck with the financial aid system. It seemed local enough for such an outreach and there was a campus in Dayton just in case I ever needed to do it, so what really drove me was like my financial situation

being like this is the most convenient you know “cheapest” college near and I'm familiar with it because I went up there every now and then.

Liz Norell - Gotcha.

Destiny Warner - Yeah.

Liz Norell - Are you using Tennessee Promise to come here?

Destiny Warner - Yes.

Liz Norell - Awesome.

Destiny Warner - Oh yeah.

Liz Norell - Okay. Yes, so that's very inexpensive at least for tuition.

Destiny Warner - Yeah so far like I said I have been here almost two years, I'm not a dollar in debt which I'm pretty happy for, I hoping I can keep that going as long as possible but I'm getting for what I feel a really really good in education that I wouldn't have gotten had it not been for Tennessee Promise.

Liz Norell - Cool. How about you Nick?

Nick Jung - Kind of similar actually, I came here originally out of high school for a different program and did end up finishing, I kind of just went on with life but decided to come back later. I'd say that definitely found what my interest was and what I wanted to pursue my degree which is in cybersecurity and another big thing here for Chattanooga State was the Tennessee Reconnect, the ability to come back to school and not have that financial burden as an adult you know when you have a million other responsibilities and things going on a life, the last thing you want to worry about is how you're gonna pay off student loan debt, so I think the Tennessee Reconnect Program was a big kind of point at which I realized okay this is the right time and in the right place.

Liz Norell - What about this point in your life Nick felt like it was the right time to come back to college?

Nick Jung - I guess it's kind of a lot behind that, originally I was coming here pursuing a degree in Hospitality Management, I was gonna switch over to Culinary Arts and go to Johnson & Wales to get a degree in that after I got a degree here, that program kind of washed away when I was Junger. So a little bit of time I'd spent in that kind of became null and void and not decided at that point, I was in the band and I was doing a lot of things and I decided that I just wanted to kind of enjoy life in the moment and I wanted to just see where things led from there, pursue my dream and so I went more into music. You didn't coming back, my twenties kind of got hold of me, I've been in restaurants for a very long time and you know anyone that works in that industry knows that it can be a pretty decent you know career especially in your 20s you know if you're single and don't have children and you know your life is kind of this you know vast open source of go wherever you want, do whatever you want and it kind of gives you that mobile ability to get up and move different places and do different things and have that flexibility in your schedule. I think you know for me at least

personally speaking is I got a little bit older, I started realizing the necessity and switching into a field or career that was more stable, that had a better foundation, that offered things for later on in life with career advancement, retirement and that sort of thing. So you know I've always had a passion in technology, I've had a passion for computers since I was Junger prior to pursuing a music career and that passion kind of came back as I got near my late 20s and I started looking more into that, so you know I decided finally a few years ago that I'm ready to pursue this, I'm ready to really get back and start getting into what I'm interested in which was technology and I've really enjoyed my education here so far and everything that I've been doing.

Liz Norell - Quite nice. What made you decide to come here straight from high school Warner?

Destiny Warner - Well in the last year at my high school in senior year, there is a huge huge push. Even in junior year, that they're like start thinking about your colleges but in senior year, they would have workshops and the classrooms. We like will help you sign up, write down like on your ACT, write down what colleges you want to send your scores to and there's also like especially because I was in like all honors courses, college was really pushed as success, so if I wanted to be successful, I needed to not stop and sit for a while, I need to immediately continue my education which is like a good idea because if there's one thing I'll give my school some credit for, is that they didn't push you have to choose a major as well. It was more like you just have to continue.

Liz Norell - Yeah.

Destiny Warner - If I hadn't, I have gone straight into college, I'm not sure I would have been able to go to college because Tennessee Promise, I think you had to immediately enrol to media, you immediately had to enrol immediately go on and if I had lost Tennessee Promise and I really don't know how Tennessee Reconnect works, so I wouldn't, I didn't even really know that that was a thing, so I thought my only chance to get into college is like afford it, was just immediately move, so yeah a lot of my decisions are financially influenced.

Liz Norell - What did either of you know about Chattanooga State before you came here?

Destiny Warner - I knew, everyone was going to that or own state.

Liz Norell - Okay.

Destiny Warner - It's just, oh yeah I know I was in dual enrollment classes.

Liz Norell - Oh, nice.

Destiny Warner - At Chatt State, yeah. That's where I mostly found out about it, so I was already enrolled in Chatt State, before I was even enrolled in Chatt State, so I get some credits here and either transfer and move and the easiest was to move but everyone at my school besides people who are wanting and willing to move immediately after high school which that would have been terrifying.

Liz Norell - Sure.

Destiny Warner - Yeah, if it was either Chatt or Rhode.

Liz Norell – Hmmhmm, how about you Nick?

Nick Jung - Well I mean I've had previous experience here, so I knew a lot about the campus in general about how things worked and operated, so coming back was pretty comfortable and pretty easy. I feel like you know I knew that the, you know the level of education get here was quality having taken several classes previously and of course getting back into Chatt State as an adult within the first semester, I decided to come back and kind of start slow. So I believe the first semester I took two classes I believe it was and just kind of slowly you know get back in and one of the classes I went through I was able to immediately turn around after that class and go take a certification exam and get a certification that revolved around the material that was covered in that class.

Liz Norell - That awesome.

Nick Jung - Yeah so that was great and of course sequentially, the classes that took after that once again when received an another certification in the material that revolved around, what was covered in that class as well. So I kinda already knew what I was in for upon returning. I knew what to expect and of course you know you listened to a lot of what goes around just in the Chattanooga area in general and there's a lot of really good positive talk around, I think Chattanooga State and the services and the quality of education that they offer here, as opposed to some of the other bigger universities where sometimes things tend to get lost in translation and sometimes I feel like some of the course material is, I'm not gonna say it's not good, it's just not to the level of what they are able to offer here sometimes.

Destiny Warner - Yeah, I think that's another reason like why or what I heard about Chatt State was, it's like a good middle ground between high school and then major universities like it still has that feel of you don't have to immediately jump from being kid to, hey where's your dissertation, right here right now you know and it's just like, it's got a good home feeling to it. It's still very much like you are getting a quality education and there's a lot, like not on the line but there's a lot you could gain from this but it's not overwhelming all of a sudden you are an adult, yeah.

Nick Jung - I believe a lot of the groups here as well, a lot of the services that are offered whether it be you know financial aid or you know as an adult students or student services in general but adult services as well, you know career path opportunities and career path services. I think everything is very well communicated to the student population. I think that it's easier to navigate through the system here so to speak in terms of like if you are getting financial aid or you know making payments or just in general the things that you need to do in certain steps in order to get into classes, to be enrolled in classes, to be registered for classes and then everything that you need to do in order to graduate, I feel like it's kind of all laid out for you and it's all in plain text as opposes where sometimes you get a bigger university seems like a lot of that stuff is lost in translation between different departments and things like they kind of make it somewhat ambiguous as to what you may need to do in order to get through certain points of your college life.

Destiny Warner - Staff just nice, honestly.

Liz Norell - Yeah.

Destiny Warner - I feel like at one point I probably drove financial aid up the wall because I was asking so many questions but they were responding it so quickly like though within 24 hours things like no joke with financial aid, I really appreciate it, yeah I got lost my first day here and the students were helpful, the staff were helpful, the maps weren't helpful but that's just because I'm battery, so that's not their fault but it's such a welcoming environment and I think that also has to deal with like its size because it's not huge, I mean there are classes with like 100 plus people in them but most of the time it's like high school or even in like the global scholars, it's like 14-15 at most, so there's a lot more interaction that can be going on. There's a lot more like growth between people, you can get to know your professors easier, you can get to know more than just one or two of your classmates, a lot like I pretty much know my entire or not know my entire psychology class but they know me, I'm sure of that. It's again, I think it's like this the size, that's like really good because it's not too big, not too small.

Liz Norell - Yeah, I was just gonna ask what it's like to be a student here and you kind of anticipated that, thank you, but Nick what's it like for you to be a student here?

Nick Jung - Well I mean, you know I think that's a big point of this whole discussion is coming back as an adult student and you know, you sit around and sometimes you think about you know like society's perception of you as an adult learner or somebody who's coming back as an adult to pursue an education and pursue a degree and sometimes that I feel like makes people scared the idea of coming back. I mean you're sitting here and you know I'm personally I'm 35 and you know despite whatever your age may be, the idea of coming back and maybe sitting in the classroom full of people that maybe you're 18 years old or 19 years old or whatever and thinking how are they looking at me, like how do they see me at this age you know, sitting in a class of them like it seems odd, you know like you know when you think about it, it just seems different and so I think that a lot of people are afraid to come back partially because of that, you know that they're like I don't want them to see me as inferior you know and some other sort of way because I didn't get a degree when I was that age but then at the same time, I feel like there's a lot of pressure on kids coming out of high school that you have to go to college right off the bat and I'm not saying that's wrong, I mean I think it's great if you're ready for it you know and of course these are my opinions and not anybody else's, so I want to make sure I preface all this conversation by saying this but yeah yeah but like you know for me, I don't think I was ready coming out of high school, like I kind of just, I had a general idea of maybe something I was interested in but I didn't really put so much thought into it as to be ready to really pursue that idea or a degree in that for the rest of my life, you know and even if I had pursued and maybe obtained my hospitality management degree and went ahead with the Johnston Oil and received a culinary degree, I can't sit here today at my age now and say that I would be happy in that career and then I would be loving it. So you know even if I had done that then, there's a very big possibility that I would still be sitting here now even having obtained that you know just because I'd be ready to switch and maybe do something different and I think that's really a big part of life and something that people need to understand is that you're not stuck in what you're doing, you just have to have the mentality to be willing to go and do something to change, to make that change in your life if that's what you want to do and there's no bad time in your life to do that. It doesn't matter if you're 20, it doesn't matter if you're 55, 60, 70, who cares, if you want to make a change in your life and you want to be determined and motivated to do that you should do it and you shouldn't worry about what society thinks, you shouldn't worry about what everybody else around you thinks, it's a matter of your and they're doing it for yourself

to achieve a goal and I'll think success is measured in a timeframe of when you do things, it's a matter of if you get it done.

Liz Norell - Yeah. Destiny over here applauding you.

Nick Jung - [Laugh].

Destiny Warner - I don't want to clap too loud because mic [Laugh].

Liz Norell - I mean I think you know what you're describing that sort of uncertainty of like what are people going to think of me when I come into the classroom and that's something that I think Warner was talking about as well yeah, that like you are thinking I'm gonna come to Community College and who are gonna be these people in my class. Can you talk about that a little bit?

Destiny Warner - Um, when I came to Community College, there was a lot of, oh man that's reaching far back or at least it feels like far back, I just remember that this was the conversation that you guys were having in gym that you had like similar, I was really really afraid coming into college. I won't lie because I felt very very unprepared because I had actually just been kicked out of my mom's house. I had been living on my own for about two months at the same time I was trying to find a place on my own. I was getting my license. It was just like all of a sudden, I was getting all this responsibility and all this just like adult responsibility whatever just placed on me and I was starting college. There was so much uncertainty of like how will I make it to college the next day because I just got in a car but I wasn't comfortable driving through 153 just yet and then there was also like the major I had chosen. I wasn't so sure about but there was also that fear that I can't change my mind because being uncertain you know it's like I held that it's not bad but it's bad for me.

Liz Norell - Gotcha.

Destiny Warner - You know like anyone, anyone could be it but my expectations on myself were so high that I couldn't allow that to change but from coming like immediately to high school into college, college at first felt a lot like a necessity, so there was like that disconnection, like not I can't but like it was hard to enjoy something that felt like a lot like high school like I just got to get through this, get this degree then I'll be a "successful adult" you know and I felt like there's no repeating, so I have to get this right and I mean that's the one thing I love is my like 4.0, I want to keep that [Laugh] but where to go. Like, I'm proud of that, now without like, no I need to have that now, I was like, yeah I have that but like in my mind, there's no way I could be allowed to repeat this or allow myself to repeat this because I would have to be successful and stick to that and that's what it meant but coming in and seeing like the collegiate high people, all the way up to people like Jim Frey, he's great but it was just great seeing people like your age even because it meant that if they could come back, I could come back, like there's nothing stopping me and of course there was like you know fighting with myself being like well you can't because your specific situation dictates you that you just can't but talking to you especially in the gym and just thinking about even if I like am not successful at first I can always come back or even if I'm successful like monetarily speaking but I'm not happy, I can always come back and it might be hard, it might be difficult but it's a lot better than just sitting stealing and just losing the quality of life and I mean if I could stay in school and just keep getting major after major like just imagine if there's like a jack-of-all-trades major, you're just like everything, yeah.

Nick Jung - You want a little bit of everything.

Destiny Warner - The 30 year bachelor because learning is so much fun but once you're out of high school, it feels like learning has a price tag and that's a very lot of zeros price tag but.

Nick Jung - It definitely helps relieve the pressure on you as a Jung adult like coming out feeling like there is that pressure in a sense of like okay you have to figure out what you're gonna do and you need to get it done in this timeframe and feel like there's only one path to do it you know and I think a lot of kids feel that way coming out of high school that they have to do something a certain way and that if you don't do it a certain way you're not gonna be successful you know and I think that's like a shame on society, on us because you know we should be teaching children that it was their growing up like it's okay to change your mind, it's okay to do something differently, it's okay to have a different perception or a way to do things, you should follow your heart, you should follow what you feel and you should you know like you said education is important and you should always constantly be you know reading and educating yourself despite whatever it is that you feel like you have to be doing. It's okay to learn different avenues and different ways to do things, I think you know CAP programs, I guess they have here with the certification programs and stuff like that, I think it's great if you want to learn a trade, go learn a trade, you know like there's a million different things you can do in this life and it doesn't have to be one particular way you know.

Destiny Warner - Oh yeah like in high school, I was so impressed by the people who are like oh yeah I know what I want to do and I am solid in that knowledge so I'm like how.

Nick Jung - Right.

Liz Norell - What like well, I think honestly that's the hubris of youth that you think you can figure it all out while sitting in the high school desk, you know like you get out into the real world and you're like okay it's a lot more complicated.

Nick Jung - Things are way different.

Destiny Warner - And in high school, it was so wild because I would like one thing, they'd be like yeah this is what would be the career and then be another class and I like that too and was like, oh no, is this my career and it'd be back and forth like one day I'd be into architecture, the other day would be engineering, our theater and just like all this but it's just like figure out your interests at first and just like.

Nick Jung - I think it's scary at that age like come out thinking, oh I'll have to make a decision now, that is gonna be what I'm gonna do for the rest of my life. You know I mean it like I think that scares a lot of people because.

Liz Norell - It is too much pressure.

Nick Jung - Right, he wants to do that, I mean like put it parallel with like let's say at 18 years old someone told you, okay you have to decide one place that you want to go on vacation for forever and that's the only place you get to go on vacation for the rest of your life. You know like people would be like oh my goodness like where do I choose, like I love going to the beach, I would love to go to Europe, but I can only choose one place you know like and I feel

like that's not fair you know what I mean like you should be taught that you know it's okay to change as you grow and you know you get more wise who you know you educate yourself, you go through life experiences that shift and change the way you think and how you perceive life and I feel like it's okay that as you go through that process that other things including your education or maybe what you want to do in your career shift as well.

Destiny Warner - Yeah, I think it's really important learning how to allow that change.

Nick Jung - Right.

Destiny Warner - Yeah because like that was really hard for me thinking because I like education, my major at the moment is secondary education but I also like love psychology and part of me doesn't want to be a teacher until later in life because one, I've been a high school student when someone fresh out of college has been the teacher or teacher learning, sometimes they get eaten alive and that should scare you.

Liz Norell - You don't want to do that.

Destiny Warner - Yeah but I also want to, some of the teachers I've met that have been the most characteristic or most influential in my life, have lived and experienced so much before they came to college or not college, before they came and taught high school that they just had so much to share with the students and with me, like I want to have a lot of experience in whatever it is, so I can come back and so I can be more than just a teacher because some of my teachers they were just like, they're like guides, they helped save my life at some points but I don't feel like that's possible if I have a one track kind of life because I'd have to go immediately like into a job after I get this and that's again scary, high school students love them but they're scary.

Liz Norell - Yeah well I think, what you're both talking about here is just kind of the practical reality of the world we live in today which is that nobody has the same job for their entire career anymore, it just doesn't happen and it's you know not to get all like sort of pedagogical here but this is why general education is so important that you have a broad base of knowledge across a lot of different disciplines so that you can go into any discipline and it's also the great thing about being at a community college where you can come in and just kind of dip your toe into different pots and the TCAT and you know all sorts of Workforce Development and.

Nick Jung - One thing that her and I discussed when we had a conversation earlier this summer, I was talking to her about was, I feel like you know you're coming out of high school like if you don't know what you want to do say you know it can't hurt especially here attending a safe to have you know you have your general transfer degree, you know you come in and you say, okay well I'm gonna go ahead and do my general transfer so that way you kind of get that block of subject matter done you know which is you know like your science sequence, your English sequences and so on you know get that general chunk of classes out of the way and then if you want to stop at that point take a little break you know, live life a little bit, make sure you know go out and see the things you want to see or maybe do the things you want to do for a little while until you kind of come down and decide, okay well this is what I'm more interested in and at that point when you're ready to come back to school despite whether it's a year or two later or maybe even later on a life, you still have a huge chunk already knocked out, so that when you do come and you are ready for whatever



you're ready for, you can come back and just do a few more years and then be finished. You know and I think that that's not a bad way to go for people that are coming out of high school and they're confused about what do I need to pick a degree right now, so you know that was something that I kind of started getting into after my original focus fell through but then I just got too sidetracked with everything else was gone in my life and then finish that but I think it's a good thing to do coming out of high school because that'll allow you to go ahead and get a couple more years towards your degree knocked out and then you know you don't, you can make a decision during time if you do, if you figure out what exactly what you want to do but if you don't, you know go ahead and get that done, have that AAS and that general transfer and then you can come back later on and you know go to transfer to four-year degree and finish the last two years once you know what you want.

Liz Norell - So why don't you each tell me about some experience that you've had here at Chatt State that has really stuck with you, maybe it was a relationship you formed or an experience you had, it just feels like really emblematic of what you have gotten out of Chatt State?

Destiny Warner - Oh my god. You first.

Nick Jung - I can go. I can go.

Liz Norell - You can take a beat to think about it too.

Nick Jung - So really for me, I wouldn't say it's necessary in particular one experience but in the program that I am which is information systems that have concentrations which are network engineer programming and then cyber security and so you know kinda as you're going through this particular degree here, the class sizes in most cases fairly small I mean you know it typically is around fifteen students, I'd say max. Some classes a little bit more, the majority or maybe in the ten range or so. So it really kind of allows you to have like a really deep connection with a lot of your classmates because you know from semester to semester you're all in the same classes together. It's not like you know the general transverse classes where there's just a multitude of students every single semester, you're never in a class of the same people, so with this, it's you're in the same classes with the same people quite often. So you get to really develop some nice deep relationships with your classmates, you get to know them really well, they get to know you really well, you know on not only school material but also personal levels and you kind of like follow each other, you know so like there's at least two students that graduated this past semester that I still communicate with on a regular basis and it allows me to kind of see what they're doing in the field that we're in like you know they've already both gotten jobs, they're both doing really well, they're both very happy you know and so it's kind of nice like building those relationships and being able to keep up with everyone and see that they're successful and what you're about to finish and that they're happy. So I think for me that's one of the big things being here at Chattanooga State in the program I'm in particular is developing those relationships with everybody.

Liz Norell - Cool.

Destiny Warner - Oh yeah, I'd say the interaction especially when you're having like discussions in class, the humor some teachers have, like in high school they're a little bit more constricted and just a little bit but here there's just like so vocal like opinions, they're passionate about their subject which I love seeing and the students they're also just passionate

about learning in general and I love the interaction and that was like just really good to experience especially but I think the biggest thing for me was the independence because once I did finally start driving here, I suddenly just had this big realization that I'm taking care of myself. I can come to school. I can actually stay home and be sick if I get sick and it was just like a lot of free, very freeing but also like, I know the weight of my time, of my effort and how important it is to combine that in such a way that I make the most of this college experience and I can't say I did well the first year but I've definitely I'm not and that's another thing that like comes with learning, you're never the same person you were the year before and I am not the same person I was when I started Chatt State but it's so hard trying to pinpoint one experience because it's been such a long time of developing just being better whether that's better like mental health, better responsibilities and I feel like this campus has just helped me develop so much as a person so quick, like again with the realization that yeah I can enjoy my time here because I know no matter how difficult there's always a chance I can come back to education and just keep learning and it's just nice, yeah.

Nick Jung - I feel like it's an environment where you feel like you can talk to people, you know like you know.

Destiny Warner - But we are now.

Nick Jung - Right exactly, like you know you can just anyone in class, you can just turn around and strike up a conversation.

Destiny Warner - Oh it's so wild especially with like, hey we have group projects and then you're immediately like it's not high school where you're waiting for the teacher to assign or you're finding your best friend and you're like, all right you ready to do this research project all right, what's your number you know I don't think I've ever given my number out to so many people and again when you sit down, you have these discussions and I was actually approached by someone in my sociology class and this is what I think is so cool and I hope she does listen to this podcast because it was really flattering because she was like I love how you just talk about things, will you be my study partner, my tutor or whatever and I'm like that's such a nice compliment and I never got that in high school because everyone was just like you're smart kid, you want to do all the work for us, yeah in here at least it's like people they're also a lot of them at least are like very passionate about, yeah let's do this research project, have fun you know it's so mentally stimulating and it's just, it's great.

Liz Norell - Yeah so I want to ask each of you to think for a moment about what's a piece of advice that you haven't already mentioned that you would give to a current or future student about how to be, how to take advantage of everything that Chatt State has to offer?

Nick Jung - I would say just stay informed on what's going on campus. There's a lot of services that are offered here that I believe you know if you keep up with student email which some people do and some people don't at all, you would be in tune with, I think that it's important especially, I would say especially in your first year coming here to check your student email because it really kind of provides you with a lot of material and a lot of services that are offered that you might not otherwise know about. You know, I think that ever since the schools been using like eLearn and everything, it kind of helps direct people to using the Chattanooga State website whereas when I first started coming here when I was 18. You didn't necessarily come to the website as much back then you know there was slowly kind of starting to have that shift in like using other systems for learning within classes or whatever

but still a lot of everything was done in class, so if you did hear about anything that was going on campuses normally just through your professor whereas now everything is very kind of based on that digital platform then where you're going to get on and go to the website and then maybe log into eLearn from there but then also you know you have those splash pages that pop up and show you different feeds of information of what's going on around campus, what's offered, so I think it's just important to pay attention to that and know what is available so you can make the most of your experience while you're here. So that would probably be my advice for somebody who's just first coming to school, also just staying focused, I mean I feel like when you know what you want and you're ready to get it, it really allows you to just go a 100 percent you know and just really be aggressive in achieving what it is that you're focused on and so I don't know I think coming in as an adult learning like coming back to school again like you know in high school I didn't have a 4.0. I was that kid that like I was in the band, I was playing music, I was having fun, I was out playing shows and having a good time and you know I've made good grades, I mean mainly A and B's, some C's here and there but for whatever reason that back then I didn't really care, I didn't put as much focus on it, I didn't think it was that as important at that point in my life as it should have been but now coming back with that renewed sense of energy and knowing what I want, you know you come in that first semester and if you come you knock out that first semester and you get A's or you get A's and B's or whatever the case may be and if you know that you put in all that you had, you know when you came back or when you first come in and you see the success of achieving that, I feel like it becomes like a snowball effect like the next semester you're competing with yourself, you don't you know, if let's say you made three A's and the B, well that next you will be like well I'm gonna make all A's now you know because you don't want to have that B here you know and so then you start finding yourself slowly like competing with yourself on every quiz, every test, every assignment and like you want to do better than the assignment you did before, you want to do better than quiz before, you want to do better than the test before because you just want to get better and I think that it kind of really gives you the mentality to be successful even after you graduate, the idea of constantly putting the pressure on yourself to do better and want to do better.

Destiny Warner - I honestly didn't know that I was sitting down with a couple of overachievers when I started. I was like you're that kind of student, I graduated with like perfect attendance which meaning from the time I was a rolled in kindergarten to graduation high school, I didn't miss one day.

Liz Norell - Was there anyone else who got that?

Destiny Warner - No.

Liz Norell - I don't think so.

Nick Jung - I definitely did not.

Destiny Warner - Like 500 students graduating, I stood up, got standing ovations, my roommate in the crowd heard someone go, are they joking? [Laugh] It was insane but yeah, I'm sorry, you're sitting down with incredible overachievers.

Liz Norell - Apparently, which is great. We're happy to have you. What's a piece of advice you would give people Warner?

Destiny Warner - I think the most important thing that I have ever utilized is adaptability, being open and welcomed to change because one of the discussions we had in sociology which comes to back to a lot of this you know continue with learning is that information itself is always changing like there are teachers in high school they still take some seminars you know because how things are taught have changed or my dad who's a mechanic, cars are changing everyday like they're starting like hybrid cars are becoming more common and so when you think like the whole like Industrial Revolution kind of mentality or close to that is where you pick a subject, you learn it or you pick a skill, you learn it then you replace those in the workforce, it's a really really old idea. So being like nowadays when information is so quickly changing, lifelong learning is something I hope becomes the new normal and people accepting that they don't have to pick one thing stick with that until they retire and then live whatever life they want to after but being able to just like come into the field, maybe even learn another field, learn more in depth, stay in college, come back to college and just continuously grow yourself as a person. It's not like you like you plant a seed and then often you're full grown tree, no. You're gonna continuously grow, leaves gonna fall and you just have to be welcome to that and not put yourself down because I think that's one of the things that like a lot of my friends do, I see especially kids who are not kids but people of my age, my friends that followed me immediately going into college, some have dropped because it's too overwhelming, some I see are just not happy doing what they're learning and I just like hope that people coming in or people who are here learn that it's okay to let yourself change and not be like well society expects blank, be like what can I do to make myself proud and that's something I'm trying to learn and I hope other people learn.

Nick Jung - I think to add to that the idea of change and what I'm doing with IT and information technologies that things are changing rapidly all the time.

Destiny Warner - Oh yeah.

Nick Jung - And so you really have to stay in tune with those changes, you have to be willing to educate yourself and constantly push yourself to learn new things and learning new technologies or learn new mindsets and so you know actually a shameless plug something we're doing tomorrow night, the IT group is a cyber seniors program where they invite senior citizens and stuff to come in and we sit down with them and teach them about new technologies or in our instance like it's more for kind of like it kind of teaches, we teach them basic stuff like as far as like office and things like that but we also teach them about keeping yourself secure you know in the sense of like being mindful of like phishing emails and phone calls and things like that that a lot of people use these days to take advantage of people that are in that age group so.

Destiny Warner - Yeah and where I work, we're starting to switch completely away from paper coupons, so like our receipts no longer printed, they're just like, hey here's how you can sign up for all these digital coupons and stuff. So I've had to, we have poor signal, so I've had to walk with some customers all the way across the parking lot, struggle, stand on top of a phone pole, not like on top of it but like the round base and just like and just help them load all their coupons because I mean, I get like there's so many like environmental changes like that's why we're doing it to use less paper and moving onto digital especially, so many things changes and even if you're 65, 80, if you have a smartphone.

Nick Jung - Who's to say you know how to use it.

Destiny Warner - Yeah.

Nick Jung - You know what I mean like you might know how to place a phone call, maybe a text message but when it comes to actually like doing everything that is involved with technology these days and understanding how it works or why it works a certain way or you know.

Destiny Warner - And I guess that's kind of like another thing and is that if society in the world has a right to change, you know so do you at this point. You have the right to change with it, you don't have to keep going like through these whole old.

Nick Jung - There's an old mentality of this is how I've always done it, you know and there's a certain level unfortunately of ignorance in that state, just because you've always done it that way doesn't mean that it's necessarily the best way to do it anymore and there's a lot more efficient way to do it if you'd be willing to teach yourself the new way you know that means be open to that.

Destiny Warner - That's kind of what like seeing students like you do for students like me seeing older students just proves that that mentality is changing and like I hope one day when I come back because I know at this point I know I'm gonna come back to college is that when I come back and I see students they're Jung I'm gonna be like, good luck.

Nick Jung - Right.

Destiny Warner - You know just like you're gonna do great, no matter what you choose.

Nick Jung - Right.

Destiny Warner - Or at least you have the possibility to do a lot.

Liz Norell - Any final thoughts before we wrap up?

Nick Jung - It's just important to set your mind to something you want to get done and get it done, you know I mean don't allow yourself to stop, you know it's okay till I you have to stop if you realize once you start that it's not exactly what you want or what you thought it was gonna be you know but if it's something you know you want, then don't let the small nuances that come in your life or might interfere with whether it's personal or with in school stop you from achieving that goal. You know just because you might get a bad grade, you know on one test or maybe you know in general you get let's say you get a C in a class so that you wanted an A in like, don't allow that to bring you down and stop you from achieving what you're planning on getting done in the first place if it's something this you really want.

Destiny Warner - Yeah and I guess like a final note for me is make sure it's something that you want because like not something that your parents may have influenced or wow these people I really look up to that I want to be just like them, you know but then you find out that subject might not be for you, do what makes yourself proud and then like others will follow and be happy for you because again that's kind of what the point I make when I see teachers who are very passionate about their subject ready to teach and just like cracking jokes, having fun and just making the in class environment there's and amazing, that's what I love to see. It's just people, no matter what it is whether it's a quality you know "quality job" or whatever

if people are happy and they're getting that quality of life that's huge important you know it's like you are the first person in your life.

Nick Jung - Things idea of not allowing external pressures to have an influence something you decide to do, the fact that like if you're happy doing what you're doing and you know that you're achieving what it is that you're looking to achieve then people will rally around you. You know and the people that don't rally around you are the probably the people that you don't want there anyway. You know and the people that do rally around you and support you are the people that you want to keep around you know.

Destiny Warner - I was like, it took us a moment but we had several final notes.

Liz Norell - Yes.

Destiny Warner - [Laugh]

Liz Norell - Good stuff. Well thank you both for coming in.

Nick Jung - Absolutely.

Liz Norell - I appreciate your time.

Nick Jung - Any time.

Liz Norell - Those of us who have the honor and privilege to work on Chattanooga State's campuses know that something really special happens here and it's humbling to get to share a few of those special things with you, our listeners. So thanks to you, for joining us here today and a special thank you to the students, the faculty and staff who make this podcast possible. If you're a student at Chattanooga State, and you want to be on Tiger Stories, let us know. You can get in touch at the email address in the show notes. We'll be back soon with another instalment of Tiger Stories. Until then, make it a great one.

[Music]