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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 Chattanooga State, we believe every member of our campus, students, faculty and staff belongs here and because we know that belonging matters, we're excited to share the stories of those who make up the unique, diverse and supportive community on our campus. You'll often hear people on this podcast talk about Chattanooga State as having the 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'll enjoy hearing our stories and maybe even someday you'll want to share yours with us too. I'm 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'm excited to get to share this conversation with you. Without further ado, let's get started with today's conversation.

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Liz Norell - All right. So why don't you introduce yourself.

Taylor Klein - Okay, I'm Taylor Klein. Umm, I'm 29 years old. Umm, and I'm going to school to be a secondary education high school history teacher.

Liz Norell - How far along in your program are you so far?

Taylor Klein - I guess half way at least here, here I think I'm trying to [INAUDIBLE 0:01:45.5] Tiger Tracks and I can't remember. I mean I've got two more semesters to go and then my associates.

Liz Norell - So why did you come to Chattanooga State?

Taylor Klein - I like this, I guess smaller atmosphere, more, more personal as opposed to like the University is huge and there's so many people everywhere and it's, I don't know. It just seems more like a closer or more tight knit I guess, so I like it, I like definitely being on the rivers [INAUDIBLE 0:02:14.5].

Liz Norell - Did you go to Chattanooga State before and then come back?

Taylor Klein - Like I did do a semester at UTC and then I stopped there and I came to Chattanooga State and that was 20, I think 2011 and 2012, I went to school and then I quit, and then I came back. So this is 2019, so spring, so.

Liz Norell - Are you here as a reconnect student?

Taylor Klein - Ah, I, I like, I've applied for like the Tennessee Reconnect thing, but I mean, I'm not, I'm not sure. I mean, I just, I applied for the Pell Grant for you know the FAFSA and stuff like that to get a Pell Grant. It's got me through so far.

Liz Norell - Okay, cool. So what inspired you to come back to school?

Taylor Klein - Working, so I was working at Olive Garden and I was on the path to be a manager and then after I kind of got into it, it wasn't for me, and I've always wanted to be a teacher since like 8th grade and it was just like this annoying thing at the back of my head, I knew I needed to go back to school. I was trying to figure out what and I was like, I was only teacher and I just need to go for it and do it, so.

Liz Norell - Are you still working at Olive Garden?

Taylor Klein - I'm not.

Liz Norell - No.

Taylor Klein - No I left.

Liz Norell - Okay. So can you describe a time when you felt like you truly belonged here at Chattanooga State.

Taylor Klein - Yes, I would say probably it was, it was in your class. It was a Congress Day. And just being in with the 80 plus students and like just you know, talking about bills and stuff like that was just so fine. And I'm like it, like, I got felt like I was part of something.

Liz Norell - Yeah. Is that the first time that you'd ever done anything like that?

Taylor Klein - Yes. Yeah.

Liz Norell - Yeah. What about it felt so meaningful to you?

Taylor Klein - I was being part of a body of like my fellow students and it was that fellow classmates in there too. So that was fine and then seeing other professors I had there, is just, even though they were fake bills, they weren't, it was just what is called an experience, what it would be like to be a member of Congress and try to you know pass bills. It's just really cool.

Liz Norell - Yeah. I mean it's really fun for me to watch. Does it make you more or less interested in being in Congress?

Taylor Klein - I see more actually.

Liz Norell - Yeah.

Taylor Klein - I don't really think I'd ever want to you know be a member of Congress or like anything like that but like it's, I'd say before your class, everybody has a thing, a Congress just sits around it, does nothing, you know, they fight with each other, don't do anything, but like that just made me feel like, there's a lot more to it being a congressman than just sitting around and doing nothing, you know, arguing with each other, like there's a lot more, a lot more work in it and especially like the Polypro stuff, like there's you know, it's very, I guess, formal, I guess the way to say it.

Liz Norell - Had you ever done anything like Polypro before.

Taylor Klein - No, no.

Liz Norell - It's bizarre, isn't it.

Taylor Klein - Yes, and like, and when I thought about it like what I think of is I think of British Parliament. I think like you know the wigs and stuff like, you know, like the 1700s people sitting around with it, the powdered wigs on and like Red Robe sitting around, oh no, I thought of, I watched it was the John Adams.

Liz Norell - Yeah. That was HBO.

Taylor Klein - John Adams, yeah, HBO, I watched it on my Amazon Prime like last, last year, winterish and like that just him defending the, you know, the British soldiers after the Boston Massacre. Like that's what I imagine, you know, was the wigs and that's what came to my mind. That's.

Liz Norell - I would point out that when you are a teacher, you can do things like Congress did there.

Taylor Klein - Yeah it's exciting. And like I don't want to go for history but like I've always thought I mean Government's always been there too, like I took government high school, my senior year and he was really cool because it's 2008 and was an election year. So my teacher had us, we had to pick a candidate, we had to, you know, follow them and then we had to present on our candidate and then we had to try to, we had like a vote. So, the class voted and we tried to, you know, we go up and we talk about our candidate and try to persuade people to vote for our candidate. Mine lost by like one vote. And I was, I was like one vote, I know, but it was really cool though because I was, I was like man, I actually, you know, class I don't know how many people, I mean probably maybe 20 kids maybe like, like it was me, like I can, my, me and like I think my two or three of the people in the group convinced, you know, that many people go to vote and we just lost by one vote, that was just so cool, felt like.

Liz Norell - Who was your candidate?

Taylor Klein - Ron Paul.

Liz Norell - Okay.

Taylor Klein - Yeah I guess, I'm more of a, I guess a libertarian, sure, I guess in my political views, so.

Liz Norell - That's okay. What relationships have you formed with people on campus?

Taylor Klein - It seems like friendships come easy to me. I had one, her name was Janet in my Finnish education class and then she's also my statistics class and she was just amazed that this other girl Audrey, I had her in my statistics class and our American history class and she was just surprised that like that me and Audrey were like, like I guess friends already, like she had, she assumed that we'd known each other before but she was just surprised that how quick within like the first week or so that you know me and Audrey kind of connected and we helped each other in statistics and in our American history class, so.

Liz Norell - Can you talk a little bit about the relationships that you've formed with any like your advisor or your education or history professors?

Taylor Klein - Yeah, Dr. Sher.

Liz Norell - Yeah.

Taylor Klein - We nerd it out like a time. I say probably about.

Liz Norell - The second day of class.

Taylor Klein - I don't know, I just went and talked to her and I talked about, last year, I read, Ron Chernow's, Alexander Hamilton biography and also read his biography about George Washington and I just kind of, you know, nerd it out with her about George Washington and that's like her favorite book is Ron Chernow, you know, biography of George Washington, because we're talking about, oh, it was the French and we knew what we're talking about. I cannot fully, let me remember what battle but very much how George Washington started the French and Indian War. Like his little, his little thing, his little I guess, I guess 'massacres,' it's viewed in some, in some circles, I guess, like it kicked off the French and Indian War and just how it's amazed me that that his experiences in the French and Indian war led to him being Commander in Chief of the Continental Army and like where would he have been if, you know, the British Government hadn't, you know, had given him a commission and you know he had, he had risen in the ranks of the British army instead of you know being denied commission. And so he's kind of you know peeved about that. And then so that is just really cool, like think about that and I guess that's why I love history. It's because, it's things that happened. But what I like to think about is like things that what things could have turned out like or what would have happened.

Liz Norell - Mm hmm.

Taylor Klein - So it's just like what would have happened if George Washington instead of fighting for the Continental Army and 40 United States had to fight for the British, you know, what and not and he really wasn't that big or that good of a I guess of a tactician, I guess as a general, but he really succeeded in like keeping the Continental Army together and glued, glued together and kept it from falling apart. So, I don't now, I can just, I can, I can nerd it out about stuff like that forever and like it's.

Liz Norell - That's fantastic.

Taylor Klein - So, yeah, so definitely with Dr. Sher, it's really fun and then, and near the end of the semester we did our assessment essay about who won the Civil War. And I like things like that much in her class because it's an open ended question. It's not like there is a right or wrong answer, you pick who you think and then you defend it with the primary sources that we go over through the semester. And it's just really cool because once again I talk to her about you know that a lot of us think that I mean the union did when the civil war, but after the Civil War, I mean the news kind of lax on the Confederate States and then they kind of fell back into, into their, I guess bigoted ways and you know pass laws that made it harder for, for African-Americans to, to vote. And I just fear for the South, so it's even though the union won the Civil War, it seemed

like nothing really changed in the South besides the, the ending of slavery, the abolition of slavery and then that up until the 1960s, you know, there was, even, even now there's still persecution of African-Americans and things like that so.

Liz Norell - Well and what's so interesting and I don't want to go off on a tangent here but too late, I am really struck by how, you say, you know you've got de jure and de facto segregation and there is de jure segregation in the South until the civil rights movement. But there was de facto segregation in the North for most of the time after the Civil War including now.

Taylor Klein - Yeah.

Liz Norell - Right with white flight and, and, and it's I think oftentimes we think of the North as being so pro-equality.

Taylor Klein - Yes

Liz Norell - But that's not the lived reality.

Taylor Klein - Yeah.

Liz Norell - Of so many people.

Taylor Klein - Yeah. And definitely you know through the sources that we went through in class. Like there's several stories from the union where they you know they view the African-Americans as you know their direct contraband, you know, their property and then you have the African-Americans you fight on, in the Saudi Union that weren't paid, you know, they were underfed, under equipped, you know, so and lot of people like you said think the union is being abolition free of slaves, but it wasn't really that way.

Liz Norell - Yeah. So what's the most important thing you've learned during your time here?

Taylor Klein - I would say, I keep talking about your class.

Liz Norell - It's okay.

Taylor Klein - But I would say how much difference that one person can make, especially the Civic Engagement Project. Like I still get emails from my local representatives about the issue that like I brought up to them and like how they're trying to fix it. And like there, I emailed them about there's this intersection and how there's a light and if you turn right there's a yield sign but people turning left onto the road, they don't yield. Like there's not a turning arrow. So they just

kind of go through and it's really confusing and weird, it's a weird intersection. And like they're talking about how they're going to get people either to survey it and you know look and see if they can remove the yield sign, what, what they can do to, it is really cool that like me, you know, just by me emailing, you know, my local representatives, like they're, they're going to try to fix the issue and it is really cool like before your class, like I'm and I'm super introvert, it's like, I'm not going to go out of my way to you know talk to somebody or you know try to and just that you know kind of kick me into doing it. And it was just, it's just really cool to feel like, you know my part of my community now is, it's really neat. Yeah.

Liz Norell - I could totally see you're running for local government. Like you say, I don't want to be in Congress. I don't like it.

Taylor Klein - I know.

Liz Norell - But like City Council for sure.

Taylor Klein - See I don't, accept thing too is like a, I don't know. I mean it's weird them we'll be a teacher, but I don't view myself as like a public speaker. Like I don't like the thought of getting up in front of people and speaking from the crowd like doesn't, doesn't excite me, I'm telling you.

Liz Norell - Have you ever met. We have an instructor here and he's also a coach. His name is Joe Wingate and he is the, currently, I think the Chair of the Hamilton County School Board and he is like pretty low key. He doesn't talk a lot but he ran for school board because he cares about students and schools. And I'm just saying.

Taylor Klein - Maybe.

Liz Norell - It can happen.

Taylor Klein - Yeah.

Liz Norell - What advice would you give students at Chattanooga State either current or future.

Taylor Klein - I would say probably just keep trying persevere. I know it's easy to get discouraged, especially in some classes. Failure is inevitable at some point. And even if you fail, you know, keep, keep trying. I know for me like I had a long stint away from, from school and definitely getting back into it. You know it's sticking with something's really important to do.

Liz Norell - So coming back to school at 29, I imagine it's got to feel.

Taylor Klein - It's weird because in my classes, you know, I like the girl, I met earlier Audrey. She's 16 and she's like [INAUDIBLE 0:15:38.0] and I'm like, I'm, like I'm in class.

Liz Norell - Twice your age.

Taylor Klein - Yeah, I'm like in class with kids who are 16 to 18. I'm sure there are old, people older than I am in some of my classes, but it's really weird to think like in your class, you know, the Howard Dean thing, like yeah I was what 14, 2004, is like I remember that vividly and then I've got kids in that class, you know students, they have no idea who Howard Dean is, have no idea like, and it's just really weird, but I think it's fun at the same time because they're kind of around the age group that I want to teach, you know, kind of you know 16, 17, 18 year olds who went to high school, like it just really cool because you know I can share my experiences with them and things that I know and it's just really fine. Like, I don't know, I surely find it to teach people things and you know show them things.

Liz Norell - Uh huh. Have you thought about being a history tutor?

Taylor Klein - I've thought about it. I just have no idea like where to start but I talked to Dr. Sher about it, be like what do I do to be history teacher.

Liz Norell - He is the current tutor, just graduated, so.

Taylor Klein - Yeah. Yeah I saw that. Like.

Liz Norell - There is an opening.

Taylor Klein - Yes.

Liz Norell - That's cool.

Taylor Klein - I love. I'm never excited for this fall semester with my modern American history and my early history and definitely geography too, I love geography.

Liz Norell - Yeah.

Taylor Klein - I think it's, I think it's fun.

Liz Norell - You talked about failure and how failure is inevitable. Is there a time where at Chattanooga State you felt like you had failed with something?



Taylor Klein - Definitely.

Liz Norell - Can you share one of those experiences.

Taylor Klein - Oh yeah. Yeah. Oh I'd say probably when I was going in 2011, 2012 for nursing.

Liz Norell - Oh wow.

Taylor Klein - Yeah. So I was going.

Liz Norell - That's different.

Taylor Klein - Yes. So, I was going for nursing because I wanted to be a teacher, but I wanted, I got to that point I'm like okay I can make a lot of money, go for a job, you go make a lot of money and then being a male nurse there in high demand, so I've a job security. You know, there is always going to be male nurse but I did my prerequisites and you know, I tried. I took the TEAS test like two or three times and like I never made it into that, I never got accepted in that program. And I guess I kind of, I don't know made me mad, you know, so that's when I quit, I quit going to school, I was like okay whatever, you know, I'll take a break. I'll keep going to work and, and work, work on, you know, being a manager for Olive Garden or whatever but say that definitely take a test and you feel like you know, you feel like you're going to do it and then you're not accepted. It's kind of like, okay. I mean what I do now like, yeah. So.

Liz Norell - I want to ask you a couple of other questions and I'm just curious, if you were giving advice to your instructors, professors what would you want them to know.

Taylor Klein - I'd say, I definitely like classes and professors who I feel like generally care about their students. So, I would say probably like don't be, I guess afraid to engage your students, I guess on a personal level, I guess get to know them and like be open to them, like have an open door. I mean, I know you're fantastic with that. Like I know like Dr. Sher like you know Dr. Wood like all these other professors, like they're definitely, like I'm not afraid to go to them with issues about anything. So I say definitely probably that, you know be open be, open with your students.

Liz Norell - What have you learned by watching other teachers that you think over the years when you become a teacher?

Taylor Klein - I guess back to that personal level with students, I guess you know getting to know my students individually and then letting them know about me. I also like that when professors do that. They let you know about you know their personal lives in some way, not, not too personally but you know the examples are stuff like, I know all, in your class, you know,

when you, you know show pictures of you go into D.C. and things like that and sharing your stories like that, it's just fun because you know it, it helps me see that you are a person, you know to, as opposed to, you know some I guess figure head, you know.

[Music]

Liz Norell - Well thanks for doing this Taylor.

Taylor Klein - You're welcome. You're welcome. My pleasure. It's fun.

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, faculty and staff, who make this podcast possible. If you are 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 installment of Tiger Stories, until then, make it a great one.

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