

[Music]

Liz Norell - So I'm just gonna start by asking you to introduce yourself.

Alexis Pinela - Okay. My name is Alexis Pinela. I live in Cleveland, Tennessee and just graduated from Chattanooga State.

Liz Norell - Congratulations.

Alexis Pinela - Thank you.

Liz Norell - What all are you doing this summer?

Alexis Pinela - Um, well I've been focusing on getting into UTC.

Liz Norell - Yeah.

Alexis Pinela - I have, so I'm starting in the fall and I'm in the School of Education, so I'll be starting my classes and I've been trying to work here and there, get extra money for school.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - So that's really and then I got a job at a home school teaching like helping with the childcare, so.

Liz Norell - Do you like it?

Alexis Pinela - Yeah, that's really nice.

Liz Norell - What brought you to Chattanooga State?

Alexis Pinela - I recently was at Cleveland State and didn't work out and a few of my friends had come to Chattanooga State and they told me how much they loved it and how great it was and so I was like, this is my first time driving to Chattanooga, so I.

Liz Norell - Really?

Alexis Pinela - Yes.

Liz Norell - Wow.

Alexis Pinela - Yes.

Liz Norell - Okay.

Alexis Pinela - It is very, you know, it was a good thing but I was very nervous. Um so I was like you know I'm just gonna go for it and so I came here and never regretted it. I loved, I loved it here and it really got me on my comfort zone and I now I'm driving to all over Chattanooga, so.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - So really friends that I've told me about Chattanooga.

Liz Norell - What, um what did your friends tell you about Chattanooga State besides that they liked it?

Alexis Pinela - Um they said that you know a lot of the professors like most professors that they had had were very reliable and they didn't just get up there and you know lecture and then say okay you can leave. They actually got you involved in more and they tried telling you about activities on the campus that you'd be involved with and they were just the classes itself they had. They told me that Chattanooga State had plenty of options.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - And even if you weren't sure what you wanted to do, you could take classes to help you and so I thought that was really great and even though I was super nervous because I do not like getting out there and doing all these activities but I said well I need to at least try it and so I did and I got myself out there more than I thought I would, so that made me really happy.

Liz Norell - What kind of activities did you do while in university?

Alexis Pinela - Um I, they have like cultural activities going on.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - Fairs and stuff, so I went to that, those things and then also got involved with the fitness club here which I never thought I would do and then they did a circuit-training class and I was in charge of one of the machines.

Liz Norell - Oh, cool.

Alexis Pinela - I was in-charge of the circuit. So again I never thought I would do that either but you know, my teacher at the time, my professor, she said you know you need to try, I think you'd be good and I'm like, I'm not so sure about that. She's like well just try it and we'll say, so when I got in there, it was like my whole mood changed and I felt like I was more independent and I was like in the leadership role, so I took that on and it was really fun and I was helping other teachers here, other professors, like learn the workouts

and learn how the machine works and things like that. Um and then we also did for your class, we did the.

Liz Norell - You're probably thinking of student government.

Alexis Pinela - Yes.

Liz Norell - Last year.

Alexis Pinela - Yes, so I never in my lifetime, I've never really been a fan of government or classes, government classes or politics and so when we first, the first one that we went to I was like really scared because I was like, I don't know what they're gonna do, if they're gonna ask questions, if they're gonna like ask our opinions on things and all that but when we first went of course we got good food and we got to learn about how SGA works, not only at the school but outside of school, which was amazing and actually ended up paying attention through the whole thing, every time we went because seeing other students actually come forward and have questions and then you know seeing those actually change on campus and like one of them was having the cafeteria opened or having something for evening students.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - And that actually ended up working out for them when she was cool to see.

Liz Norell - Yeah. So can you describe a time when you feel like you really belonged here.

Alexis Pinela - Probably again with the circuit-training.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - I've never done something like that and so when I was actually in-charge and helping other people, um it just clicked and I just came to realize that I do belong here but of course, I regret not getting involved sooner because this was kind of close to when I was going to graduate but I took full advantage of it and so I really enjoyed that.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm. What relationships have you formed with people on this campus?

Alexis Pinela - Uh all kinds, um both like with professors especially like for example with you like I feel comfortable, I mean just messaging you or whatever if I ever need anything and that goes for other professors as well and I've had other professors message me and be like, Hey! How are you doing? You know, things like that which you wouldn't think would happen, you know do you think after their class they'd just be like okay you know your student, you're moving on, not gonna involve it but for them to check in on me and see how I'm doing like shows that they really care and also friendships, I've made

tons of friendships at Chattanooga State with for example Kelsey, me and her still talked on the you know every now and then and we're super close and even which this may sound silly but even the cafeteria workers, I would go in there and I would go in there frequently and so they kind of got to know me and they knew what I wanted to order, so whenever I would go in there and they're like, hey, you want this and I'm like, yeah that's what I want. [Laugh] I usually get this, so you know it was just a friendly and fun environment with everyone here.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm. What do you feel like the most important thing you learned during your time at Chattanooga State was?

Alexis Pinela - Probably to get out of my comfort zone and try new things. If I didn't try new things, I feel like I would just be like I was in high school, going through the day, getting my work done, going to the classes, going home, start over.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - And if they had activities then I would just be like I don't really need that I'll just go home but I felt like starting at Chattanooga State, it was a new fresh start for me and so told myself, no matter what if it was just one thing that I stepped out for I was gonna do it.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - And I feel like I've done quite a few things as far as one of them especially being Congress Day.

Liz Norell - Yeah.

Alexis Pinela -Whenever we went, I was not a fan, like at first I was very nervous and I was like I'm not sure if I'm gonna like this at all. This is gonna be scary. I'm not gonna which, I didn't talk a whole lot like I told myself I wanted to but to actually go and be involved and just listening to other people you know go back and forth on how they believe and what they think and things like that was really cool.

Liz Norell - Yeah. What advice would you give other students either current or in the future?

Alexis Pinela - To trust your professors because a lot of students I feel like come and you know are really nervous or intimidated sometimes, even when if you have a question, you don't really want ask it, that was me. I never, if I'd had a question, I was like oh no one else probably know that this is gonna be a dumb question and no one else probably has this, so I'm just not gonna ask the question and ended up hurting me in the long run because I could have done better. So toward the end of Chattanooga State, I learned that, it's okay to ask questions and if a professor tells you for example if they tell you, you know, you should probably try to do this and that may help you, you know on an

assignment or something, just trust them because I've done that and it actually helped me out, even though some students are like probably don't want to be told what to do by a professor.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - In that kind of aspect but yeah just trust them know that they especially here at Chattanooga State, they do care about you and they want the best for you.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm. What was your major?

Alexis Pinela - It was, I was in Respiratory Care.

Liz Norell - Okay.

Alexis Pinela - And then I changed it last minute to Education.

Liz Norell - Okay.

Alexis Pinela - So.

Liz Norell - So Early Childhood Education.

Alexis Pinela - Mm-hmm.

Liz Norell - What was that program like for you?

Alexis Pinela - Well I took, I got to take a few classes from it before I graduated with my associates and I could tell that it was just, I knew it was something I wanted to do. I knew it was right for me. I knew the timing was right and everything and learning. Usually people think early childhood is you know, let's just take care of little kids or knowing little kids and it's so much more than that as far as their development and it goes into a lot of detail but I've always loved kids and I have a passion for working with kids, so I actually got to do some field work hours and again that put me out of my comfort zone a little bit in the classroom with kindergarteners.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - And it was an amazing experience and that's another thing that Chattanooga State does I feel like they put you out there even more in the real world, so you can get that feeling and I loved it and even though you will be nervous at first, once you do it you'll know what it feels like to be in the classroom.

Liz Norell - Mm-hmm.

Alexis Pinela - So yeah it was really cool.

Liz Norell - Yeah. So what's next for you Alexis?

Alexis Pinela - Um I start at UTC in the fall. I'm gonna be graduating my Bachelor's Degree in Education and then I'm doing the Pre-K through third and Special-Ed Program, which I'm super excited about and then once I get my bachelor's, I haven't fully decided what I'm gonna do yet but I'm thinking about getting my master's as well.

Liz Norell - Yeah.

Alexis Pinela - So I'll be in school for awhile but one thing about me I really for some reason this a lot of people think I'm crazy but I love school [Laugh].

Liz Norell - Well [INAUDIBLE 0:12:10.2] [Laugh] obviously.

Alexis Pinela - I love coming to school especially college ever since I got into college. I woke up every day even though I'm not a morning person. I'm like yeah I'm going to college.

Liz Norell - Yeah.

Alexis Pinela - I'm going to classes and I think the whole environment of the campus is really what helps so.

Liz Norell - Good.

Alexis Pinela - Yeah.

Liz Norell - Well, I hope that you'll stay in touch once you start over at UTC.

Alexis Pinela - Yes.

Liz Norell - Don't forget about us here.

Alexis Pinela - No.

Liz Norell - By the river, yeah. It has been a pleasure talking with you.

Alexis Pinela - [Laugh].

Liz Norell - Yeah.

[Music]

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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