

EXTRA CREDIT

A SUMMER & WINTER SESSIONS PODCAST

Episode 10 Transcript

00:00:02 Introduction

Welcome to Extra Credit, hosted by the Rutgers University Office of Summer and Winter Sessions. Listen to hear from students as they share their experiences at Rutgers and some tips on how to navigate a condensed semester. Also gain the perspective of professors and learn more about the courses they teach.

00:00:19 Rosie

All right, so Justin. Thank you so much for joining us today. If you don't mind, can you introduce yourself and just tell you a little bit, tell us a little bit about yourself.

00:00:27 Justin Ricardo

Thank you, Rosalina. Thanks for having me. My name is Justin Ricardo. I'm a senior here at Rutgers University and I'm graduating in January after the fall 2021 semester. And I'm really excited to be here as a student in the School of Arts and Sciences, Human Resource Management program and Sociology. And I can't wait to share my experience with everyone.

00:00:52 Rosie

Great, well, we're happy to have you here.

00:00:55 Rosie

Uhm, so from what I gather you're technically an untraditional student. Can you just tell us a little bit about your journey to Rutgers and what led you here?

00:01:05 Justin Ricardo

So, I'm, I'm most definitely a untraditional student, and also I'd like to say that I'm proud that I'm untraditional student. And I think that it took a lot of courage for me to realize that I wanted to attend Rutgers. And in my journey, It's- it's been a lot of self-reflection and, and figuring out the things that I wanted to do.

00:01:27 Justin Ricardo

And whether that was working a full time job, uhm, learning the valuable life experiences, or attending a class I wasn't necessarily interested in... throughout my journey I've learned through each and every experience, different lessons about myself that's really made me who I am today.

00:01:45 Rosie

Great, can - you worked a full time job prior to coming to Rutgers, can you tell us a little bit about what you're doing? What field you were in?

00:01:53 Justin Ricardo

Yeah, absolutely. So, prior to attending Rutgers, I was working a full-time job for an independent contractor with FedEx Ground.

00:02:01 Justin Ricardo

One of my friend's father - one of my friend's uncle, sorry, not father - had owned a couple different routes in Middlesex County, in Union County, and Essex County so I decided that I was going to gain some experience working through him because I didn't really necessarily know what I wanted to do

00:02:20 Justin Ricardo

So, instead of forcing something, whether, you know, that be going to school for something that I didn't necessarily think was natural and came to me naturally. Uhm, I decided that I wanted to gain this valuable experience and obviously I needed money to live and and living expenses in New Jersey are very expensive.

00:02:39 Justin Ricardo

However, I believed that it was really important to look at this experience as, as a lesson and as a like a building and growth potential for realizing my full potential and going to where I wanted to go.

00:02:55 Rosie

Yes, so in picking your major, I know you said human resource management, do you think that this prior experience kind of guided you more towards that major?

00:03:04 Justin Ricardo

Oh, absolutely, absolutely. I think throughout the experiences, just seeing the passion that that my coworkers in various jobs that I've had around me, the passion that they bring to their day-to-day lives really inspired me to want to start a career in human resources.

00:03:23 Justin Ricardo

And I can't even pinpoint the exact moment that I felt that fulfillment in me and that passion in me, but I knew, knew firsthand that, that uhm, I was interested in human resources and everything that that came with human resource management.

00:03:41 Justin Ricardo

And it was when I, when I decided that Rutgers was something that I was going to set a goal for myself of trying to attend Rutgers. I researched their program and I realized that I really aligned with, with the values of Rutgers and with the values of the program through the human resource management program.

00:04:04 Rosie

Was it this program that really drew you to Rutgers? Or was there some other big selling point for you to pick this school?

00:04:13 Justin Ricardo

Yes, so, so I would say that it was more of a 50/50 split between Rutgers having just excellent professors, excellent programs, the location being in central New Jersey, right outside of New York City.

00:04:28 Justin Ricardo

And also growing up in the area, I knew that Rutgers was somewhere where I wanted to be. I knew that it was always a goal of mine to graduate from Rutgers University, mainly because of the fact that my mother had attended Rutgers and as well as my uncle.

00:04:42 Justin Ricardo

So, I looked up to these individuals as, you know, family who I wanted to basically achieve the same goals that they were achieving. I was always inspired by my family and always inspired by the things that they achieved.

00:04:58 Justin Ricardo

However, when I realized that human resources was the exact program that I wanted to pursue, it was only through realizing that, that I had these specific personal goals where I wanted to continue that family legacy.

00:05:10 Justin Ricardo

And then also just knowing that this program at Rutgers is going to give me so much opportunity to realize my full potential and, and it was through that that I realized that Rutgers was the only school that I really, really wanted to go to. And, and I set it as a goal to myself that I was going to get into Rutgers and I wasn't going to take no for an answer and I was going to take every step that I need to take to improve myself and the things I need to change to better myself, so that I can get into this school and achieve my dreams.

00:05:42 Rosie

Good for you, a little bit of our Rutgers legacy.

00:05:45 Rosie

I know about that, too, both my older sisters went to Rutgers, and so did I so I can relate to that.

00:05:53 Rosie

Uhm, so I heard you took a summer course. Do you mind just telling us a little bit about the course, the title, how you liked it?

00:06:02 Justin Ricardo

Absolutely. So, it was last summer in the beginning of the pandemic that I realized that I really wanted to chase my dreams. And it was right then and there that I decided that I was going to chase the human resource management program at Rutgers and I wanted to have a career in human resources.

00:06:18 Justin Ricardo

So, I decided I enrolled in Professor Coffey's Intro to Human Resource Management class and I had read very good things about this professor, that he was very passionate and very caring and also that he was very, very informative and very knowledgeable and I attended this class and learned so much about myself.

00:06:38 Justin Ricardo

And also, I was basically given opportunity, because the professor was very knowledgeable and was very understanding. It was, it was a very difficult time in the summer for a lot of different people and this professor made it known to everyone in the class that he was going to be accommodating.

00:06:57 Justin Ricardo

And it was right then and there that I felt like I was in the right place and that everything was really just falling into place. And while there was a lot of obstacles that I would have to climb, I knew that I had the tools that I - that I needed to succeed. I had that motivation and I had that determination.

00:07:18 Justin Ricardo

And I knew that I had people around me, like professor and like everyone in the department, that are there for me and that want to see me succeed.

00:07:26 Justin Ricardo

And it's in that instance that I decided I was going to pursue the program of human resources. And after taking that that Intro to Human Resource Management class in the summer, I realize that this is everything that I love.

00:07:38 Rosie

Yeah, that's great, especially um- it's good to get that feeling of, "this is where I'm supposed to be, this is what I want to do" and that extra reassurance and I'm glad you found that especially in this program.

00:07:50 Justin Ricardo

It was, it was like a very good experience, and I really didn't have many expectations going into it. And I was pleasantly surprised that there was so much passion, and I really didn't know that the passion existed at Rutgers.

00:08:05 Justin Ricardo

I had no clue and I - I was really just surprised by it and it really touched me and was able to basically allow me to realize my full passion and that I have a lot of passion in myself as well. And seeing that in other individuals was, was amazing, it was really amazing.

00:08:25 Rosie

Yeah, Rutgers can be very big, but once you kind of find your major and similar like-minded people. It makes it a lot smaller. Were there any clubs or anything that you joined along the way?

00:08:40 Justin Ricardo

Yeah, so most recently actually since- since I'm relatively new to Rutgers, since the summer- I was originally enrolled in 2018, however, uhm, circumstances made it difficult for me to pursue my degree.

00:08:54 Justin Ricardo

So, in this most recent phase of my education, I have basically, uhm, joined the SMLR, School of Management and Labor Relations clubs. So SHRM, the Society of Human Resource Management, is one of the clubs that that I've been attending recently and I've been networking and - and building relationships with, with like-minded individuals. who have similar goals to me, who want to help each other.

00:09:24 Justin Ricardo

And I've realized that in this club, that's exactly what seems to be happening. It seems that everyone here wants to help each other, and that's something that I really align with.

00:09:35 Justin Ricardo

I really want to give back what was given to me and the opportunity that I've been granted and, and all these blessings I have in my life.

00:09:44 Justin Ricardo

It's something that I really want to give back to, so involving myself in SHRM most recently has been something that I'm proud of and I hope that I can continue to build relationships with people, whether that be reaching out to anyone in – in the, the group, or whether that be reaching out to someone who's not in the group and who's thinking about joining.

00:10:07 Justin Ricardo

I just hope that I can make an impact like the people in the group have made an impact on me.

00:10:12 Rosie

That's great, yeah, it's definitely the people that you meet along the way that make the experience what it is, for sure. Do you have any goals for after graduation?

00:10:21 Justin Ricardo

Absolutely. I have professional and personal goals alike and I think it's really important to keep a balance between your professional and personal goals.

00:10:30 Justin Ricardo

And just for instance, it's, I don't think that it's advantageous to just focus on professional goals, because then you might not necessarily achieve the things you wanted personally.

00:10:41 Justin Ricardo

So, a couple of my goals, professional, include, uhm, receiving a full time offer from Amazon. So, I have an internship this summer that begins on May 24th as an HR intern with Amazon and I'm so incredibly proud of myself for getting this opportunity because it's a company that I really am passionate about and that I think has helped so many individuals.

00:11:05 Justin Ricardo

And a goal of mine is to become a human resource generalist for Amazon and to build relationships at the company and help people prosper.

00:11:13 Justin Ricardo

And also, I hope to be able to gain a lot of mentorship, whether that be having mentors and eventually being a mentor to someone else. Like I said, I'd love to give back and - and help others who, others who are seeking opportunities and others who want to work and reach so many different goals.

00:11:33 Justin Ricardo

And a couple of my personal goals include... this summer, I'd like to learn how to surf. I've lived in Belmar for five years and I've been out in the water so many times, and paddleboarding and kayaking and really so many different things and boogie boarding, but I think I really am ready to take that next step and learn how to surf. So that's something that I have set for my personal goal in the summer of this year.

00:12:00 Rosie

That's awesome congratulations on the internship, that's huge. That's sounds like a really exciting opportunity for you.

00:12:06 Justin Ricardo

Thank you.

00:12:07 Rosie

And surfing that - that always seemed cool to me too.

00:12:10 Justin Ricardo

I could tell you, it's so difficult. I've tried standing up on the board. I remember last year, one of my friends took me out and it was - it was, I guess like more of like comic relief for him to like, see me just like falling all over the place and it was kind of funny, but it was a really fun time.

00:12:31 Rosie

I can imagine there's definitely a learning curve, but it'll be worth it.

00:12:37 Justin Ricardo

For sure.

00:12:37 Rosie

One question that I like to ask is if you have- what is the biggest lesson that you've learned at Rutgers? Whether it's in the classroom or outside of the classroom?

00:12:48 Rosie

What's your biggest takeaway from your experience so far?

00:12:51 Justin Ricardo

That's a, that's a - It's a heavy question because there's so many things I've learned from this school.

00:12:56 Justin Ricardo

But I'd say that the one thing I've learned and -and I think it's important. I've learned to trust myself and I've learned to give myself credit, and I've learned to believe in myself.

00:13:14 Justin Ricardo

And this, this applies to a lot of different things in my life now, and it's also applies to like learning how to become accountable for the mistakes I make. And I've just grown so much as a person through my time at Rutgers and-

00:13:30 Justin Ricardo

I think that the people that care for me here and the amount of lessons I've learned here has really been able to allow me to reach, like I said, those goals of becoming a better person.

00:13:43 Justin Ricardo

And it's - just I, I'm incredibly grateful for the continuing lessons that I've learned and whether it be talking to a professor, you know, on a phone call just to chat, you know, about nothing, and I just think that connecting with people and learning so much about myself has been the absolute best lesson that I will take out from this school and have for the rest of my life.

00:14:10 Rosie

Yeah, that's great.

00:14:12 Rosie

And so, being an untraditional student do you think that - how would your journey have been different had you taken the more traditional route, and is there anything you would have changed about how you got here?

00:14:25 Justin Ricardo

So, I can confidently say that I live my life with zero regrets and, and confidently say that I'm excited for every single goal that I'm going to reach, and also for every mistake I'm going to make because that's just an opportunity for growth. And I, I don't necessarily know - I don't necessarily know like where my journey is going to take me afterwards.

00:14:51 Justin Ricardo

Uhm, but what I do know is that I, I'm still learning every day and - It's important to know that that it might not come to you right away. And, and there might be someone listening that that feels the same way I felt when I was graduating high school and going into that change of experience from leaving my parents' house and going to a new school and just meeting a bunch of new people, but also knowing that this wasn't what I wanted to do.

00:15:25 Justin Ricardo

I knew right away after high school that I did not want to go to college, and I felt like I was just conforming to society and to that - that belief that was basically planted in my head at a young age that quote unquote successful people go to college and that's how I thought as a young individual.

00:15:47 Justin Ricardo

And through the years I've learned that trusting yourself and following the things that you believe in and are passionate about, and if that means working after high school, because you don't know necessarily what it is that you'd like to do, that's sometimes the path that people need to take.

00:16:03 Justin Ricardo

And just for me, I know that accepting the path that I was on was a major part of my development and I was really able to fully grasp the things that I was interested in and the things that I really wanted to achieve.

00:16:18 Justin Ricardo

And with this mentality, then I was able to fully commit to Rutgers. I was able to realize that I really want some of these things, but at the time, I felt a lot of pressure and it could be really difficult to deal with the pressure at the time.

00:16:34 Justin Ricardo

So, if there's one piece of advice, I can give to a young student who might be a little stressed and feel like they're under a lot of pressure... It's just to take a deep breath and to listen to yourself and to know that you're in control of, of your educational future and to know that you don't necessarily need to attend, right- right away if it doesn't feel right.

00:16:56 Justin Ricardo

But as a nontraditional student, I know that through my journey, I attended at the right time.

00:17:02 Rosie

That's awesome and really, really inspiring. Your pride in your journey is very transparent and I think that's awesome and great for you.

00:17:09 Rosie

And I'm happy that it's led you here, because it sounds like you're exactly where you're supposed to be.

00:17:13 Justin Ricardo

Oh - oh like, that that's - I align with that so much. I mean I, I feel like I'm just, things are just happening the way, like I'm dreaming of and like I said, I mean some things don't go necessarily right and it's very difficult sometimes. However, like I will always try to make you know an effort to become the best version of myself. And I'm right where I need to be. You're so right.

00:17:39 Rosie

Well, Justin, thank you so much for meeting with us, and talk to us about your journey and I think you're bound for great things, and I want to say good luck to you with the rest of your Rutgers career.

00:17:54 Outro

Thanks for listening and we'll catch you next time on Extra Credit.