Interview keywords/topics: Ireland and Appalachia, Community, 2024 Election, Hurricane Helene

Interviewer: DB
Interviewee: KD

DB (00:00):

Ooh <laugh>. Hello. It is Wednesday, November 6th. We are in the library room three 18. Um, I'm DB and I will be interviewing KD <laugh>. I'm using the questions that KM has written. Alright. So I guess we should just jump right in.

KD:

Right?

DB (00:32):

This is the day after the 2024 Election.

KD

Yes. So… it's gonna be raw. Uhm <laugh>.

DB (00:34):

How were you impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? How did it change you?

KD (00:43):

Um, so actually during COVID-19, I was homeschooled that year. So as far as like school goes, um, for the most part, my lifestyle, it didn't change too much. Um, but it was– it's really weird and I don't know if like COVID had anything to do with this necessarily, but like that was the year that I realized I can't be homeschooled anymore. Like I can't just be at home. Um, like I wanted to be in some sort of like public education, um, 'cause my depression just got really bad and I think, you know, COVID-19 obviously didn't help that 'cause like, I could see the effects of it on my family and at the time, my sister was a senior in high school, so that was really weird. And she was just, I mean– like that's– she didn't get her senior prom, you know, she didn't get a normal graduation. Um, but yeah. So I think COVID in a way kind of forced me to come outta my shell a little bit 'cause I realized just how mentally bad I was, <laugh>. Um, and so I think I like grew a little bit more socially, which is like not really something common that you hear about COVID-19. But, um, for me, luckily the following year, so my sophomore year of high school I was able to go to a charter school. Oh, school. And…

DB(02:07):

So you were a freshman– during, or when COVID hit?

KD(02:09):

I was a freshman, yep. It was crazy. And my grandma was staying with us, like she had to stay with us. Like she's from Pennsylvania, so like that's 10 hour drive roughly. And so she stayed with us for like over a month and we were living at our old house and we didn't have a bedroom for her, so it was just, we were on top of each other. Um, but I, yeah, so I went to a charter school sophomore year. Um–

DB(02:38):

Was that 2021?

KD (02:39):

Yeah, 21-2022 school year. Um, and I really liked that school 'cause they actually offered the hybrid like version, so like certain classes. Um, I mean certain students could come in for like Monday, Wednesday classes and then certain students came in for Thursday, Friday. Um, so like that was really nice and kind of provided some normalcy. But yeah. <laugh>

DB (03:05):

Would you say that Covid is still impacting you?

KD (03:08):

I think for sure. Um, I think it's still impacting all of us, 'cause like, I mean, I don't think there's a day that goes by where people of our generation and just the people that were really impacted by it don't think about it still. Um, 'cause even though it was four years ago, like it's still highly prevalent. And I don't know, I think it's just kind of the con– like, I don't know, it's just, it seems to be almost the center of every conversation. Especially like political conversations too so,

DB (03:44):

Yeah.

KD (03:44):

Yeah, I would say so.

DB (03:47):

Yeah, I definitely relate to that.

KD:

Yeah. <laugh>.

DB:

Um, how would you describe your identity or identities? Um, in particular as a member of different groups or communities of race, ethnicity, class, religion, gender, et cetera?

KD (04:02):

Yeah. Um, well I know they won't be able to see me <laugh>, um, but in the recording, but if y'all can have guessed it, I'm white. So, um…um, it's really funny that that question's on here 'cause I literally just took an ancestry, DNA test <laugh> because like my mom kind of knew her roots were Swedish, but my dad didn't know much about himself, but we just presumed he was English.

DB(04:25):

Mm-Hmm.

KD (04:26):

Um, and yeah, came back 32% English. Ooh, <laugh>. Um, gotta love the English <laugh> <laugh>. Um, and so yeah, <laugh>, I grew up, um, both my parents are white. Um, I'm white, grew up in mostly white environments, but I am very grateful that like my first neighborhood that I was raised in was pretty like ethnically diverse. Um, and to an extent racially. Um, and that's something that I do really like about my hometown Greensboro, is that it is very racially diverse. So I think with that you get a lot of different perspectives, which I appreciate. Um, which is why it's kind of weird being up here where it's primarily white. Um, but yeah, so I don't, I don't know. It's weird. And then I am a Christian. I go to a non-denominational church back home. Um, and like that's a very diverse church as well. So it's really weird. 'Cause up here I find myself, you know, among other white people. But back home sometimes I'm the only white person in the room. So it's just interesting to see that difference, and to see how like conversations look different and how, you know, just my personal feelings, um, is different in those different environments. But yeah. I know you kind of touched on this Monday in your interview, but like, kind of some of the <laugh>, I don't know if Christian guilt is the right word, but just like a lot of, I mean, honestly the bad stuff that has been justified through religion, um, definitely still weighs on me. And that's why I'm not always like super enthusiastic about being a Christian. And I'm not like whenever, you know, I talk to people or meet people for the first time, like that's not the first thing I say, you know? Um, 'cause I just like, I don't know. I don't want it to appear– I don't wanna make myself appear a certain way, you know, ‘cause like, yes, I'm a Christian, but I would say I'm a very liberal Christian <laugh>. Um, and so, I don't know. And so, that's another thing that's interesting with going home because, uh, like not everyone that I know from my church, um, even my age has the same political views as me or the same values as me. And so sometimes that really hurts me. Um, 'cause I'm like, I get it if you have different views and like I can understand where you're coming from, um, it's just, I don't know, the way that they talk about certain things sometimes. I'm just like, y'all… that's not okay.

DB:

No, I, I for sure relate to that.

KD:
Yeah.

DB:

Like, growing up, growing up in a really healthy, um, Christian environment that like really taught me, like, how to love and value all different types of people and then like reconciling that with the way that Christianity has been used for hate is a huge..

KD (07:50):

Yeah. <laugh>

DB:

You know, it’s a disconnect in my identity. Um,

KD (07:53):

Yeah. <laugh>. Yeah. <laugh>.

DB:

Alright. <laugh>, what are the main current events or political topics of 2024 that you are interested in?

KD:

<laugh>

DB:

it's gonna be local, campus, national, and or global.

KD (08:11):

Well, I think the most obvious one… is the presidential election <laugh>. Um.

DB:

Right, right, right, right, right.

KD:

Yes. Um, I kind of like, I'm not, honestly, I'm not as political as I would like to be. And I think that's just partially because like, I'm still young and like experiencing what it's like to have political power, um, and like, doing research on candidates and just looking at that process. Um, 'cause I also wasn't raised in a very, like, politically charged household, which at times I'm grateful for. But at other times I'm like, I kind of wish that that was a conversation that we had more often. Um, because I do value my parents' opinion and I think they're very like, um, sound– sound minded (if that makes sense) people. Um, but yeah. Presidential election, y'all. It's, it's something.

DB:

Yeah.

KD:

I, yeah. I'll be very curious to see how, um, the next four years play out. Um,

DB (09:26):

How has your, like, view of politics changed in like the last 24 hours <laugh>? Like, just now that we know that we are in another era of Trump's America, like, how does that affect your way of thinking about politics?

KD (09:49):

Yeah. Um, I don't know. It does make me kind of like cling onto my more liberal ideals. <laugh>. Um, which I think is interesting. But yeah, I don't know. Like honestly this election has kind of made me, like, second guess some stuff.

DB (10:11):

Yeah.

KD (10:12):

Um, and some of my choices, um, back when I was voting. So I don't know, like I am, I am worried to see what happens and it's really disheartening to see like my classmates and my professors and just people that I know and appreciate so much, like seeing them hurting. Um, which like, I kind of like, I kind of wish I was at home seeing the impact that it has there and like how people are responding to it there. Um, but yeah, this is a very somber time for us. But as far as it goes, like changing my political attitude, I don't really know, kind of–

DB:

That's really valid. <laugh>

KD:

I'm kind of like still just in disbelief almost, and just like numb, so yeah. Yeah.

DB (11:11):

Yeah. <laugh>. All right. Switching, switching gears a little bit.

KD:

Sweet <laugh>.

DB:

Um, how and why did you attend App State?

KD (11:21):

Oh, love that question. So I actually, App State was not my first choice. Um, Carolina– Chapel Hill was my first choice.

DB:

I could have guessed that. <laugh>.

KD:

Really?

DB:

Yeah. Honestly.

KD:

Really?

DB:

Yeah.

KD:

Okay. I'll– hopefully that's not offensive <laugh>.

DB:

No, no, no, it's not. It just like, I have dear friends who go to Chapel Hill. It just like, it makes sense.

KD:

Yeah, no, I do too. I love them. But yeah, so they, I got waitlisted, rejected me off the waitlist. It's cool, it's fine, it's whatever. So kind of had a little beef with Chapel Hill for a little bit and still to an extent do. Um, but as far as App State goes, like, I think it literally, it turned out for the best for sure. Because, I mean, I'm in Watauga Residential College, absolutely love Watauga. I've made all of my best friends there and my closest friends. Um, and I think that I talk about this a lot with my friends that go to App and also go to UNC, whereas, like, I think the person that I'd be today if I went to UNC would be very different.

DB (12:31):

Mm-Hmm.

Speaker 2 (12:32):

Um, and I think just because of like the environments that I'd be placed in, 'cause most likely if I went to UNC, I'd be some sort of like STEM major. Whereas here I'm not <laugh>.

DB:

What is your major?

KD:

Uh, interdisciplinary studies.

DB:

Okay.

KD:

So focusing more on like humanities, like for that you can focus on STEM, but I'm just, yeah. I've changed a lot over the past year and a half. Like it's been really crazy. Um, and I would say for the better. So sometimes I just think like, oh, if I had gone to a different school, would I have been changing for the better? Um, 'cause I think here my… my beliefs and my ideals have been challenged a lot, but in a good way.

DB (13:11):

Mm-Hmm.

KD (13:12):

Um, and I just, sometimes I think if I were to have gone to UNC, like I don't know if they would've. So that's what I really love about App. And so even though it wasn't my first choice, it kind of after applications came out, like honestly a few months later I was like, yeah. App. Which, this is really interesting, <laugh> and hopefully I don't get hated on for this, but it was actually between App State and Liberty University, which–

DB (13:45):

Wow.

KD

Crazy difference.

DB (13:48):

Wow. What attracted you to Liberty?

KD:

I don't know. Honestly. I think it was like growing up in a Christian environment. I was like, okay, maybe I'll find friends easier and like it'll just be more comfortable and like, in a way familiar. But I toured that campus and I sat in one of the classes. <laugh> No. Respectfully, no. <laugh>. Like, not hating. Not hating. I do have a few friends that go there and they're great. But yeah. I just don't– no. <laugh>. I'm so glad that I chose App and a liberal education. Um, 'cause I think I've become, honestly a better Christian for it. Um, and just a better human in general. So <laugh>. Um, yeah, I have a lot of App Pride. <laugh>.

DB (14:36):

Love that.

KD (14:37):

Yeah.

DB (14:38):

How would you describe the first few weeks of your undergraduate experience? Like, tell me about, like, the transition from home to campus or moving away from your hometown.

KD (14:49):

Um, so first few weeks. Um, it's really weird 'cause like the first, I can remember the first day of moving in so vividly. Um, and like meeting my roommate, meeting my suite mate. Um, and it was honestly a very easy transition that day, which was surprising 'cause I feel like that's supposed to be the day that's like most stressful for parents. But for some reason I just like, I don't know if I was in shock or what <laugh>, but I just like, I felt comfortable. It wasn't until a few days later that I was crying on the phone talking to my parents. <laugh>.

DB:

Aw.

KD:

Um, but literally, I mean, after– within a week and a half, like I was doing great. I was completely fine. Um, and I had made a small group of friends. Um, one of them I'm no longer friends with for good reasons, but that's okay. <laugh>. Um, but yeah, so like, honestly App felt very comfortable very quickly. Um, but as far as like… what I've grown up around, um, and like… just friends back home, like my friends here are pretty different. Um, well, they are and they aren't, I don't know. I feel like up here I have more like liberally minded friends. Um, whereas back home I have a mix. Um, so that's really interesting to see. Um, 'cause I'm just like being back home in Greensboro, which Greensboro, I'm pretty sure– I was watching the election last night and I'm pretty sure Greensboro is a pretty like red area.

DB:

I think it was– Oh really?

KD:

I think it is.

DB:

I thought it was– blue. But I might be wrong.

KD (16:32):

No, I think you are right. It's like, it's blue in like the city area, but then like the suburbs of it is more red, which–

DB:
Gotcha.

KD:

– makes sense.

DB (16:39):

That's the same as most–

KD (16:42):

No. Yeah. Yeah. <laugh> literally. Um, so it's just, I don't know, it was an interesting transition in that way. But as far as like feeling comfortable and like not feeling homesick. I– that happened probably almost immediately, like within a week. So luckily the transition, it was not too bad. I think in a way, the transition this year, which is my sophomore year, has been harder than last year, which I find really interesting.

DB:

That is interesting.

KD:

Mm-Hmm. And I think it's just 'cause I have changed so much. Um, and so even going back home, like going back home for the holidays, like that'll be very interesting 'cause I love my home, but with me changing a lot, like I can just notice like friend groups kind of changing and like how I feel, like, attitudes towards them. So I don't know. It's a constant transition, I would say.

DB (17:45):

Yeah. Yeah. All right, well the next question was how have you changed since you arrived at App State? But, it seems like you kind of answered that.

KD:

Kind of. Yeah.

DB:

If you have anything else to add.

KD (17:55):

Um, I don't know. I think, yeah, I kind of covered most of it, which I literally sound like a broken record 'cause I've been saying the same thing over and over again.

DB:

Everything is connected. <laugh>

KD:

Everything is connected. But, um, I mean, yeah, just the fact, I'll just go back to my major real quick. Like, just the fact that I'm literally interdisciplinary studies, which is kind of like making your own major, like drawing from different disciplines. Um, like that's just crazy to me. Um, because I came in and I was like, okay, yeah, I'll probably be like biochemistry, nursing.

DB:

Wow.

KD:

And now like, yeah, <laugh>. So…

DB:

Humanities, liberal arts, Watauga Residential College.

Speaker 2 (18:39):

Yeah, literally, literally. Um, but I love it. I think App does a really good job about that, so. I love it. Yeah. I love our professors so much.

DB (18:49):

Um, what advice would you give to next year's incoming students?

KD (18:54):

Oh, I saw this question last night and I was so excited. <laugh>. Um, so I would say first and foremost, honestly prioritize your mental health. <laugh>.

DB(19:05):

So true!

KD (19:05):

Yeah. Because I know people hear it all the time and they're like, yeah, yeah. Okay. Okay. But it's so easy to get wrapped up in your schedule and get wrapped up in the to-do list that you forget to take time for yourself. And not just like spending time, like taking a nap or spending time alone, but spending like quality time with yourself.

DB:

That's reall– that's <laugh> like, you just got me, like, right in my– right in my heart. <laugh>.

KD:

Uh, because like, I'm guilty of that too. Like I do not do that enough. Um, and I'm kind of convicted of that this week, 'cause like the past– ever since post hurricane, like, life has been crazy. Um, which I know you can relate to.

DB (19:44):

Oh, absolutely.

KD (19:45):

Um, so yeah, prioritize your mental health. Make sure you surround yourself with great friends, great people that are genuine. Um, but I would also say like, don't be afraid to have friends that are, you know, outside your comfort zone or outside of your, you know, what your normal friendships look like. Um, 'cause like, I think that's a major part of college is just like learning from other people that are different from you. So when you enter out into the workforce or whatever you may be doing next, like you're better prepared to handle different situations. Um, so I think that's a really important aspect. Uh, <laugh> don't procrastinate. [I] do that way too much. Uh, and it's kicking me right now, so

DB (20:29):

Same here.

KD (20:30):

<laugh>. It's great. I'm thinking of dropping a class right now, so.

DB

Oh gosh.

KD:

Yeah. Um, yeah. But–

DB (20:39):

Speaking of the hurricane…

KD (20:42):

Mm-Hmm.

DB (20:43):

Do you think that there is anything that you have, like, learned post-hurricane about how you can function better as a student and a person in this environment? Because, I don't know, for me personally,

like, the hurricane was like this huge reset button on like my mental health and my ability to function that I've had to like, really intentionally get back in my routines and like, make my systems work for me in order to like, be a successful student. Um, and some of that has changed from like, how I functioned before the hurricane. So is there anything that like, you think that has informed for you and your, like, ability to function?

KD (21:22):

Um, yeah, I would say so because like you said, the hurricane and just like that three week period that we were off was a huge reset button. Not sure if it was necessarily a good reset, but —No. Um, but yeah, I think I did kind of realize that I am– like I need my routines, which is weird because I am a very like, free spirited, like go with the flow kind of person. Um, and I honestly like, hate the idea of having routine and doing the same thing every day. Um,

DB:

We have like the same [unintelligible] Continue, I'm sorry. You say everything that I feel <laugh>

KD:

uh, this is, this is great. Um, I feel like we're just doing like a podcast right now. <laugh>

DB:

I feel like I'm on a podcast too. I'm honestly, like embodying the like, podcast host persona.

KD (22:15):

No. For real. Um, but yeah, so I think I kind of realize like, yes, I don't always like order, but for myself and my mental health and productivity, um, like I do need some routines. And I would say just being home for a few weeks on end, like not having that routine– 'cause I'm very much like, I go back and forth as to whether this is a good thing or not, but I'm very much so like a busy body. And so being gone for three weeks, I was like, okay, how can I be productive? Like, what can I do? And it was– I honestly felt so much guilt from not helping out more and— with like relief efforts. But I just, yeah. It was, it's been a really weird transition back and I can't believe we came back as soon as we did.

DB (23:02):

Yeah.

KD (23:02):

Um, that still is crazy to me. But yeah, I think the main thing is just— and I also literally… post-hurricane, I moved apartments, so that's been a huge transition too. And currently paying for two apartments, which is great. So.

DB (23:20):

Oh gosh.

KD(23:20):

Yeah. There's been a lot of stress. Like, honestly this semester, like looking back, this has been a rough semester.

DB(23:28):

Yeah.

KD (23:28):

I mean I'm still doing great I would say <laugh>, but it's, been crazy. Like I just know when I go home for the holidays I'm gonna be like, whoa. I just, I lived through that. Like I just went through that. That's crazy.

DB(23:44):

No it's been a crazy semester.

KD (23:45):

Yeah.

DB (23:46):

I was like, I was smooth sailing up until the hurricane and then—

KD:

For real. No, for real. <laugh>.

DB:

And then, you know, a hurricane came to the Appalachian Mountains.

KD:

Yeah. That happens. Yeah.

DB:

Um, and you know, everything went crazy. Um, <laugh>.

KD:

Yeah. For real. Um, seriously.

DB:

Alright, well you've kind of already talked about this, but if– I would love for you to elaborate on your program of study. Ah, um, and like, why did you choose it? What do you feel is valuable about it? What are you passionate about within that? And like, how is that going to inform the rest of your life?

KD (24:21):

Yeah, no. Um, yeah, not, not a big question at all. <laugh> for the rest of my life.

DB:

Yeah, like why are you in school? Um, and what do you wanna do forever? <laugh>.

KD (24:33):

So yeah. It's really crazy when I came to App, when I was even, you know, had college on the brain, I didn't even realize interdisciplinary studies was a thing 'cause I know they have it at different universities as well, but I think that App does it very well. Um, and so I, last semester was kind of like… the first time that I even thought about, like, considering doing interdis. Um, and then I declared by the end of my last semester.

DB(25:07):

So spring of 2024?

KD (25:09):

Mm-Hmm. Which is kind of crazy, but—

DB (25:12):

And you were a freshman?

KD (25:13):

Mm-Hmm. I was a freshman, so, yeah. But I mean, I really love my major. Of course I still have the doubts like, oh, is this really gonna get me a job? Is this gonna get me anywhere? Um, but I think it'll create very interesting conversations with interviewers, which I appreciate. Um, but I know like, I don't know. There are gonna be some people in my family that I just know they're gonna be like, why are you doing that? You know, like, why are you– that's stupid. Why are you making your own major? You're not going to get anywhere in life with that.

DB (25:44):

Mm-Hmm.

KD (25:44):

But, um, I really appreciate it 'cause it's taught me how to advocate for myself a lot because I mean, if a class— like you are in charge of your program of study, which is crazy. Like, you created your program of study. Um, and so my program of study draws from like social work, sociology, anthropology, um, and it's another one— global studies. So it draws from a lot of different disciplines, which—

DB:

It sounds like a really well-rounded education.

KD:

Thank you, <laugh>. Thank you. That is the affirmation I need <laugh> <laugh>. Uh, yeah. Well, I mean like, honestly, no matter what I do in life, I know I wanna work with people. Um, and I just think unfortunately in a lot of fields, such as like social work, um, I've also been considering ministry, but when I think of ministry, like I wanna work on building churches that are more inclusive.

DB(26:40):

Yeah.

KD (26:41):

Because a lot of, like, a lot of groups of people don't feel welcome at churches. And so, and I think there's just a lot of, there's just a lot of language that pastors need to revise. Um, and so I would love to— I don't know, that's kind of my passion right now. I don't know if it'll change by the end of my four years here, but I just think that interdisciplinary studies and the disciplines that I'm drawing from will definitely get me there.

DB (27:09):

Yeah.

KD (27:10):

And I'm thinking of doing minors in Gender, Women's and Sexuality studies as well as Psychology. So hopefully that'll kind of also put a foot in the door in case I wanted to do psychology 'cause I've also thought about being a therapist. But I don't know. That was kind of all over the place. But–

DB:

No, that seems like a, like honestly, that seems like a very clear vision and it seems like you know what your strengths are and like how you want to live in the world. So I'm excited for you.

KD:

I appreciate that, <laugh>. Thank you. I appreciate that a lot. <laugh>.

DB:

Alright. Um, how would you describe the current climate on campus? And by climate I mean like general feelings/vibes of students and faculty, um, influenced by world events and you know, local, on-campus events.

KD (27:56):

Other, yeah. Uh, well obviously in case you didn't catch it, election day was yesterday.

DB(28:01):

Yeah.

KD (28:02):

Um, so crazy to be answering that question now 'cause I mean, it's already been a very, I don't know if temperamental is the right word, but it's already been a very kind of unstable, rocky environment post-hurricane. Um, and especially with the election last night, like so many people that I know, like were crying last night, couldn't go to bed. And like this morning, they were crying this morning. Um, and they're just like distraught. And they're really scared of what the next few years will hold for us. And I am too 'cause like, I don't know, I— I don't know. I care very deeply about people and I just, I don't wanna see certain rights taken away. Uh, so I would say for most people it's a very uncertain time right now. And it's creating a lot of stress.

DB (29:03):

Yeah.

KD (29:04):

And honestly, like App State and Western North Carolina has been through it. Like people, I don't think people realize that, but we are living through a traumatic event.

DB (29:16):

Yep.

KD (29:16):

We are still in a traumatic event. And add on top of that, <laugh> the election, um, and the determination of what the next four years will look like. It's just, it's insane. Like, I don't know. So I think the current climate right now is just very… uncertain. And scared.

DB:

Walking to class this morning, or like walking here this morning, I happened to be in like a really big group of women walking across campus and we were all just like making eye contact with each other and like feeling this like communal grief. And like just no words were spoken, but everybody just kind of like, knew what we were all experiencing and it was, it was a really surreal moment. And I feel like that's like illustrates a little bit.

KD:

Yeah. That's crazy.

DB (30:11):

<laugh>. Um, all right, last question. Um, what does it mean for you to be a member of Watauga Residential College?

KD (30:19):

Um, so actually when I first decided on App, I had no idea what Watauga was. Um, I still didn't even know when I got invited to apply and got in. I literally, I applied, I— this is gonna sound so bad. I applied because I saw we had nicer and bigger dorms. <laugh>

DB:

and that's so valid. <laugh>.

KD:

Yeah. I knew I did not wanna live on East Side.

DB(30:44):

Yeah.

KD (30:45):

Um, no thank you. And so I saw that and I was like, okay, cool. I probably won't even get in the program 'cause I was like, oh, this is like, this is like, you have to apply for this. Like, this is almost like an honors college. Like this is crazy. So I did not think I'd get in. When I got the acceptance letter I was like, okay, sweet. Like, don't really know what this means, but I'm all in, I'm here for it.

DB:

I remember being so scared that I wouldn't get in. Now I'm like, wait, what? <laugh>

KD:

Did you know about Watauga though when you applied to App?

DB (31:16):

It, it's what convinced me to go to App.

KD(31:18):

That– Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Um, which like, I feel bad saying that and kind of feel guilty for saying like, oh you just applied for the dorms because so many people, like, that's why they came to App. But, um, I mean coming from more of like the central side of the state–

DB (31:34):

Mm-Hmm.

KD (31:35):

I don't know much about Western NC. Um, I mean we had family friends that went to App, but they never— they weren't in Watauga, so they never brought it up. But like, whenever I talk about it now they're like, oh yeah, the LLC, you know? But, um, for me, honestly, it kind of means everything 'cause like I said, I met my best friends there, we're still friends today. Um, it's taught me a lot about myself. Just like the interdisciplinary approach to education is so important and it's made me value education so

much more. Um, and value good professors. Um, which I think personally we have great professors, but, uh, and like this year I'm on leadership for Watauga, so it's just kind of crazy. Like seemingly a very small, um, decision, like, seeing it play out now and seeing how it's impacting me now is very crazy.

DB(32:25):

What's your role in leadership?

KD (32:27):

I am vice president.

DB(32:28):

Okay. Yeah. That's what I thought.

KD:

Um, yeah. And then I'm also a peer advisor this year, so.

DB (32:33):

Perfect.

KD (32:34):

Yes. But yeah, not gonna lie though, vice president, I don't really know what I'm doing, but it's cool. <laugh>.

DB (32:42):

Yeah.

KD (32:42):

Um, but yeah, no, it means a lot to me. I think the community's great. Um, I like having a small community within a bigger community 'cause honestly, last year, last semester was rough. I thought about dropping out.

DB (32:56):

Mm-Hmm.

KD(32:57):

Um, but I think genuinely Watauga really helped get me through that rough time because I would look forward to classes with Watauga professors and I just, they know you by name and they know what you're going through and they care about you. Um, like literally Professor Maddox today sent out an email saying, I hope you guys are okay, like, me and Connie are here if you need anything. Um, so that was just—

DB:
King.

KD:

real. Yeah. <laugh>. So that's just like so sweet and such a unique experience that I haven't heard any of my other friends talk about, like, at other universities. So I'm very, very grateful for it. And huge advocate for Watauga now. Um, and I mean, I do see the downsides of it too, but overall, like I, I love it so much and it's helped me understand a lot more about myself and like, honestly, it just, it was meant to be like, yeah.

DB(33:52):

<laugh>. Well, do you have any closing remarks? <laugh>

KD(33:59):

Take care of yourself, guys.

DB:

So true.

KD(34:02):

Yeah. Take care of each other.

DB:

Yeah. Whoever's listening to this in 15 to a hundred years or longer. You know, go get coffee if that still exists. <laugh>. Yeah. Okay. Alright. Sweet. Logging off.