

Transcript for “Episode 5. Everybody's Talking About College Success”

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Gerardo M. Gonzalez (Professor and Dean, School of Education): There's a lot of debate and a lot of discussion today around whether a college education should be preparation for a job or preparation for life.

[Begin Movie Clip]

Francie: I think Hypo's right this time, Maxie.

Maxie: Now look, kids. You know as well as I do that I made an awful lot of dough by getting my brains knocked out. Even I know that. Now, doesn't it make sense that I can make a lot more dough by getting some brains knocked into me?

Francie: Oh, but Maxie...

Maxie: And what could be a better place than college? And the better the college, the better.

[End Movie Clip]

Anthony: College Success. What is it? Well, it depends on how you define the purpose of a college education. And if you listen to a lot of the conversation out there right now, whether it be amongst faculty, college administrators, parents, the news media, or even students themselves, you hear two stereotypical approaches. One looks at college as kind of like a catapult or a spring board. The idea is you jump on and it's supposed to launch you off to a job quickly and efficiently afterwards. The second looks at college more like a buffet. The idea here is that you're supposed to wander around, sample a little bit of this and a little bit of that, because you're trying to use this to figure out who you are and what you want to be. We're here to advocate in this episode that you bring these two approaches together, that you have your cake and eat it, too. And so we start in Part One with putting you at the center. In Part Two, we're going to talk about how to build all aspects of you, how to create a whole person while you're here with us. In Part Three we're going to discuss how to become the leader in this journey while you're here. And in Part Four, we're going to get into building important relationships with all of the extraordinary experts that you find here on campus.

Part 1: Take the Ultimate Selfie

James Audretsch (IU Freshman): Well, obviously doing well in your classes is important, but I think what you're getting out of your classes is the most important part. Because I know, to me personally, the grades aren't as important as what you're getting out of it and what you can apply to real life.

Angelica Hernandez (IU Senior): Well, I mean, it's about finding what you want and going to get it. It doesn't really matter if it's with school or anything.

Vivek Joglekar (IU Freshman): Well, success I would define as, like, doing the best that you can possibly do for yourself. And you're successful... no matter what, if that means a high GPA, that means a high GPA, if that means a good job after college, that means a good job after college, if that means neither, but still being happy with your life, that's what I would consider successful.

Madeline Randall (IU Sophomore): One of the things that I find myself doing is I get so focused on my classes and on my school work, I just focus on doing those things and then, kind of, waiting for the next, like, assignment or the next paper to come in. So, because I'm only focusing so much on my classes, I'm not taking as much time as I should to actually go actively start exploring and using the websites and using the web sources that IU has and comparing majors and talking to counselors and things like that. So, I think part of being successful in college is to actually take the time to go and look around, and use the sources available to you, and start talking to people.

Stephen Watt (Provost Professor of English): Yeah, my parents defined success for me in some ways; i.e. graduation - what are you going to do after graduation? But I think at the end of the day you have to define success for yourself, too. My mom did not want me to be a National Geographic reporter climbing mountains, she wanted me to be a lawyer. So I actually took the LSAT. And finally I had to tell her I just can't do that. That, for me, that's just not what I want to do. I have never regretted, ever, the choice I made to become a faculty member because I love coming to work. I'm actually close to retirement, and I don't really want to retire! You know? And so I think part of success is finding out what makes you tick and things that you like to do. I can't imagine at 22 or 23 graduating and saying "Well, I'm off to a job, and I'll be there for the next 42 years, and I'm going to hate every minute of it," you know? The cliché is that most of us have six or seven or eight jobs in our lifetime, and I sure hope that your definition of success would be finding one that gives you some satisfaction.

Drew: Hello, everyone. Welcome to our fifth workshop, "Everyone is Talking About College Success." Now we're filming in secret location at the top of one of IU Bloomington's buildings. And we're at the very top because sometimes people equate success with being at the top.

Kimberly: But we're here to figure out what success means to you.

Drew: That's right. I'm Dr. Andrew Koke. I'm an advisor for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Kimberly: I'm Kimberly Lucht, and I'm an undergraduate instructor at the Student Academic Center.

Lauren: And I'm Lauren Evans, an Associate Instructor with the Student Academic Center.

Drew: I really like what Dr. Watt was saying about how he had to eventually take some ownership of his own definition of success, and in his case, it involved changing a little bit what his parents expected of him. And I suspect that a lot of students need to do this. So it got me wondering, what are some intentional steps that you have taken to define success for you?

Kimberly: Well Drew, I think you're entirely right in the sense that we do need to construct our own definitions of success. We can't have anybody else dictating what we think we want to accomplish in life. And so I had to actively make a list, So I wrote things out, and I was like, OK, think of ten to fifteen things - priorities, values, passions, interests, anything - that I can, like, guide my actions with. And so I had to list them out. And then with that kind of inventory, I was able to be aware of what I was interested in, be aware of what different clubs or organizations or majors I wanted to become involved with. So that really helped me.

Drew: So is the list static, or are you able to change this as you go through your college experience?

Kimberly: I think it's a trial and error thing. I think you can shift, and prioritize in different ways, and as you experience more, that kind of changes as you go on.

Drew: I see. Now, Lauren, what about you, in your case? An intentional decision that you made towards your own success.

Lauren: Well I think for me, where I might have differed from Kimberly, is that I wasn't quite sure what I was interested in. I didn't know where I would even start with a list. So I took the step to go in the Career Services, take an actual inventory of my abilities, my interests, my skills, my values, to see "What am I actually interested in?"

Drew: Now here at IUB, we have a fantastic career service center, and they offer a lot of these inventories. What do these look like? How does a student actually complete an inventory?

Lauren: Well they can look a few different ways, but for the most part they are a series of statements or questions asking you to compare different things. So, you know, do you like to

work outside? Do you like to work inside? Do you like to do paperwork? Are you an organized type of person? Do you like to socialize with other people? All of these things sort of generate ideas in your head that you may or may not have thought about before and synthesize it in a way where you can learn about yourself.

Drew: So, I guess the purpose of the inventory is to teach you about yourself and then that will orient you towards different careers or majors and minors.

Lauren: Exactly.

Drew: So, we entitled this section "The Ultimate Selfie," and the reason that we called it that is because really college needs to be about you, yourself. You get to define what is going to be success for you in college.

Part 2: Create the Whole Person

Gerardo M. Gonzalez (Professor and Dean, School of Education): I think that if you graduate from college just getting high grades, for example, or focusing on the money that you're going to make in a job after graduation, you miss a great opportunity to grow as a unique human being.

Jeffrey Huber (Professor of Practice, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences): Work on setting goals to where everything you do helps you to get better, whether it's better as a student, whether it's better as a friend, as a mentor, as a role model, you know, as a citizen. All of those things, so that you're striving to meet your greatest potential, not just as a student, but as a human being.

Carol Hostetter (Associate Professor, School of Social Work): It's important that students figure out how to grow. Growing as a person doesn't just mean growing in one trajectory. It's not one straight line. It's more like the yellow brick road that Dorothy travelled. Or it's more like a sphere, an orb that is in all directions. And Indiana University is a wonderful place to be able to do that because we have something that can grow every aspect of a person.

C. Kurt Zorn (Professor and Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education): Academic success, of course, is very important, but if you focus only on the academics I honestly believe that you are not going to be a whole, well-rounded person. So you need to focus on some extracurricular stuff whether it's working out at the HPER or the SRSC, whether it's joining a club, attendance at athletic events or music events or other cultural events. But doing something for you as a person.

Stephen Watt (Provost Professor of English): And I also always like to say, at a big university, why go to a big university? Because there is so much happening outside the classroom that's great. Plenty of great theater, plenty of great music, lots of great lectures. And I think if you don't take advantage of that you're kind of selling yourself short.

Kimberly: These clips kind of remind me of the necessity of developing our own personal syllabus.

Lauren: Hm. Personal syllabus. What do you mean by that?

Kimberly: Yeah, well you know how professors have, different, you know, how we're going to do this and when we're going to do that and what we're going to do in a course? I think that we have to develop those same objectives and goals, and even like a calendar associated with what we want to do in our college career.

Drew: I like that idea of developing a syllabus for, you know, how we're going to go through our four years, but I'm wondering: How do we generate the activities that are going to populate that syllabus?

Lauren: I think that's where getting active on campus comes into play. You know, as an instructor sometimes I will talk with Freshmen and they'll be unhappy with their college experience so far and college is not what they expected it to be. But then I'll ask, you know, "What are you involved in" and they'll say, "Nothing. I go to class, I go back to my dorm, that's about it." But really it's about getting involved, seeing what's out there, going to the student involvement fair, trying different organizations or clubs, any activity where you can really try things out.

Kimberly: That's so true. I think that pairing the academic with how that might manifest in the community is so important, and I think, you know, some people, a lot of my students, were on the other side of the extreme. The other side of the spectrum entirely, where they focus so much on the extracurricular and so much on jobs or internships or anything else that wasn't academic, and they kind of lost sight of the academic. And so I think the key here is equilibrium and how do we achieve that.

Drew: Yeah, that's really hard to do. Humans are good at extremes, doing either not enough or doing too much, but to find that balance is difficult. And it reminds me of how I see Freshmen acting a lot whenever they first get here in September of every year. They will often, you know, go to every call out meeting, they read everything that's written on the chalk on the sidewalks, they fill up their phones with all of the friends that they're meeting. But then a semester later in January, they'll lament the fact that they're no longer seeing those friends, they're no longer

contacting those people, they're no longer going to all these clubs. But I think that this is actually completely normal to start and to experiment and to try many different things, and then to pare it down into a manageable and balanced activity for your "syllabus." And, in this way, they're able to grow the whole person.

Kimberly: Right. So you think the syllabus is rewritable?

Drew: Yeah, I think it's rewritable and I think it must be rewritable.

Part 3: Lead Your Journey

Vivek Joglekar (IU Freshman): High school studying's a lot different than college studying. There's a lot more time after class and outside of class that's involved in studying and doing your homework. And it's not for, like, a grade most of the time, it's just more for yourself. So you have to do it for yourself in order to do better in college. It's less extrinsic motivation, more intrinsic.

Stephen Watt (Provost Professor of English): He actually had three internships: an internship every summer after his Freshman year, Sophomore year, Junior year. The Junior year one was officially set up through SPEA, but the other two he arranged himself. Which, of course, is something I never did as an undergraduate. And the idea that one uses one's own initiative as future interests become clearer to you... and involved a lot of knocking on doors on his part.

Carol Hostetter (Associate Professor, School of Social Work): How do I make my way in the world? How do I become self-sufficient? All of those opportunities are available at Indiana University. One of the ways that they've been studied lately is through "high impact educational practices." And what that means is students feeling engaged in their coursework, finding a connection, finding a relevance between the course and what's happening in their lives. Doing some study abroad or taking a class on an international culture that's different from your own. Also, service-learning, doing some volunteer work, and bringing that back into the classroom - that's another high impact educational practice.

Pravina Shukla (Associate Professor of Folklore): And I think the successful student is good beyond the particular class, is able to apply things beyond the classes, to his or her life in terms of decision making, in terms of learning that people are different - they have different skills, they have different cultural backgrounds that are affecting who they are.

Shabnam Kavousian (Lecturer/Math-Ed Liaison, Department of Mathematics): And the path is generally very difficult. And you go up, you go down, you have fun, you have bad days, you have hard days. You don't like some of your teachers, really. And you hate some courses; you

still have to pass them. And, it's just learning how to deal with this that makes someone successful, I think.

Gerardo M. Gonzalez (Professor and Dean, School of Education): There's learning to be had from failure. So, rather than being discouraged—"Well, I'm not good at math, I'm going to change my approach," or whatever it may be, learn from that failure and think about what do you need to do to be able to solve the problem or be able to accomplish the goal.

Drew: Our third clip is about proactivity, trying to make decisions, intentional decisions, that are going to lead directly to your idea of success. We believe that this is not something that you can simply wait on, but rather something that you have to choose to go and get. Now, both of you are successful and have made very specific decisions at different times in your life to go and get that success. Could you share with us, you know, a moment where you made those kinds of decisions? Lauren, let's start with you.

Lauren: I was a biology major, and I did not enjoy being a biology major. I was getting frustrated with the classes. I wasn't enjoying the content. And so, I really decided to take initiative that year and apply to a lot of internships so I could try out biology, see what a career in that would be like.

Drew: How did the internship go?

Lauren: Well, I didn't enjoy it. It turns out I really didn't enjoy being in the labs, which is what I had suspected. I enjoyed being more social.

Drew: So, you came back from the internship and changed your course.

Lauren: I did.

Drew: OK. So this was a significant amount of time that you spent both preparing for the internship and doing the internship. And it ended up that you didn't even go into biology. Is this a failure, the fact that you spent that much time about something that you ended up not even doing?

Lauren: I actually really regard it as a success, personally. It was so helpful for me to be sure that I don't enjoy biology before, you know, maybe graduating with my degree, getting a job in a biology lab, and ten years down the road just really hating my job. And it was helpful to be able to catch it early and take a new path before it was too late.

Drew: Now, Kimberly, in your situation we're not talking about an internship, we're actually talking about an extracurricular activity.

Kimberly: Right.

Drew: Can you tell us about it?

Kimberly: Yeah, so I spent the first two years of my undergraduate career kind of searching around campus for a lot of experiences, a lot of opportunities, a lot of extracurriculars that kind of encompassed what I was interested in. And, at the time, I had been interested (and I still am) in dance, social change, and service, and kind of how all those things intersect together. And I couldn't find anything that entirely encompassed all of those things until my Junior year as well. And so I joined Movement Exchange, which is an organization here at Indiana University, and it's one of the first chapters of a national organization. This past year I became president, and so I took a lot of initiative in becoming president, making the chapter grow as I was a president. And as a result the national organization of Movement Exchange offered me a job for next year in San Francisco.

Drew: What I like about both your stories is that you purposefully made a choice. In both your cases, it was your Junior year, but it doesn't have to be your Junior year. Lauren, in your case, you chose to investigate something that you were becoming suspicious about. You were thinking, "Maybe I'm not going to like this, so I'm actually going to get some hands-on experience." Kimberly, in your situation, you chose to stick with that extracurricular and then to grow the organization which required a great deal of work from you. But in both cases, it was an individual choice. You saw one idea of success and you went for it. Leading your own journey requires taking that kind of initiative, making those deliberate decisions to achieve your own success.

Part 4: Build Important Relationships

Abigail Reverman (IU Freshman): I don't know. I really like the sense of community here. And the professors are all very willing to help you if you ever need any help with anything, or help with assignments, or anything like that.

Alexis Buford (IU Sophomore): And there's a lot of networking. I mean, all these professors know people around the world, so...

Jeffery Huber (Professor of Practice, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences): Working closely with an expert. You know, I think students that come in here and have an enormous opportunity to work with some terrific professors.

Stephen Watt (Provost Professor of English): If you're taking a class from a professor who seems good and you're interested, and they're interested in you, take another course. Go to their office hours. Strike up a conversation with them, because sooner or later, at the end of the day, you're going to need letters of recommendation from faculty. And it's really important for me as a letter writer to say, "Yes, I've known this student for two years, had two classes with them. I've seen countless papers and other kinds of presentations. I know this person will be successful." It's hard to write that for a person you don't know very well.

Carol Hostetter (Associate Professor, School of Social Work): Even if you have a class of 300, go up to that professor after class and say, "You know, I still had one question about this," or, "I really liked what we learned about that." Just, you know, thirty seconds. You're not taking up a lot of their time. That person, that professor that you talk to, will walk on air out of that classroom to know that there was a connection between themselves and a student. That's a gift that you can give to the faculty, and it's a gift that you can give to yourself. You will get to know the person better. You will feel known in the class.

Pravina Shukla (Associate Professor of Folklore): Learning happens by just human interactions, learning every single individual has things to offer to you. And if you're open to that, you really enhance the four years you're here beyond what's happening in the classroom. And learning from your classmates who have a different life experience, come from a different region of this country, come from a different country itself. And I just think we should all be aware of all the people around us that are de facto teachers and learn as much as we can from every single person that we meet.

Drew: This section is really about creating important relationships with professionals on the campus, and by that we mean advisors and professors. And as an advisor, I just want to make a plug real quick, and say: IU is an enormous institution. There are many different schools and majors and policies, and the people who are trained to help navigate this maze are the advisors. So please, have a relationship with your advisor. Now that being said, there is also the relationship with professors, and students seem to be hesitant, at least at first, to have this kind of relationship. Kimberly, why do you think students are so reluctant to approach their professors initially?

Kimberly: Right, well with a lot of my students they were coming straight out of high school, so they were freshmen, in college, they didn't know really where their footing was. And on top of that, in high school, the norm really wasn't to sit down with your professors. It was kind of deemed as a little bit "abnormal." And so, one-on-one in college is something that can really substantiate and supplement your college education. And it's something that, you know, they might not get or there might just be that mental barrier where they're like "Ah, I don't know, like,

they're in this leadership position, they have a higher-up position" and there's this kind of mental hierarchy there. So, really, overstepping that boundary and finding a way to overcome that is the first step.

Drew: So, get started now. Lauren, what's the payoff of having a relationship with your professor that's different than the relationship we had with high school teachers?

Lauren: I think one of those pertains specifically to the class, right? So maybe you didn't get something in lecture - it's too big, you can't raise your hand and say, "I didn't understand." So that's the time you can go to office hours, get something explained to you maybe in a different way than when you first had [it] explained in lecture. It's also helpful for the student to show a sense of effort and interest in the class, to say "Hi, this is who I am," put a name to the face for the professor, can pay off in the long run.

Drew: It reminds me, to some extent, of the relationship that athletes have with their coaches. On the one hand, a coach can be very technical and say, "Do this in this way." But, on the other hand, a coach is also an ally and a coach is also on your team and wants you to succeed. And I think professors are that way, too. I would suggest that if we can change the way we approach our professors so that instead of thinking of them like we thought of our high school teachers, but instead thinking of them like we thought of our coaches, in that way we would be able to more easily have a great relationship with that professor. Now then, what are the take-aways for this episode?

Take-Aways & Credits

Anthony: OK, here's what we're saying. College is the place where you can start making what you have to do and what you want to do later in life the same thing. And we suggest that you do this in Part 1 by putting you at the center, by taking the ultimate selfie, and by using the resources of this place on this campus to help you figure that out. That might involve doing what Kimberly did, which was to actually make a list of what your priorities are and your goals so that you can keep your eye on the target. Or you might do what Lauren did and actually use the Career Development Center and other resources on campus to help you figure that out in the first place. Part 2 we called Creating the Whole Person. That means attending to both the inside-of-class part and the outside-of-class part of the college experience and trying to balance the two. There's a lot happening on this campus, a lot of events, and don't play it safe. Be an explorer. Go out and check some of them out. Look into student organizations. The point here is that you're using college as a kind of lab to put your whole future self together, what Kimberly called a "syllabus for your life." We called Part 3 Lead the Journey. Why? Well, if this whole college experience is about you and what you want, then it really has to be that way. You're the one who chooses your major. You also choose many of your classes, so think about going after some

high-impact educational practices. Once you're in your classes, it's up to you to decide how much studying you need to do and how to pick yourself up after you fall academically. And going beyond your classes, if you think an internship might help you in your future career goals, go ahead and set them up. The overall message here is the same. You're the one who leads the journey. You're steering the ship, so set the course. We called Part 4 Build Important Relationships. This is another outside-of-class part of college. You're surrounded on this campus by people who are at the top of their game, and one of the best ways to be successful is to talk to other people who are. So go visit some professors in their office hours, and make an appointment with your advisor. Tell them about yourself and learn about who they are. If you do all of this and you keep on top of it, from the day you walk in here as a Freshman, then you don't have to choose between college as job preparation or college as preparation for life. Because you'll be doing both at the same time.

An SAC Workshop by
Anthony Guest-Scott

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Co-Hosts
Andrew M. Koke
Lauren Evans
Kimberly Lucht

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Sawyer Toll
Stephen Watt
C. Kurt Zorn

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Cameras and Boom

DJ Boits

Additional Boom Operators

Meg Campbell
Kiva Reinbold

Film Clips

Scene from *College* (Joseph M. Schenck Production, United Artists, 1927)
Directed by James W. Horne
Courtesy of the Internet Archive

Scene from *Harvard Here I Come* (Columbia Pictures, 1941)
Directed by Lew Landers
Courtesy of The Internet Archive

Music

"My Only Swerving" by El Ten Eleven from *El Ten Eleven* (Bar/None Records, 2005)

"Hall of Fame" by The Script (featuring will.i.am) from *#3* (Sony Music Entertainment UK Limited, 2012)

Additional Visual Media

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