

123. Chris Dicus: Good Fire, Bad Fire

Gavin Kelly

Hey, everybody you're listening to Beyond 1894, this is the official podcast of Louisiana Tech University. My name is Gavin Kelly from the Office of University Communications, and our special guest for this episode is Dr Chris Dicus. He's a professor of Wildland Fire and Fuels management in the natural resources management and environmental sciences department at Cal Poly and is the university's resident wildland fire expert. He's a past president of the Association of fire ecology and heads the wild land urban interface module of the California Fire Science Consortium. And he sat on the board of directors of the San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council. He's a certified senior Fire Ecologist and a California registered professional forester, and Chris is visiting campus, so we're happy he was able to make time for us today on the podcast. Chris, thanks for joining us.

Chris Dicus

Oh, it's my absolute pleasure. I guess being back in the south, it's like my heart's just tickled to be here.

Gavin Kelly

There you go. Well, let me ask you when, how when was the last time you were at Louisiana Tech before this week?

Chris Dicus

I drove through about three years ago and was pleased to actually meet up with one of my old professors, you know, and hadn't been here for over 20 years. And so it was really exciting to be back on campus.

Gavin Kelly

Okay, so let's kind of get back into that and dive into where you're from and kind of what led you into your your academic interests, and then what led you to Louisiana Tech. So take us back to the start and talk about kind of those early days and deciding on taking your classes here at Tech.

Chris Dicus

Well, I was kind of a poor hillbilly from Arkansas. What part Arkansas Hot Springs is where I, where I grew up, and a lot of poverty in our family. But even as a kid, it's like, this is not my destiny. You know, I just knew that there was something more out of that. And being in Hot Springs, there's a national park that was there. And so I worked at the National Park. I was enamored by what was happening in the national park system, and actually wanted to be a wolf biologist. Okay, wow. And so, yeah, and, and so I started looking around at different different schools that had wildlife. And the nearest school of all places was Louisiana, tech. There was another one in Arkansas, but I didn't particularly care to have cattle roam outside my dorm room. Okay, so, but being a really poor student, I never visited tech until I came here. Oh, sight unseen, absolutely sight unseen. The only thing that I had to go by is they had really cool brochures. And it's like it spoke to me. So I cool brochures, and the fact that they waived my out of state tuition and I showed up sight unseen had no clue whatsoever what I was doing getting here, and so it was quite the the adventure navigating these waters as a first gen student.

Gavin Kelly

Well, it sounded like you kind of knew what you wanted to study, though. So was picking a major easy for you?

Chris Dicus

Well, it was, it was fairly easy. Yeah, it was easy at the time. You know, you didn't have to declare a major, but I went into wildlife conservation, which at the time, was under biology, and loved it. It was great. And then I started looking over in the School of Forestry, and wow, they're also accredited by the Wildlife Society. And more importantly, from a poor kid that literally went three days without eating at Tech because I had no money. Was they had scholarships, and so I made the jump over to forestry with the wildlife kind of a concentration. And that's kind of what started me down this, this path, yeah, yeah.

Gavin Kelly

So talk about that. Talk about sort of finding your interests while you were here at Tech. And maybe even mentioned some of those professors and classes that sort of guided you along during that time.

Chris Dicus

Well, man, Tech is amazing, in a sense, like this, hands on learning, which I so value, especially for a kid that didn't know anything from anything. And some of the professors that I had really took me under their wings. In fact, one of the professors, which has since moved on to Ohio State, I was given a keynote address at some fire conference in Sacramento, and he was there, and I came up to him, and I was like, Hey, do you remember me? My golly, he didn't. It was Roger Williams, who's currently up at Ohio State, looked exactly the same, you know. And so we started off conversations like it never ended. We hadn't seen each other in close to 30 years, and has happened others that had a big influence. Dr Ray Newbold, in fact, it was kind of this career path. I started getting interested in wildfires, and I remember to the day I was on a field trip in one of his force measurements class. And. You know, I said Dr Newbold, I think I know what I want to do with my life. And, you know, he was really interested. Just like, okay, you know, let me it's like, Well, I think I want to get a PhD and study fire in the mountains. And he kind of looked at me incredulously. It's like, huh, PhD, because most tech students never went that path fire. No one talked about fire, you know, mountains I'm looking around. So he's like, Oh, okay. And so that was sort of since time I was 19, that was sort of my, you know, that was my path, that that I was on, that was my goal. And unfortunately, it worked out. And when I was rolling around tech about three years ago, actually had lunch with Dr Newbold. He remembered me. That was, which is pleased me. And I said, I don't know if you remember this, you know this, this whole conversation, yeah? And he's like, Yeah, I do remember it, mainly because it was just so different than anything I'd ever heard before so well.

Gavin Kelly

It's always good to hear whenever somebody kind of charts their own course and then sticks with it and it sort of comes to fruition. Did you know kind of where you were going to get those advanced degrees and kind of what your career path was going to be? What made you decide, you know, to go for the Masters and the doctorate where you did?

Chris Dicus

Well, it's kind of like the Grateful Dead said, What a long, strange trip it's been, you know? So I had applied to a lot of places from a master's degree and ended up what was at the time, not my first choice, but they had money because I got married two days after I graduated from tech, took my poor bride. We moved to Logan, Utah, Utah State, because they had scholarship funds over there. And so got into fire ecology work. You know, I working at 8000 9000 feet, studying beautiful campus. Oh, it's amazing. Yeah, yeah. So that that was really great. So that was my master's got my fire, and that's something I wanted to get on. And interesting how life makes these curves that you don't expect. And my major professor at that time wrote a scathing letter of quote, unquote recommendation, you know, to for for doctoral schools. And unfortunately, I find that I was on a long list of students that he had done that to in the past. And so I applied. It's like almost at the time, hopefully my major professor at LSU doesn't think this, but it was almost a courtesy application, because he had just graduated from Utah State, and he knew all the players involved in all this. And so I went from largely being blackballed across the country to getting the absolute best fellowship you could get at LSU. And was studying silviculture, which is kind of tree management, you know what, what sort of objectives you had. So it wasn't exactly the career path I wanted, and it's intriguing that I all I want to do is research. I didn't want to teaching and I wanted to go back out west California. Certainly didn't want that. But again, you know, man makes plan. God laughs. Yeah, and so I didn't get this post doc at Clemson that I knew that I knew that I knew I was going to get just just absolutely devastated. And this application came up for Cal Poly on the West Coast, primarily a teaching very similar to the the model that Louisiana Tech has, and very hands on learning, you know, smaller classes, et cetera. And at the time, I book smart, but perhaps I don't have a lot of wisdom. I had three kids in grad school, and so we were so poor, my poor wife, God bless her. See, we literally were going through the couch looking for spare change to find postage descended out there. And so I still keep these rejection letters after my doctorate that I didn't have, and within three days of me sending off this application that I thought I had no chance, I was on an eight hour phone interview. They flew me out three days after that, with my wife and my six month old daughter and offered me the job on the spot. And it was because I had the fire experience and I had the forestry experience, and that's what they were looking for.

Gavin Kelly

So I mean, your sort of research interests are developing around this time. Talk to me about how that kind of happens, though. So whenever you're pursuing a doctorate degree and you're having to do research and study and you get into a professor position that again, you're teaching but also doing research. How do you sort of hone in on the different areas of research that you enjoy, and kind of talk to us about what some of those are right now and maybe what they have been in the past?

Chris Dicus

Well, I think for most faculty, they have what interests them and excites them, but let's be frank, sometimes these things don't pay they, you know, it's hard to get funding. So a lot of younger faculty are very opportunistic, shall we say. And I was really excited when I first started my career that I was able to get some funding to do work in Yosemite National Park. And from a Tech grad, and from a, you know, a guy that grew up in. Arkansas. You know that moved there. I'm 8000 feet studying fire ecology in Yosemite National Park. In fact, my kids were, you know, it's like, Dad, do we have to go to Yosemite

again this weekend? I'm, like, one of the most beautiful places in the country again. Yeah, you little buggers. I didn't leave the state until I was, like, certain age, so but there was a big, big change that happened in 2009 I happened to be, of all things, I was on working in Australia, part of my Cal Poly gig was on sabbatical, and that's when the their Black Saturday fires came through and killed 172 people. And somehow, some way, I ended up, of like, just a handful of people that were allowed into these burned areas. And you know, you're digging through these rubble sites where entire families died completely needlessly, and it just really, really impacted me. We're thinking about my own family, honestly, just living that and reliving the experiences of the survivors, because we were interviewing the survivors, trying to understand that, frankly, a little bit of low grade PTSD, just reliving their work. But it completely changed my whole career path. It was like I love working up at Yosemite National Park at 8000 feet. Awesome. But there were more important things that perhaps I could, for lack of better words, you know, make the world a better place to live in. Yeah, and so that's been my career path. It's like, How can you let fire play its natural role? That these ecosystems are fire dependent. They need fire of a certain type, but at the same time, not burn down the world, you know, all around us, and just destroy entire towns and livelihoods and just people's lives, frankly. And so that's kind of what's for the best part of my career that's kind of motivated me, that perhaps I can make a real difference in bringing out this human suffering.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, talk to us a little bit more about that. It's, it's, I say unfortunately, but, you know, it's topical in the sense that the wildfires last year, or was that earlier this year? It was actually in January, okay, yeah, I was gonna say right at the beginning of the year. It's sort of for people who aren't directly affected by it, who kind of just sit back and watch it's devastating and you know, but when you're not in it or near it, as you are and as your work takes you, it may be easy to sort of, well, I'm in Louisiana, or I'm wherever, and that's not as big of a deal here, and it's not as big of a deal for me, but it's clearly affecting millions of people at a time. So the science of what you do, like you said, it's important for the ecosystem of where you are, but also, how do you keep it from devastating lives? So kind of talk to us about the type of work that you do and how it is helping in that regard.

Chris Dicus

Well, a lot of is just trying to figure out, what are the mechanisms of, like homes burning down, which is a completely different field from what I originally started from, and so designing communities such that that they are no more resistant to ignition. It's like, can we live in these high fire prone places? And I would argue in some places, yeah, you know, if you build your house in the right place and in the right ways, and then you're landscaping, when you know the gardeners that kind of come through, it's in a certain way, and the road layout is in a certain way. And so working on really holistic solutions to bring down this fire problem, and it's enabled me to work with a wide diversity of disciplines that have a stake in it, everything from fire protection engineers to architects to Landscape Architects and these others working a lot with the fire suppression staff, and for so long, we've been so siloed, you know, it's like, this is our turf. We're going to do this. But it's like, No man, there's, there's so many moving parts that we all have to sit in a room and kind of figure out, you know, what's happening, which, which varies from place to place. You know what the real issue is.

Gavin Kelly

You think about fire as just a destructive force. But as we've, as you've been talking about a necessary part of, you know, our world. So I'm assuming that it's not all doom and gloom, you know, it's, you know, fire is a cool thing to study. And in the world of forestry, what are some of the, I guess, cooler, maybe more fun, things that you've learned and that you study that pertain to sort of fire in this, you know, naturally destructive thing,

Chris Dicus

I consider myself what I refer to as a pyro schizophrenic. Okay, good term is a sense. So when I was president of the Association for fire ecology, we were all about letting good fire, the natural fire, play its role. And we were huge. Advocates for prescribed burning and trying to allow this natural role to play. Now, for my work in the wild and urban interface, fire Batman, yeah, you don't want fire playing its natural role, you know, rolling down someone's neighborhood that's through. And a really interesting thing that kind of like one of those aha moments, was I was at a meeting in Marseille, France some years ago, and we had representatives that were in this space from South Africa, Australia, Europe, all around and we're going around introducing each other and saying, This is what our issue is here. And it was wild to see that it didn't matter if you were in California, Chile, Greece, we are all dealing with the exact same issues. It didn't matter the culture, the hemisphere, the ecosystem, and you're seeing this increasing destruction around the world, which is largely caused by living in fire prone buildings and fire prone places, and then you stick wind behind it, and all bets are off at that point.

Gavin Kelly

Would you say that? You know, over the past decades that this sort of fire as a problem in urban areas has gotten worse?

Chris Dicus

Oh, absolutely, yeah. And unfortunately, it's, I hate to say it's a product of our own making, to a large extent. So some of the things I have a love, hate relationship with Smokey Bear. You know, it was like fire, bad fact. Well, no, no, in fact, we need some of these low intensity fires kind of clean up the forest, but. But, you know, fire was looked at bad for so long. So now, where you might have some areas that would burn every five to 10 years, well, haven't burned in 100 years, and you've had all that growth kind of come up. So now, when you get the spark in, you know it's going to cause some real issues with with a large destructive wildfire, and we are seeing that it's certainly increasing, both on the wildland side and more important perhaps, to human health and safety. It's in this interface area. And if you look at California, which, even when I was at Tech back in the 80s and 90s, you know, it was looked at as a fire prone state, you know, and but if you look at the 20 most destructive wildfires in California's history, almost half of them have occurred in the last five years.

Gavin Kelly

Wow. So with that in mind, you know, what does the future hold? You know, what are some things that you and the research that you're doing, and the people that live in the area that you live in, even around the world, what are kind of some preparations or things that can be done in the future to sort of cut back on the devastation that type of thing can cause.

Chris Dicus

Well, I used to rage against this. I'd hear this, this is the new normal, almost this fatalistic approach, and it's like it's not the new normal. It doesn't have to be. This is, this is a product of our own making, and if we have the political will, we can fix this issue, and we'll talk about some solutions here in just a second. But unfortunately, I've seen that the problem is so large across, frankly, all the US, and there's a lot of places around Rustin that I drive by, and I granted I've got my fire sunglasses on. You know, that doesn't feel really good, you know, sort of thing. But the problem is big, and it's expanding through a lot of our actions. So a lot of meetings I go to with other quote, unquote, ologists, fire ecologists, biologists, etc, I get up there and it's like, we will never beat this problem with just more fire engines and more fire people. And they're like, Yeah, you know sort of thing. And then I turn around and it's like, and we will never, ever fix this problem if all we do is more prescribed fires and thinnings. And it's like, what did he say that? It was like, We need both, and then we need more than that, just that. So working with fire suppression staff, working with people that do prescribed fires and mechanical thinnings, like we see over in forestry, you know, the architects, the community designers, the landscape architects. I mean, we all have a role to play, and that specific role kind of depends upon place, and not only just the physical environment, but what is the socio demographics that would work? Something that might work in a community of kind of up and coming folks, career folks, it's not going to work where you've got retirement community that are less ambulatory and there's more different types of concerns.

Gavin Kelly

I'm again, thinking about, sort of the fires in January that we talked about, when something like that is going on. Are you sort of one of the leaders that's called upon, like, what is your role during a time like that? I mean, I'm guessing, outside of the work you do at Cal Poly, you. You have to be a little bit more hands on when there's a national emergency like that. So during a time like that, what are you doing? What's taking place in your world?

Chris Dicus

Well, as a pointy headed professor, sometimes the fire staff doesn't like you wandering around. You know, as a past firefighter, though, and has the experience, I do embed myself into it, and I think that's so crazy important to see the thing. Not read it through a book, but we call it learn by doing at Cal Poly. It's unfortunately turned into burn by doing, but inserting yourself in there, watching these mechanisms, because you can study all this stuff, read research papers, etc, but unless you're actually there watching it and going, Ah, that's where your aha moment kind of comes up. So I do a lot of media interviews and things that's kind of part of the part, of course, and then I'm called on pretty regularly in the legal arena to provide expert witness testimony about things that I think that work, things that didn't, and there's, unfortunately, a tremendous amount of money flying around in lawsuits every time, you know, with these destructive fires.

Gavin Kelly

And I imagine, too, as with most things, there are different camps of thinking on this. And I imagine if somebody, if you're being pulled into sort of legal discussions and things like that, that you have people in your ear trying to pull you one way or the other, and I'm guessing that's just an opportunity for you to kind of stick to what you know and your beliefs on the topic. Is that, right?

Chris Dicus

it is. It's interesting, the space that I've kind of found myself in which I'm so happy so I've got colleagues at research one universities. And it's like, well, why aren't you publishing 10 papers a year, you know, sort of thing. And then just like, well, because I'm out doing the stuff, some of the fire staff is like, Oh, you really know what you're doing. It's like, Yeah, I kind of seen this before about 13 other times, you know. And so, and bringing a little gravitas in with that. So I think that the experiential learning, along with the education, has been really beneficial to my career, and hopefully the people I work with.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, let's talk about that a little bit. So a professor whose research is kind of hands on teaching a class that is also a little bit hands on and experiential, what is sort of the classes you teach, what is that like? Give us kind of a broad overview of what your students go through in one of your classes.

Chris Dicus

Always just miserable. It's just terrible. No, it's interesting that give your experiences along the way, and I really have honestly incorporated a lot of the attention and care that I learned at Louisiana Tech into my students at Cal Poly. And so we teach seven different courses on wildland fire, everything from being a firefighter to fire ecology to societal issues to technology to on and on and on. And most of these classes, they have a lecture component and but we really do try to have a hands on experiential learning, that that's something that, like tech Cal Poly, tries to separate themselves from other universities, that it's a learn by doing, you know, sort of atmosphere, so lot of labs, so they spend a lot of time outside, doing different types of work, different types of things, depending upon the class you

Gavin Kelly

happen to be on campus, and you made time for this interview today, but you aren't exactly just passing through. So talk to us about kind of why you've come to campus and what you'll be doing later on your visit.

Chris Dicus

Well, I was pulled in to provide a seminar on my work, and especially as a Tech alum, it's kind of funny. For years I've been saying it's like, hey, kind of local boy did good. I want to give back. I mean, because what tech gave me was so great, it's like, that said I can't afford to give you a nickel, but I've got time and talent and whatnot. And indeed, you know, it's like, Okay, that's great, you know. And didn't hear a lot of things back. And it's most interesting with these fires that happened in January. It was Associate Dean Jamie Newman that, who was from that area, she had interest, and she found me online, of all things, you know, that could kind of come in if she found out I was a Tech alum. It's like, oh, we gotta, we gotta get this person in here. So it's unfortunate that tragedy, in a certain sense, brings me here. But this place has a deep spot in my heart and any way I can give back, you know, I try to do that because it had a lot of important times and shaping my life, sort of having foundations to move on throughout my career and just my whole life being here,

Gavin Kelly

Beautiful, beautiful. Yeah, maybe not necessarily tragedy. I mean, it's tragedy that kind of brought here. But also. Live and see. You know, we talked about how recent those are and how kind of a national spotlight was on those fires in January. What do you kind of say when something like that is so

prominent that, again, Yeah, a national and maybe even a world spotlight is on that, and it's sort of your chance to sort of advocate for the things that you are doing. You know, is it? It's it takes a great fire to cause great destruction for people to suddenly ask, what are you know? What could we do and what's doing wrong? Do you think that they're in between when there's maybe not a fire raging and destroying homes, the work that you're doing then, obviously, is equally important, but kind of, how do you keep it relevant and prominent on a national stage?

Chris Dicus

Well, on a national stage is just embedding yourself into people that can make a difference. Previous supervisor of mine said that the world is ran by those who show up. You know, so, and there's so many people that are incredibly competent and have the ability, but they just don't show up. And so I've always got my hand up, like, Hey, I'd like some input into this and being surrounding yourself with people that can make a difference, policy makers. So during that interim, boring time, you work with policies so that when the next fire kind of comes through, maybe there will be a difference, you know, in terms of the recovery and the rebuilding efforts,

Gavin Kelly

thinking sort of about your time here at Tech and about studying forestry, and about coming from a place like Arkansas, in this sort of region. And I know you've been in California for a while, but you've also been all over the world. Talk about kind of your home state, and maybe Louisiana and this kind of area, and how you think what you've learned over the years has affected your perception of where you're from. Oh,

Chris Dicus

it just it feels like home, you know? I live in an absolutely gorgeous place. I can see, smell, hear the ocean from my front porch, you know. But that said, this has always been home, even though I've lived longer in California than I have anywhere in my life. And example, I was back in the Hot Springs area recently, and went into the local Walmart, and I had six different people that didn't, they didn't have a little blue vest, you know, they didn't work there. Like, you know, good morning, yeah, how are you? And I'm like, what? It's just friendly, you know? And there really is a thing about Southern hospitality, and it's familiar here, and just the the people in northern Louisiana, Arkansas, is just, they're my people, as they say, yeah,

Gavin Kelly

there you go. It is easy to when you when you're used to southern hospitality. It's easy to fall right back into it whenever you're home. One more question here before we let you go. We've kind of talked about, you know, reasons to be optimistic in times of doom and gloom. But talk about, again, the nature of of what fire is. And you've kind of spoken to both sides of it today. What are some reasons as we look to the near future that we as a people can be optimistic about something like that.

Chris Dicus

Well, you know, when some of these communities are burned down, there's an opportunity to build in a way that's not going to repeat the disaster. And unfortunately, I've seen, in my experience a lot of times, the politicians and they're trying to like, oh, we, let's help these poor people. Which, like, awesome.

That's great. But then they rebuild back the exact same way that that got them there in the first place. They get rid of any sorts of permitting processes and whatnot, and it's like, oh, well, this is a sort of a one off. This will never happen again, and it doesn't until it does, you know, sort of thing. So one of the things that I've seen that's been really successful, and it's been the sort of Master Plan communities, where I have worked with developers to so that they can make a community that they look at fire at all aspects, everything from the the houses, to the landscaping, to the to the road networks, evacuation, planning, all these things. And it's interesting that a lot of people's like, oh, how could you build this sort of thing in this fire prone area? Well, experience has shown that sometimes these large, fast moving fires, they move through. It's almost like a fuel break when they hit these communities, and it actually helps the downwind communities that are older and haven't been built in a fire safe way through there. So I think that there's hope there. But there, even in California, there are hundreds and hundreds and 1000s of housing units that were built back before there were any thought about fire, and they're very fire prone, and the vegetation has grown up, not maintained. And we, we Americans, we we like our stuff, you know, and that accumulates. And so it's just we. People, you know, they they act surprised when this happens, like, you know, fire is not this terrible, you know, Devil that's kind of trying to eat you and your children. I mean, it's just a natural process, and it's physics, you know. And so, how can we live in such a way that you still have a quality of life, but it's going to reduce your risk of harm? That's, that's the secret sauce that we're all looking for. That's

Gavin Kelly

why we need people like you and the students that you're teaching to come up and be the voice for that sort of thing.

Chris Dicus

I will say it's interesting. That is an encouraging thing with our students, because we changed our major name, which I was over the from forestry natural resources, to forest and Fire Sciences, and by changing the name with fire in there, it had a 300% increase in applications the very next year. And I do these straw polls, and I asked them my students, like, how many of you have been evacuated? How many of you have had, like, your grandma's home burnout? It's like 80% of my students. So I mean, Gen Z, they're motivated. They want to change the world. They think differently than my generation. And so there's some, there's a lot of hope there in that very, very smart people that it's personal to them because they've experienced these things that they really, truly can improve the conditions going forward.

Gavin Kelly

And like you said, the 10 of the last 20 of the worst fires were within the last five years or something, so they're also the most affected people by what they're choosing to study. So yeah, that's a good point. That's very insightful. Well, you've already spoken, you know, very beautifully about the work you've done and about Louisiana Tech, but I'll give you a chance here, kind of as we close, if you have any sort of final thoughts about your education, about your career, about tech, about your job, anything like that, the floor is yours. If you have any final words,

Chris Dicus

well, I would say to the students that are here today, it's like, you know, have a goal. You know, if you don't have a goal, you're going to hit that every time. But don't go off the deep end, like me, where I had a goal at 19 and kind of, frankly, got lost in that, where there wasn't a whole lot of joy in the journey. So I didn't even go to my master's commencement, because that was just another thing to check off and to get, you know, get on to the next thing so I could start what I wanted to do. So, you know, do your very best. Insert yourself and surround yourself with successful people. But just know that a job is not as important as your family you know, so take care of yourself and your family, and hopefully you'll find your life it's Fruitful And Joyful on all sides,

Gavin Kelly

great, beautiful, beautifully. Said again, I appreciate you making time for us today. I know just a quick what, couple of days on campus, so thanks for making time to be a part of the podcast. What do you think, by the way, of campus, I know you said three years ago, but then, if you frame it, campus now versus campus when you were here. I mean, what do you think about the growth and the changes that you've seen?

Chris Dicus

Certainly, some new buildings. I being a first gen student, that's like, I'm getting myself out of poverty. I you know, it was like a job to me, university. It's like we wanted to have fun, but it was like it was a job. So the old Nielsen dorm, which was the nerd dorm, I was on the nerd floor the nerd dorm, and they have since torn that down. So the first time I drove by, it's like, Well, what happened, you know? So that's been and changed interesting. Some of the buildings repurposed, and I love the fact being in the south, you're dropped on any university campus, anywhere in the south, and you know exactly where you're at. You go to a lot of campuses out west, and it's like the buildings or whatever the whim of the architect that day was, you know? So it feels home. It's like, Oh, this feels familiar. All the formative years you know I was here,

Gavin Kelly

you've seen your brick. I guess even

Chris Dicus

it's like one of those folks that got down on my back and took a selfie. You have to do that. Well, again,

Gavin Kelly

I appreciate it. Hope you're enjoying your time here in Ruston. Thanks for being on the podcast today. I've enjoyed our conversation. I've learned a lot. Have fun. Enjoy the the seminar late. That's later today, right? It is today. Okay, by the time you're you're listening to this episode out there, that will have already happened, but good luck with that today. And again, thanks, Chris, it's been nice getting to know you. And Go Dogs. Go Dogs.

Gavin Kelly

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