

126. Christiann Bayne: Career Services

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 guest for this episode is Christiann Bayne. She is the Director of Career Services in our Career Services Center here on campus. Christiann, thank you for joining us. I kind of mentioned it in the last episode. We talked to Casey. Casey Ingram from residential life. It's the summer. So you know, when students release, the majority of the students go home for the summer, and things for a lot of areas of campus, quote, unquote, slow down. Behind the scenes. Stuff does keep going throughout the summer, and in some instances, it gets a little busier, right? And I think in the case of career services, which exists to help our student body. There's always something going on. So that's part of the reason I asked you on. I wanted to talk to you about that, but let's get to know you a little bit first, okay, talk to us about where you're from, and kind of early on, the decisions you made about your own education, and then kind of walk us through the career path that led you here. Sure.

Christiann Bayne

So I kind of figured that you're gonna start with the where are you from? That is a loaded question. So there's a little bit of a story. Because if I really think about it, I've spent more years of my life living in Lincoln parish, right here in Ruston and Sims four area, than I have anywhere else. So born in Baton Rouge, but born into a ministry family. So my dad was a music minister, youth minister. My mom worked for newspapers. She had a graphic design background, and from Baton Rouge, they moved to Jonesboro Hodge, and he was the music and youth minister there at Hodge Baptist. So growing up as a kid, I was right, yeah, Russ was quick drive. Yeah, exactly. Well, then my mom worked at the Rustin Daily Leader, okay, so she worked in the back there. She was part of the I don't know her official title. I was young, but she was back in the editorial area, where they would lay out the newspaper just before it would go to print. And so I would go and hang out with her. And anyway, so I was in Ruston, yeah, a good bit even during those years. And like, I remember peach festival, we would go at she, she would go and take or just go and look at what's going on down there. I don't know if she, like wrote stories. I don't remember her taking pictures, but I went with, like some of her colleagues, to take pictures of things. So I was again, always right here in Rustin. This is where we did everything. My dentist was here, Orthodontist was here, doctors were here. We came here to shop. So Ruston is definitely home. Well, somewhere around my junior high years, we moved to Crowley, my dad got a call to another church, so we moved to First Baptist of Crowley, and we were already pretty familiar with that place, because that's where his parents were, and so my grandparents were there, and his brother and sister and their family. So I had aunts, uncles, cousins, we knew the place. So when we moved there, that's where I finished out high school. Was at Crowley high. And then to fast forward to this story a little bit. Went to Northwestern. Started there. I picked that school because I was I thought I was going to do radiology.

Gavin Kelly

Interesting. I was going to ask because, you know, when you spend time in wrestling, you get exposure to tech at a young age, but then you're also from Baton Rouge and their schools down in that part of the state, and then you end up in Crowley, which, you know, again, school, the school's closer to there, you know, so all over the place. What was it about Northwestern

Christiann Bayne

some of it was familiarity. Yeah, my sister went to the Louisiana school. So Louisiana school for math, science and arts. I was going to say she went to school there, so I was already familiar with already familiar with campus because of the visits we did there in high school. I was in band and I was a drum major, so we did a lot of the Christmas parades in Natchitoches. So I tripped many a times on their brick streets. It was great. Actually, that's where I dropped my trumpet. Fun fact, I played trumpet and that's where I dropped my trumpet, brand new, and bent the bell. My dad is very happy those dang breaks. I know. I know so, so some of it was just I was familiar with it. And again, I had this wild idea that I wanted to do radiology. Where'd that come from? You think a family friend? Okay, yeah, sure. My mom kept asking me questions when I was like, 1617, of hey, what do you want to do in college? And I'm like, I have no idea. I truly had no idea. My sister at that time, whenever I was finishing up high school, she was at Louisiana college. My parents both went to Louisiana college, so in Alexandria or Pineville, technically. And. But I guess they were like, just trying to get me to think about, hey, do you want to go there? Do you want to go there? And I'm like, No, yeah, I don't. I don't really know where I want to go. What do I do? So a family friend, yeah, back to that. My mom had me sit down with her and just start asking questions about what kind of work she did. Like, it was a great model. Start asking people questions about, what do they do? How do they get there? Just learning their path. Well, that was the first person that I talked to about it. I was like, Oh, I can do that. That's not that's not a problem. Again, I'm 17, yeah, I have no idea. So I just found a school in Louisiana that had radiology. Now it wasn't the only school we looked at. My parents were very nice to me. They they let me look at colleges that were outside of Louisiana. Despite cost. I didn't have any connections to these schools. So we took a road trip that my my summer, the summer of my junior year, we took a road trip. We went all the way to Georgia. I know I drove all the way to Savannah, Georgia, beautiful study, by the way, looked at some colleges in that area of the states. Did a big circle, came back through Missouri, looked at a couple schools up in that direction, came down through Arkansas, looked through Arkansas, came back through Reston and looked back. Yeah, but when I whenever I really thought about it, I knew I wasn't gonna go outside of Louisiana. I love Louisiana. This is where I'm from. It's where, it's what I know it's comfortable to me, not that I wouldn't go anywhere else, but if I'm gonna plant like home is home, this is home, yeah. So I knew I wanted to be in Louisiana and so, well, Louisiana Tech doesn't have a radiology program. So again, just I thought I had to pick a major, which now I know I really didn't have to, but probably, I guess, tap

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into a little bit more. But it's interesting to talk, talk to someone who now works there. You know your job is helping other people find, oh, yeah, like career alignment. And you were at a point then where you it was all question marks for you,

Christiann Bayne

yeah, oh, it was a huge question mark. I mean, because I'm looking at my dad and I'm thinking about what he did, and I'm thinking, okay, ministry music. Because, I mean, he was in a quartet at one time back in his early days. He that was his job. I'm looking at my mom and doing all of her graphic design stuff, and extremely talented. She Fun fact, she actually submitted a poster for the Rustin books festival. I forget which year, definitely in the 90s. And the poster was a colored pencil drawing of me sitting with a basket and a peach. And she still has it. I hope I get it one day, no time soon. But so, yeah, it's definitely part of my story. The big question mark, I really had no idea where I was gonna go, what I was gonna do when I started college. I mean, school was easy for me growing up, so I really didn't think a whole lot about how to study in college, I quickly learned how, that's the challenge, I think, for all college students that do okay in high school, yeah. And then I took a chemistry class so that, that was my first real, true major class, because there were several chemistries that was gonna have to take if I wanted to go towards radiology, and I was starting to fail. And I'd never failed a class before. I quickly learned how to drop a class, not without trying, because I had done tutoring, I had done extra studying, I had changed my study habits. I went to office hours, I talked to that professor, and I was getting so frustrated with the just the technical pieces of chemistry. I know there's somebody out there is playing listen to this and be like, chemistry isn't hard. Well, different strokes, you know, it was. It was a challenge. So I found myself in office hours with this professor and just being real and raw with him. I mean, I'm having philosophical conversations about, why does chemistry exist? I understand all that, but he finally just looked at me. He's like, Christine, I don't know if this is going to be for you. You really need to think about this. You have, I don't remember how many chemistries in that program that you're going to have to go through. He's like, this is the first one. So it really had me do a lot of self reflection. And of course, I'm calling my mom my dad. I'm melting like I've never failed before. And here I have someone telling me, You're about to fail this class if you don't figure this out. So I started looking at the catalog. You know, I used to we had a book. I'm dating myself a little bit, but the catalog was a book, and it had descriptions of all the majors and descriptions of what you could do with those majors, and all the curriculum was right there. So I literally started flipping through, and I found a class that was in social sciences, specifically a social work like intro class. And I thought, well, I just need something for my next. Semester I'm gonna try that. And took that class. Loved it. My mom was so afraid. She's like, you're not gonna make any money. You're not gonna make any money. You're going from radiology to trying to be a social worker, you're gonna make nothing. And I'm like, the money didn't matter to me. I at least remembered I really liked working in communities. That's what my dad got to do. Yeah, true. As a minister, he was constantly in the community. We were, you know, just talking to people all the time. I mean, he would counsel, not like a counselor, like a therapist, but he would counsel, and he would just help people get through things and help find resources. And I thought, I enjoy that kind of stuff, and I enjoyed the challenge of finding resources. So that was a lot of what social work was. So I did that, finished out my degree there, got it in about three and a half years. So I made good bounce back. Yeah, I know, right. I was very proud of that. I worked myself to death. I will say I could have slowed it down. I definitely could have. I did semesters of 21 hours, wow. And I did some summers and I fast tracked it, because I don't know. I really don't have a clear answer of why I fast tracked. But three and a half years I got out of there, I had an extra semester of tops that was left over, and really just didn't know what I wanted to do with that. So in my college years, this is a side story. I met my now husband while I was in college, who is a Louisiana Tech grad. There you go, all right. So I spent more time at Louisiana Tech than I on weekends, and I did my own university. I was the one that was running with him, obviously, but we were getting to football games two hours before they started, just to get the front

seats at the railings. I mean, right next to the Blue Crew people deep down. Just always a bulldog, always. I mean, there's pictures of me leaning over the rails and, I mean, they've got their masks and paint. Now, I didn't do all the mask and paint, but I do have, or had a shirt at one time that said, kiss me, champ. I don't know why, and please don't ever anyone do that, but

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that champ, if you're listening, please don't get a hold of yourself, dude.

Christiann Bayne

But I didn't know what I was doing. I was 1918, years old, whenever I made this thing, and I just thought it was funny. So yeah, so I spent more time up here. When I finished my degree at Northwestern he and I got married. Fun fact. Two weeks after I graduated, my dad had a deal with me. He said that I will, I will help pay for your undergrad, as long as you don't get married. I was like, Okay, so two weeks

Gavin Kelly

just fast track all the milestones real quick, I know.

Christiann Bayne

So that's with that extra semester of tops though it was going to time out, and I knew that, yeah, and I just felt like you didn't want to waste it. Yeah, I was working for nonprofit agency. Actually, here in Ruston, was a small private counseling agency. They worked a lot with probation and truancy families in the community. I loved what I did, and I loved the people I knew financially. Though I was gonna have to make some decisions, I was gonna have to make some moves. So that's really what got me back into school. So that extra semester of tops took me to Grambling, right down the road, right? I went to Grambling State. They, at the time, were the only masters program inside of Louisiana, north of what is it? I 10, yeah, and Baton Rouge. New Orleans would have been the only option for me. And I couldn't commute. There was no way. So I I went there. I did a summer and a fall in a spring, because I fast tracked there as well. Course, of course, that seems to be my thing. So I fast tracked there and finished out, got into working in psychiatric hospitals as a social worker, got a license, loved what I did there, and it was all resource finding. It was all helping people understand what got them into the hospital setting, helping the family understand what resources are available for them when they leave the hospital setting. And so it's a lot of just helping other people connect dots.

Gavin Kelly

Breadcrumbs were dropping, weren't they like starting to I'm getting ahead of you, but I'm piecing together kind of how you ended up where you are exactly yeah.

Christiann Bayne

So all of those things that I was doing, working in the hospital, working in outpatient programs, it led to what I get to do now, really, I had a an opportunity to jump. And I'm getting ahead of myself too, because I will say, with the first job that I had out of grad school, the hospital that I was working for got bought out, and then they closed, and I went through a panic, so I didn't know what I was going to do. This was the only kind of work that I knew. This was the only place that I knew, and I had never lost a job before. So for about two weeks, I. I was in a panic, until a connection reached out to me and said,

Hey, did you ever find a job? What are you doing? There's a spot in Ruston. Because I was working in Monroe at that time, and they said there's a spot in Reston doing something very similar. You should go and apply. I did get the job. Now I'm working full time in Reston and loving what I'm doing in that hospital again, inpatient, outpatient, connecting resources for patients and families. Fast forward. I'm told that there's an opportunity, potentially at Tech in the counseling center, that if I was ever interested, I should go and apply and just try it the first time that was offered to me or encouraged to me, I wouldn't say offered, that's a dangerous word. The first time it was mentioned to me, I blew it off. Interesting. I just never thought that Louisiana Tech was going to be a right now thing. I thought it would be a later thing.

Gavin Kelly

What about was this? Like, what give or take,

Christiann Bayne

this had to be around probably 2015, 2016, maybe a little bit earlier than that, that it was really mentioned to me about, hey, you should really think about it. There are opportunities at Louisiana Tech. And I'm like, I'm a social worker, yeah, and Louisiana Tech doesn't have social work, so I wouldn't be teaching. I've learned so much since then. This was my ignorance at the time. But yeah, so the first time I heard it, I kind of blew him off like that. That probably wouldn't happen, so I'm not even gonna try. And I just stayed where I was again, still loving what I'm doing and everything. And then the second time it was mentioned to me, and that was around 2019, 2018, I thought, Well, why not? Yeah, shoot myself. It keeps coming back around. I know I was like, go for it. Why not? And even West. Okay, so West is my husband as a Tech alum. He's like, yes, go for it. Go work at Tech. I want you to be because he's one of those that I mean, he bled tech blue all of his years of college, all of the years that we dated, and I was up here on those weekends, I was basically being, I wouldn't say, brainwash. That's terrible, but I learned more about Louisiana Tech than I knew about my own school. So yeah, so he was rooting for me. He's like, Just do it. Just go for it. Apply, try it out. See what happens. If nothing else, you at least meeting new people. Okay, so I applied and got a call. Hey, come in for an interview. Here you go. And came in for an interview to a panel of like, six or seven people, right? Right? It's always really intimidating, right? And interviewing is intimidating. This is intimidating in some ways. It took a lot of practice. It took a lot of like, I really had to psych myself out or down. I don't know, I really had to calm myself down while I was in that room, because that was just a lot. I'd never had a panel interview before. I'd had a one on one. I'd had like a like me and two people, but never six or seven people. It was a great conversation. Great questions were asked. I had done my research. I knew a little bit about what was going on on campus at that time, I told my story just like, now, maybe a shorter version, but I it felt, it felt okay, yeah, it felt good. But at the same time, I was still telling myself, like, oh well, it's just not gonna happen. Now, it's a classic, though, you don't want to ever get your hopes up for something. And, you know, and that's where I was. I was like, I don't want to get my hopes up. So I was very thankful. I was very just happy. I was even in the story of, like, telling where I've been and where I was working. Previously, found out there were mutual connections between me and some of the the interviewers, and that may have helped. But like, again, it was just very comfortable, very, very comfortable. And being on campus was fun, exciting. Well, afterwards, you know, I go home and I'm telling Wes like, that's not gonna happen. They're not gonna take me. Why would they take me on? Well, then I'm getting phone call of, hey, we want you. So I made that shift, switched from working in

the hospital setting, and moved into the Counseling Center. So at the time, the Counseling and Career Center one department I remember, yeah. So the position that I was hired for, I wore hats in both areas, yeah. So I was getting to help with the counseling, the mental health counseling, and help with some of the career exploration aspect, which was great, yeah, like something familiar, but something new, something else that I could learn a lot about, and just new skills. Yeah, I really liked it. A few weeks after I started, we had a big meeting, which I didn't know what I was walking into, but it was a it was a big meeting, and. It was all counseling and career. Our dean was in there. I believe, if my memory serves me correctly, I think was our dean and our Vice President anyway, and they talked about the structural changes of how they were going to be separating the two. And I had a moment of panic of, oh, no, I just started this job and right, yeah. And that question came up in that in that room, it was actually someone that was on the career side at the time, she asked on my behalf, because I didn't really know anybody still very well, she asked on my behalf, of like, so what happens to Christine? She just started, and she's in both and, you know, I gotta give a nod to my dean and VP. They, they were both like, hey, that's that's for Christian to decide Nice. So it wasn't a hey, you know, cut, cut, you're out. Yeah. It was a hey, let's have a conversation. Where do you feel comfortable? Yeah. And when I thought more and more about it, and there was no rush, there really was no rush, no pressure. But the more I thought about it, I was like, I think I want to explore this career side a lot more. I'd done mental health for for many years. And anyone that works in the mental health field, especially in psychiatric hospitals, inpatient, outpatient and or really just in mental health and counseling, yeah, they understand the pressures. And there were definitely sleep, sleepless nights. And you, while they try to train you up in not taking things home, you still think about it sometimes. So I wanted to take a break for a little bit. And that's why I wanted to kind of explore the career side. And I saw there was a need as well, true. I mean, there was needs on both sides. Don't, don't, get me wrong, there was, there was a need on both sides, but the career side was new, and just, I wanted to try it, yeah. So I started as a coordinator about two years, maybe two, three years after I started, moved up to assistant director and career development, I believe that timelines right? And then two years after that, basically I'm coming up on a year of being director. That's a long way of telling you my whole life.

Gavin Kelly

No, that's exactly the question I asked. So I appreciate that. Yeah, again, I mentioned it early on, but it was interesting to hear you kind of point out how you sort of discovered yourself in the sense of what you enjoy doing, and, like, the bits of your career, yeah, that were showing up early on, but showing up in pieces, right? So, like, just taking a little bit here and a little bit there, and then one day it's like, oh, that's what I want to do, or that's what I feel like I'm meant to do. And, yeah, that, but that's makes you the right type of person to connect people with potential career opportunities, because it's a, it's a hard decision for a lot of people, or it's a big question mark, or, you know, in good problem to have. Sometimes there's too many options, you know. So let's, let's talk about that. Let's talk about Career Services. Because, you know, we it exists to serve the students of our campus. Um, so kind of talk about how it functions, why it's sort of beneficial for students. And you know what? Maybe a quote, unquote, typical student might experience utilizing Career Services here on campus.

Christiann Bayne

Okay, well, so the career center isn't just for our current students, alumni, too. Yeah. So we're tapping into alum. We're also tapping into like potential students. So we pride ourselves in thinking that there's

a resource for everyone that comes through. If they're needing some help, we're going to potentially have something there for them, especially if they are interested in tech, or at some point we're connected to Tech like we want to be able to serve them in some way. So the way that we function, I tell you what, I'll put it on a timeline of like, first year to fourth year, because that's how we look at a lot of the services that we offer, of what makes the most sense at what point in your timeline at Tech. So starting out in your first year, that's where those big question marks come up right when

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you want to maintain, I'm guessing, a relationship with a student over the course of their entirety. You don't want someone coming in two weeks out of their graduation to be like, what I mean, like, I'm sure you could

Christiann Bayne

help. Oh, I literally had that just a few weeks ago. But it's

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better if they're in the door from the get go, right?

Christiann Bayne

Absolutely, absolutely. So we want to hit that first year. We want to join forces with our orientation orientations, we want to be involved with first year experience. All of us, we teach a section of FY, and the Career Center is one of the field trips that faculty can bring their students to the Career Center. Because if you think about it, we say with Louisiana Tech, too, if you come to campus, it's more likely you're going to come back as a student. If we can get them here for four you're going to come back Ruston and Louisiana campus is just a magnet when you're here. It worked on me. Oh, from the very beginning, it worked on me. So, yeah, first year we want students to come to Career Center, because even if they don't need us, it may be. They don't have the big question mark. Maybe they know exactly where they want to go, as far as a major is concerned, they know exactly what they want to do as a major. They don't need us maybe so much in that first year. But when they start thinking about internships or jobs or life after college, maybe we can help them out. So if they've been there in their freshman year, they know where we're located. They're more likely to come back because it's familiar. So we want to get in touch with them in that first year. We want them to have access to the career assessments. So all of these things are free to students. So there's none of the resources that we offer in the Career Center are paid through student fees. I mean, we we get sponsorship, we have other ways of revenue to try to make sure that these things are free to students. And that's something we're very we are very proud of. That's a big deal. Yeah, and so students have that access from the very beginning. As long as they have that, like latech.edu behind their email, they can access all of the stuff, and that includes handshake, the career assessments, our interviewing platforms, all of that. And so we want to teach them in that first year of Hey, it's okay to explore. You need to know, because I explore too in high school, yeah, when you do your UC t like you can do the career exploration side of it. Fun fact, mine always said I should be a teacher, or I should work in healthcare as a nurse. So again, there's those bread it's kind of a hybridization of it. Yeah, it is absolutely maybe I should listen to those things. So yeah, that's in their first year. It's second year as well. But then we start talking about competencies like so that's another big thing with the Career Center is competencies. So the soft skills,

the we lean into the academic side. For the technical skills, I can't teach you accounting, okay, right? I can't teach you engineering. I definitely can't teach you chemistry, obviously, but what I can work with you on is communication, or what I can encourage you to go and try is, hey, become a leader in this student organization, in some capacity, or in a group that you're in in class, try to take a leadership role, and that builds your confidence there, and therefore can build the competency that you have in leadership or in communication and so on so forth. So the career center services really go back to our NACE competencies and making sure that all of our services tie back into that from first year all the way to fourth year and beyond. I know we have, I think we have one of the best graduation rates as a university. Of my work on that, I think,

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and quickest, yes, quickest time to degree completion. I heard a number

Christiann Bayne

one time. It's probably changed since since I heard it, but I heard like a 4.1 years graduation rate or something. Either way, they have services from first year all the way to fourth year. And so that also includes, like, resume writing, the best practices of what to put on resume and whatnot, and how to use that resume, because Gone are the days of making one beautiful resume, everything on it, and sending that to 100 place tailor it. Can't do it. So NACE helps us in understanding what's happening on the employer world. What applicant tracking systems are they using, or where is AI involved in that whole process, exactly. And we teach that to all of our students that come through and that can happen second year, third year, fourth year. We introduce these things as early as we can to try and make sure that they're on the right track, getting to graduation, having all the internship experiences, you know, acing the interviews, to get the jobs beyond because we know we have good students here. That's that's a given. We know that Louisiana Tech attracts good students, and we keep good students, and we graduate good students. It's just the competencies and other skills that come with the technical things that they can do is also important. That's where I feel like the Career Center can help and we can help shine. You mentioned, like, students that graduate two weeks later they come in. I literally had that a month ago. Great. GPA. They're like a 3.9 GPA in the field, and it's like, so let's figure out how to get you a resume going. But what if we had worked on that, like, two years ago, right? We can still find things for them. Yeah. So that's back into that those Alumni Services, as long as you've walked across this stage, our services are available for free to alumni. We want to make sure we're giving anyone that comes to us. We want to make sure that we're giving them resources. So even if they're only here for one time, they've got a resource in their hand. So if we never see them again, at least they have that Yeah, right, but that relationship is really important as a career center, individually, even myself, like relationship building is important,

Gavin Kelly

yeah, and every student, alumni that you help, they are then essentially a resource, too, right? Know the outcomes, you're creating a network of Bulldogs helping

Christiann Bayne

Bulldogs Absolutely because those alum become part of our advisory board Correct. Those alum become maybe adjunct professors, Assistant like they they may go into higher ed themselves. One

day, they become the experts and the mentors in the field that I can then take a first year student who's exploring that field and walk them over to them and say, Hey, can you just talk to the student, tell them about your job? Fun fact, I do that to West all the time because he's a construction engineering technology major, and he's worked on several projects in this area. And one year, I was able to take my first year experience section and take them on a tour of one of the sites. It was the Ruston sports complex. So we got to go and just see, like, what does it look like if you're a construction engineer? What could you be doing as a project manager? And they, I mean, they had such a great time. They learned so much. So that alumni piece, though, started all the way back with him being even a freshman at Tech and inviting his girlfriend to come to the football games, right? Yeah. So yeah, that relationship we have to tie into that somehow, because that's what gets us beyond and that's what helps us, I think, as a university, just to continue on and continue on and continue building

Gavin Kelly

when you can, when you get a student that says, you know, I have this degree and I want to work in this field, but I don't know where to start, and you're like, Oh, I know the exact person who was in your position that works at this company, and I can connect you, and you can talk to them, and we can get your resume shaped up, and all I mean, like, it's, it's priceless, and the fact that that it's a given service that students don't have to pay for is, like I said, pretty big deal,

Christiann Bayne

exactly. And we, I will say, like, we lean heavily on our academic partners too. So many of them who teach here on this campus, they are the experts that we lean into and say, Hey, connection here. They have more connections in their respective fields than even I would, but they become that link. So again, that relationship has to be there between Career Center and academics, and it is. It's growing. It's ever growing. I've got some great friends, partners, whatever you wanna call them, that are across this campus, where, if I had a student that's exploring and wondering about that major or wondering about a job in that field. I could call them. I could walk them over to this professor's office and say, Hey, this person's thinking about it. Can you just talk to them about what you get to do every day, and encouraging that student to kind of what my mom was encouraging me to do was interview people, asking them the questions, because it's a lot easier to ask them questions than to have to answer them, but to encourage them ask questions, and let's get you connected to the right people to ask the right questions, to giving them the confidence that they can do that. I just think it's the most helpful thing for students that are trying to figure out live?

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, crucial. Very crucial. And again, I think the split, the Counseling and Career Services split, was necessary to make each one better. You know, there's a lot more. You know, you can focus on growing and honing in on the staff skill sets in each area. Absolutely, I think that was pretty important. One last question before we let you go, just in case anyone's listening and is curious. We're, we're, you know, in the summer now, but it'll be fall before we know it. And got a big freshman class coming in, uh, if anyone listening is curious about how to utilize this service, Is it as simple as showing up at Kenny hall or sending an email or a phone call, like walk us through that for

Christiann Bayne

a second? Yes, yeah. So all of that, yeah, you can walk into Caney Hall. We're on the third floor, so as soon as you come off the elevator or the stairs, we're we're to the right. You can walk in. People call all the time. We have parents call. Sometimes that'll be like, Hey, I think my student needs your services. What do I do? We tell them the same thing, like, encourage your student to come, give them our email address, send us an email. Now all of our students, including those that are coming in, we set up a handshake account for them. So I haven't mentioned handshake, but that is our career management system that we use, and that's our job board. We've got employers that are connecting there. It's an ever growing system. Several schools use it. There's over a million employers that are using the system nationwide and some international companies too. But anyway, on handshake, they can also request appointments that way, so we put our availability right there, and they can pick they can tailor down, like, what are they coming in for? If they're coming in for interview prep or resume, or they're exploring, or they just have no idea what they're doing in their career plan, they can go and pick their time, their person, and it's as easy as just show up.

Gavin Kelly

Very cool. You're mentioning services before we you know, in the podcast, I do want to bring up the Career Closet. Oh yeah, I think that's a cool thing. It is, and it's fairly new, like, right? I. A few years, maybe two or three years,

Christiann Bayne

years, it officially opened in 2021 okay, but it's, it's been in the making long before, yeah, I was here. I remember there were so many partners across campus, multiple colleges, multiple hands involved with that. And when we got to 2021 of course, I was there as well. And I remember asking the question that summer going into that fall of light, so why don't we open? Because we just come off of COVID, like that whole pandemic year and so many changes, and it was just asking, why don't we, why don't we just open? And we did it, and it was it was great, it was messy. We learned a lot of things, and it's still here to this day. So yeah, the Career Closet is what we call the attractive piece. It's in the back of our offices, so in same career center, third floor of kinyo, and students can walk in and just go shop, go and look and see what's there. So it's run a little bit like a thrift store. It's donations only occasionally. We will get a grant, I will say we've been very blessed over the last several years that we have gotten the lanyard ladies grants. Shout out to them. They're great, but we've gotten grants from them. We've had a few that have just given monetary donations to, Hey, go and get some new jackets. Or, hey, go get some

Gavin Kelly

new pretty steady stream of physical donations too. It's always a full closet in there, right?

Christiann Bayne

Yes, we've had faculty. We've had our own, well, I won't throw any people out there, but we've had faculty and deans and vice presidents that have come and brought their clothes to the Career Center, or they've dropped them off in different locations where we have bins, and those items are then passed on to students when they come shop. But yeah, it's all free. Students can get a full outfit every year. What that means is, they can't get two of the same kind of item in the same year, but they can shop it multiple times, but they just can't get two of the same kind

Gavin Kelly

like. And it's big for a student who, you know, there's something to be said for the student in need, who you know may not be able to get that sort of clothing on their own, but also, even a student who doesn't even know what to wear, what to wear, like, what to wear like, what does it mean to dress professional for a job interview? Where do I even begin to get a suit from? It's helpful for those two

Christiann Bayne

Absolutely. And we have, we have professional development series. I haven't even mentioned that. That's part of our services too, is we bring in experts to talk on different topics, like finance topics and budgeting. This fall, we're doing one on identity theft, bringing in experts talk about what to do to prevent and also to recover. But one of those experts is one of our very own, Dr Kathleen Hyden. She comes out and she talks about fashion. She talks about the interview what you should wear, she talks about psychology of colors. She helps them understand in a digestible way, what I wear and the impression that I give and what I wear matters on a virtual setting, on an in person setting, and she uses items from the Career Closet, so they're real items that come out of there. And so, yeah, just building the confidence for students to know what fits. But we'll also measure them. If we don't have the item, we'll measure them and say, hey, well, these are your sizes. Go and check out this store. We partner up with JC Penney every once in a while, at least twice a year, they'll they'll do some stuff with us. We've had some local businesses that have hosted donation drives. We had our chamber do it one time. So there's a lot of different people that are involved with the Career Closet. That's another one of those free resources. So it didn't cost the university anything to even get started, and it's not costing anything to keep it going. It is. It's the people, it's the people, and we're back to that relationship piece. So, and a lot of people enjoy that when they when they give clothing, or they give money towards the Career Closet for those items, they feel like they're involved in it, and they are, because they know they're helping absolutely tell Yeah, they are very much involved in the career development of these students. So in theory, if a student were to tap into the resource, starting in their first year, they get their full outfit that first year. If they did that every year that they're here as a as a student, they get four full outfits. Yeah, potentially, that helps build their Career Closet, their own Career Closet, because then all they have to really try to go and get is that fifth year, that fifth day of the week, which starts, they're all set. Yeah, that's the whole idea. And it did start from a student that was trying, well, the student was going to skip out on an interview because they didn't have something. And one of our very own staff, she's now faculty. She her well, the student went to her and said that they weren't going to go to the interview. And she went home and got her husband's shirt and said, hey, yeah, I'm taking this the students using it. I believe she might have gotten a shirt and a tie, but either way, she got items from her own husband's closet, brought them to that student so they would go to that interview. That's what really sparked it all. Like, hey, we need this on our campus. So it's a great resource,

Gavin Kelly

very cool, and just one of the many resources within the Career Services area here at Tech, again, we talked about it at length, but I'm sure there are. We didn't even completely cover it because it is very in depth. I. Appreciate you making time for us and and coming to talk about your story and about the career services area, and thanks for all the hard work you do and for, I mean, like it's, it's easy to tell we talked to a lot of guests on the podcast who kind of, quote, unquote, work their way up. But it, I think, in

a lot of ways, it just shows like a dedication to the university and to the people and to the students and to our our Tech family as the phrase we like to throw around. We

Christiann Bayne

love what we do and we love what we get to do like it really is a pleasure, so and the people we meet, it's priceless.

Gavin Kelly

Well, again, thanks for your time today, and Go Dogs.

Gavin Kelly

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