

The LAUNCH Podcast - Campus-Change with Amy Donofrio, Kelli Petersen, and Thomas Dineen

[00:00:00] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:00:00] Hi everyone. I'm Emma Bjorngard-Basayne, Academic Advisor at the Stamford campus. Welcome to another episode of the launch podcast,

[00:00:14] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:00:14] and I'm Kayla Hogrefe, academic advisor school of business at the Hartford campus. Today, we're interviewing Kelli Petersen, who is an academic advisor in the ACES, which is the academic center for exploratory students department.

[00:00:29] She also manages the transfer connections program and has a hand in helping campus change students transition to and from Storrs as well. And joining her is Amy Donofrio, who is an academic advisor with the academic services center in the college of liberal arts and sciences. And she is the staff advisor for cognitive science as well.

[00:00:50] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:00:50] Okay. And after that we will talk to Thomas Dineen. He's a current accounting major at the Storrs campus currently in spring 2020 he's a [00:01:00] sophomore. And he will talk a little bit about the importance of getting involved on campus and building community when you were coming from a regional campus up to the Storrs campus.

[00:01:08] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:01:08] So without further ado, enjoy our conversations with Kelli. Amy and Tom.

[00:01:22] What are your names and what do you do at UConn?

[00:01:25] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:01:25] So my name is Amy and I'm an academic advisor for the college of liberal arts and sciences, and I'm in the academic services center. So I'm one of the generalists advisors.

[00:01:33] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:01:33] So you advise on all the majors?

[00:01:36] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:01:36] I do. I advise all the majors on CLAS and I'm also the staff advisor for cognitive science as well.

[00:01:42] **Kelli Petersen:** [00:01:42] Hi, I'm Kelli Petersen. I'm an academic advisor in ACES on the Storrs campus, the academic center for exploratory students. And then I also coordinate a program called transfer connections for transfer students.

[00:01:54] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:01:54] and can you tell us a little bit more about that transfer connections program and like maybe when it started and [00:02:00] what it does for students?

[00:02:01] **Kelli Petersen:** [00:02:01] So I think we started working on that three years ago now, which seems crazy. So the idea was to create a support service for all transfer students at UConn because at that point, other than transfer admissions, there wasn't really like a

specific support service for that population. So we felt like we should kind of acknowledge those students a little bit more because that is a very unique experience that should kind of be seen. So we do have a website transfer connections.UConn.edu and it's designed to serve as kind of like a virtual, portal for new transfer students to kind of learn how to navigate this place, navigate the transfer process. We have transfer insiders who are current transfer students who've already navigated that process.

[00:02:47] so if an incoming or brand new transfer student is looking to kind of connect with somebody who's already been through that, they are available in the website. And it's just kind of informing transfer students have the support services and [00:03:00] student organizations that we have for them. So we do have an honor society and we do have a transfer student association as well as a living learning community on the Storrs campus.

[00:03:11] but Amy and I have been working together, as part of a committee of people across. Campuses for UConn. And then also for the Storrs campus. We have new to Storrs programming that we do for transferring campus change students. So that's kind of how we, have started to collaborate for these populations.

[00:03:27] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:03:27] Okay, great. Have you been able to gauge what kind of expectations campus change students have when they are coming to Storrs? And can you share. What you see that students expect when they're coming to serve?

[00:03:39] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:03:39] I think it's different for everyone. Everyone has a different expectation. And also I think it's different based on maybe what regional you're coming from because coming from Hartford a little bit closer versus coming from Stamford, you're quite a distance away.

[00:03:52]you know, I think most students. I do know that the Storrs campus just physically is much bigger. So they do have that expectation. [00:04:00] I think they're aware that typically classes, especially at the 100 level are going to be bigger. We have a lot more of those lecture halls. you know, but again, I think everyone has a different expectation.

[00:04:09] I think, many students are very excited to be coming up. There's also, it's very normal to have some anxiety about it. so that's why we're here. You know, we work with, you know, the new to Storrs programming that CLAS started right around the same time. Time that the transfer connections started to work with campus, change students and transfer students about that transition to Storrs because it's just, you know, for campus change students who've been UConn students but Storrs is a new environment, Storrs is a new campus for them.

[00:04:35] so just helping them with that transition. So again, I think everyone just has a different expectation experience with that

[00:04:42] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:04:42] and some of those, like I have a ton of Hartford students that. Already live in Storrs and/or split their schedules so that they take some of their classes here and some classes in Hartford.

[00:04:51] so, and compared to students that are coming from Stamford, it's like a completely different, coming from a city environment to a more rural. So [00:05:00] what are some of the biggest challenges for students who come to Storrs from a regional campus that you expect students to face.

[00:05:07] **Kelli Petersen:** [00:05:07] I think first acknowledging that a lot of them haven't maybe lived on a campus, so they're just kind of getting used to having a roommate or living with other people, or maybe not having to commute.

[00:05:20] maybe some of them had to let go of some other responsibilities, like maybe they don't plan to have a job, you know, they, they're not going to work part time their first semester here. So just adjusting to kind of like a new lifestyle and a brand new environment. But then kind of going along with what Amy was saying, like getting used to just a brand new learning environment, like the classes are larger.

[00:05:41] we have TAs at the Storrs campus, so we have grad students. So it's kind of just suggesting to working with a professor and working with a TA and utilizing office hours and kind of really needing to learn how to like self-advocate for yourself on such a large campus.

[00:05:56] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:05:56] Yeah. But you do have, you know, we always talk to our students about that.

[00:05:58] we have lots and lots of [00:06:00] resources on campus. Professors and TAs want to help you. Your advisors want to help you, but we don't know if you need the help unless you reach out and ask for it. And I think the way we look at it. You're adults, you know? And so you need to take that initiative, but we want to help you with that initiative, you know?

[00:06:16] But you have to take that first step and seek out that help.

[00:06:19] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:06:19] So then it's like going through this transition and looking at a map and finding buildings and all those different, finding the dining halls and all while, yeah. Maybe you have like Scholastic standards you have to meet to, you know, get certain grades in certain classes so it can be really challenging.

[00:06:34] what are some specific resources and Storrs that exist to support campus change students?

[00:06:40] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:06:40] I think, I mean, obviously we have so many of those resources. That's why we try to do in the fall a resource fair for our incoming, campus change and transfer students. It's through the Storrs programming that we do.

[00:06:52] So definitely something to check out. We try to do that a second or third week in a semester, but a lot of things that we highlight, are first of all, your academic advisors.

[00:07:00] every department, every school or college has. Devise a different advising structure. So you do kind of have to like look into what the advising structure is for you specifically, but your advisors are there to help you navigate and they're just a really great place to go if you have a question.

[00:07:13] if it's not academic, they can at least direct you as to where to go for that. We have the academic achievement center that helps with kind of like those study skills, organizational skills, even presentation skills. We have our student health and wellness. So your health and wellness, you know, they have the mental health services.

[00:07:31] We know that college can be stressful. So any support with that, they're really helpful with that.

[00:07:36] **Kelli Petersen:** [00:07:36] Center for career development is huge, especially because sometimes campus change and transfer students, they're not always. They're all coming in at different points. So a lot of the times, by the time they get to Storrs, they are very concerned on developing themselves professionally and kind of working on building their resume because they may have a shorter amount of time to get involved on the Storrs campus and work on finding an internship.

[00:07:58] So. Connecting them with that [00:08:00] office probably sooner rather than later. Our Dean of student's office, cause they just help with everything. Like if you need somewhere to get, like if you're not sure where to go, I would say Dean of students can literally help you navigate those places as well. Off campus and commuter services.

[00:08:15] If after their first semester they are maybe thinking about living off campus, in a brand new town or brand new city. So it's just a lie and getting it right. This information to them, like as soon as they're here. So then that way they know how to navigate this place. And they're not kind of falling behind, you know, they feel comfortable being here right away.

[00:08:32] Right.

[00:08:33] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:08:33] And I would even add to that, again, there's so many that were probably, that were definitely missing, but, office of undergraduate research, because like Kelli said, you're kind of coming in later in your college career. You might have some really great goals. So if you're looking at research, we have our office of undergraduate research that could help you with that.

[00:08:49] our cultural centers are great. Right in the student union. Student activities, if you're getting get, just getting involved in organizations and clubs. So lots of things on campus. [00:09:00] but it can take time to just kind of get used to like where everything is. And you know, our map, because everything is in different locations.

[00:09:06] so using the UConn app and. Using that map. And I know I still use it at times and I've been here for a while and I was a student here. And then there are buildings that you just have never been to. And that's okay to use the, the map to find it. Yeah.

[00:09:18] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:09:18] And I imagine you encourage students to engage in like student organizations and activities and, like the intermural sports and those sorts of things because building community is really going to help students feel at home and be more academically successful?

[00:09:34] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:09:34] Absolutely. Absolutely. Every time we meet with campus change students, we always talk about that. You know, you want you to, there's a diff, there's a difference between involvement and engagement. We want you to be involved. We want you to go to class. We want you to join clubs, but we also want you to be engaged.

[00:09:47] It's more than just. So going to class, it's going to class, asking questions. If it's a really large class, it's okay. You know, meeting with your professors during office hours, maybe getting involved in internship or research like we talked about. When it [00:10:00] comes to the clubs, you know, it's great. Go there.

[00:10:02] you know, the involvement fair, the second week of the semester. Learn about all your clubs, you know, sign up for clubs. But also, like you said. It helps you get involved in a community, create a community for yourself, make it feel a little bit smaller by not only joining the clubs, but participating in clubs, maybe being part of like a subcommittee of the club and doing things like that.

[00:10:21] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:10:21] do either of you have experience and can you talk a little bit about students who changed their minds maybe after they campus change to Storrs and want to return to a regional campus? Is that something that's. Students can do.

[00:10:33] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:10:33] Yeah, absolutely. The only thing you'd have to just check with is whether or not you could finish the degree at the regional.

[00:10:38] So many, you know, all the regionals have degrees that can be finished on their campus. but again, they don't have every degree or every major, so I should say, so, you know, you just want to make sure that if you do feel like the regional's a better fit for you, and that's perfectly fine sometimes, you know, not, not every school is right for each student.

[00:10:57] Right. You know, and we are very [00:11:00] large, and some students may feel more comfortable in a smaller setting, maybe for personal reasons. They need to be closer to home. And that's okay, but you do want to check to make sure that you can finish at least the degree in the major, or make a plan for it. So we do have students.

[00:11:13] who, you know, started at Storrs and then campus changed to the regionals. We have students who obviously we know start at regionals and campus change of Storrs. We have students who have done both ways, come to Storrs after being an original and go back to the regional. And we even have students who maybe split that time.

[00:11:28] so, so they, because maybe they do need to be close to home, but they need to take a couple of classes up here.

[00:11:33] **Kelli Petersen:** [00:11:33] Okay. Yeah, I was going to be like, I just, I think it's important, like Amy was saying that to acknowledge that every student has a unique experience. So like, just because we're a Storrs advisors doesn't mean we won't have a conversation about, is Storrs the right place for a student.

[00:11:48] so I think it is important for students to know, like at the end of the day, if you graduate from UConn, you're graduating with an UConn degree. So your experiences, what you make of it, and what you want it to be. So whether that. Finishing [00:12:00] at Storrs or finishing at a regional like it's whatever's going to set you up to be the most accessible.

[00:12:04] There should be no stigma around that, you know?

[00:12:06] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:12:06] Absolutely. In your transcript, just as UConn, Hartford, you know, it does not, and it doesn't tell you which semester you were at, which regional or which you know are Storrs campus. Again, it's just UConn. The only thing I would say is, you know, you have to work with your regional campus.

[00:12:21] If you are campus changing up the Storrs, even if you were at Storrs, then once the regional and they want to come back to Storrs again, it's the regional campus that does the application for campus changing up the Storrs

[00:12:31] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:12:31] could, both of you offer one piece of positive advice or encouragement for students who might be campus changing soon.

[00:12:40] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:12:40] Well first we're excited up here and to meet with you. My biggest piece is, you know, we always talk about is self-advocacy and engagement. You know, making it your own, reaching out for help. most students do pretty well with the campus change process, but when I do meet with students who maybe struggled with it, our students, typically what I hear from students is [00:13:00] they didn't know where to go and they didn't know who to ask for help.

[00:13:03] And so all we just keep saying is, yeah. You know, talk to us, you know, talk to Kelli, talk to myself. Any one of your advisors from any school or college can help you. So it's just about asking for that help or at least letting us help you navigate, like figure out what resources could be helpful for you.

[00:13:20] **Kelli Petersen:** [00:13:20] It's interesting because Amy and I both went through a transition, so I was a transfer student who transferred to UConn Storrs and Amy was a campus change student. So I know not every student will have the same experiences that we both have had, but I, I completely agree with Amy. I remember myself feeling a little bit overwhelmed coming to such a large campus at first and really needing to learn how to ask for help.

[00:13:44] And the more I did, the more I realized like. There are people here who actually like want to like see you often and want to hear how your transition has been in higher days. I've been going at your classes. I've been going, so just know that there are people at each campus who like want [00:14:00] to like hear how you're doing.

[00:14:01] We want to make sure you're okay. We don't want you to be floating like on your own, so please just. Like, don't be afraid to ask for help and, that's normal. You're not the only one. Don't feel like you're the only one going through that transition. I know it's hard for transferring campus change students to ask for help because they don't want to be seen as like a brand new college student.

[00:14:19] I hear that a lot from students. So just know like there are other people going through similar things and like, yeah. You won't be judged for doing that in the end.

[00:14:27] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:14:27] How can students get in touch with you? Both if you, I don't know if there's a campus change one site or like if they, if you have your emails up online somewhere that they can reach out to you.

[00:14:40] **Kelli Petersen:** [00:14:40] so I'm available both on the ACES website and the transfer connections website, by appointments, phone conversations, email, Amy is also. So on the transfer connections website, if you wanted to kind of start there. because on that website there is a lot of information for transfer and campus change on the Storrs campus.

[00:14:59][00:15:00] but we also have information on there for all the regional campuses as well. So kind of wherever you're at in your journey, there's going to be stuff on that website, to kind of help you through that process.

[00:15:10] **Amy Donofrio:** [00:15:10] And that website. Also has contacts for other advisors from other schools in colleges like engineering at, college of Ag, school of business.

[00:15:19] So they have contact there. And then of course, through CLAS if you just looked at website, my information is there as well as my colleague Sarah Mosier, who's also works with campus change students.

[00:15:31] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:15:31] All right. Thank you so much. We really appreciate you helping students.

[00:15:43] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:15:43] What is your name, your major, and your year at UConn?

[00:15:47] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:15:47] My name is Thomas. I'm a sophomore accounting major up at Storrs.

[00:15:51] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:15:51] When did your campus change to Storrs and where were you coming from?

[00:15:54] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:15:54] I came to Storrs after my first semester and I came from Hartford as part of the spring Storrs program.

[00:16:00] [00:15:59] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:15:59] Okay. What was your major at the Hartford campus?

[00:16:02] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:16:02] At Hartford, I was finance, but in your first semester you don't really do too much business specifics, so it didn't really. I feel like that much of a change to me.

[00:16:10] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:16:10] Perfect. Yes. and what were your expectations for coming to Storrs?

[00:16:14] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:16:14] coming into Storrs, I really expected everything to feel super vague, which I definitely did for the first couple of days.

[00:16:19] It was like, there was a lot going on and buildings were 15 minute walks in Hartford. Everything was so close. It was really just a big transition, like as far as that. in terms of the academics, I didn't really expect there to be much of a difference, but there definitely was. I learned that pretty quickly.

[00:16:33]housing like. I didn't really have any big expectations for housing. And my roommate ended up dropping out in February. So that was kind of like a, there was a big, big surprise there. And like everybody has those housing horror stories and you know, but for every bad story, there's a good story too, so you just have to find what you're looking for.

[00:16:53] Yeah. Yeah. And then like extracurricular wise, I didn't, I expected there to be a lot, but I was really blown away. Like there's [00:17:00] just so many things. There's something for, absolutely everybody here is stories and it's just, you really just have to work to find your community.

[00:17:07] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:17:07] Yeah. Yeah. How did you go about.

[00:17:09] Like figuring that out and kind of narrowing things down in terms of getting engaged on campus?

[00:17:14] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:17:14] Well, first I kind of started with like what I didn't want to do. So like I had a lot of friends who joined fraternities and sororities, and that wasn't something that I was looking forward to or looking like to become a part of.

[00:17:25] It was just a lot of time and I wanted to put more time into my academics, which definitely I think. Guns line is become a good thing. I knew I wanted to do something athletic, so cause I had played soccer throughout my entire childhood. So I had really just focused on first that I knew as an accounting major.

[00:17:42] Like I looked at accounting society and I was like, that's an easy one. I can do that once a week. It's readily available. You get to talk to people who are doing the same thing to you. So that was really helpful to me. But then as far as the athletic thing, I just kinda like looked in, saw like what I was interested in, and I ended up choosing the boxing team, which is a lot of fun.

[00:17:58] So I'm really, really happy with my [00:18:00] choices.

[00:18:00] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:18:00] Oh, that's great. That's great. what were some of the biggest challenges for you that you faced when you came up here?

[00:18:06] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:18:06] I definitely struggled with the, ah, like the big lecture style classes. Like learning from 300 plus or learning with 300 plus other students from a professor who's standing at a podium is not, not a lot of fun.

[00:18:20]and especially coming from Hartford where your biggest classes at the most 60 students and you get really individualized instruction. Like I'm sure you do it at other branch campuses as well. It was something that I really had to, I really liked to work in like buckled down in those classes, particularly in some of the smaller classes.

[00:18:36] I didn't have nearly as much trouble, but those like big lecture style classes was really something that hit me hard.

[00:18:43] What did you do to kind of overcome that? Did you like go and talk to the professor or did you have TAs that you would meet with?

[00:18:51] So for me, like going to both professors office hours and then go into discussion section every week and then go into TA's office hours as well.

[00:18:58] It was really like a big first step for me [00:19:00] because, you know, coming out of high school, school of business students in general, myself included, like it wasn't really high school. I didn't really put that much effort in and I didn't really try super hard. So that was really the first point where I was like, okay.

[00:19:11] Okay. I have to work. I have to work hard to do well. And so I really started putting time in like that. And on top of that, like the accounting society, like I was talking about before, like surrounding myself with people who were taking the same classes and he had the same goals as me. It was really helpful to like see how they were going about it, see what kind of habits could I pick up on.

[00:19:32] And then aside from that, like just surrounding yourself with. People who not only want to like pass their classes, but people who want to get A's, people who work to get A's. It's like learning, like having those habits rub off on you is something that you hear about your parents want, your parents want it to happen, but until like you really go experience it, like it's something that.

[00:19:54] I hadn't really thought about. And then I learned, like I learned how to study and like learning how to learn [00:20:00] again was something that was, a big process. But something that I think the campus change really like instilled in me kind of like crystallized, like what you actually change.

[00:20:10] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:20:10] Definitely. Yeah.

[00:20:11] So in terms of, you know, I know a lot of students, they struggle with going to professors office hours or maybe, you know, going to their TA's office hours. Like it's a little intimidating. how did you feel about doing that? And if it was something that was a little, I don't know, nerve wracking. Like how did you prepare?

[00:20:29] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:20:29] I mean, so for the TA's office hours, like it wasn't, I wasn't super nervous about it just because like with your TA, like you know that they have a lot of students, but within your section you have like 25, maybe 30. So at that point it feels almost like back in high school where you would just like go up to the teacher after class and be like, Hey, I didn't get this.

[00:20:48] Like, can you help me out? So that didn't really. Make that much of a difference to me because I already felt like I had somewhat of a personal connection with them. But as far as like professors go, that was like a, the first one was definitely, I was super nervous.

[00:21:00] Just cause like, I know who you are, I've listened to all your stuff and I'm just a number on your page.

[00:21:05] And like, that's really, that's kinda how you're not, you shouldn't think about it. But realistically, that's how it is. So as long as you go into their office hours and you show a genuine interest in genuine concern about like, I don't understand this and I want to get better, I want to improve. That was something that I put forward pretty just pretty straightforward.

[00:21:27] It was something that I wasn't like trying to hide on. I wasn't doing super great and I was like. Trying to get better. So as long as you do that, like your professor's going to empathize with you. Like there are some topics in some courses that are not easy. So like all of those things together, it just kind of like you put your nerves and your pride aside and you just kinda have to buckle down and say, I want to do better.

[00:21:49] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:21:49] Yeah. That's great. And then like that's how you build connections with them. And then if you ever need, you know, a letter of recommendation, like they will know that you're someone that put in work and, you know.

[00:21:58] Absolutely. That's [00:22:00] awesome.

[00:22:00] so I know you mentioned a little bit that you're involved outside of the class on campus.

[00:22:04] Can you talk a little bit more about that? Like do you go to meetings or would boxing right? Like, do you do that every week?

[00:22:12] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:22:12] The accountants. I'll start with the accounting society. That's usually like once a week, once every two weeks, and they have professionals come in. this past Wednesday, yeah, Wednesday, they had, Deloitte, Deloitte was on campus for recruiting, so that night they had Deloitte, a couple.

[00:22:27] Professionals come in and just kind of talking about like what they were looking for in recruiting and like how their experience with Deloitte has been as a whole. So like I said, accounting societies usually once a week, once every two weeks. It's super low key. It's just, it's a good way to like learn about the professional world, where in the classroom, like you're going to learn about accounting, but you're not going to learn about like.

[00:22:47] How to be an accountant, if that makes sense. Boxing is three nights a week. I love it. It's a really great group of people. It's something that I had always kind of like, thought it was cool as a kid and [00:23:00] yeah, my mom would never let me do it. And then I got to college and I was like, this is my opportunity, so I'm going to take it.

[00:23:07] I've not had an official competitive match yet, but I'm looking forward to that. and yeah, it's just like having some kind of physical outlet, whether it's boxing, whether it's an intramural sport, clubs work, whether it's just going into the gym, something like that, to just kind of like. Let your mind get off of school for an hour, an hour, a day, even an hour, every couple of days.

[00:23:27] Like it's really, really helpful for me. And then I started working at the school of business. I absolutely love a year. I didn't really expect to be able to say that. And like, there's a lot of other people who have on campus jobs and they're not crazy about them, but. You know, become close with the advising team.

[00:23:41] Here is something that I am really, really happy with. It's helped me like get a real good working relationship with my advisor and with other advisors and just kind of be able to talk about like, Hey, how would you recommend going about this? What's your best, ideas about this topic? And like, yeah.

[00:23:56] Just kind of meshing everything together.

[00:23:57] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:23:57] No, that's great. And in terms of [00:24:00] like the boxing that you mentioned, do you feel like that allowed you to meet students outside of the school? That's definitely

[00:24:06] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:24:06] okay. Just because within the school of business, like your first couple of years it's not as much, but then once you get up further in front of, it's like you just stay within the school of business.

[00:24:16] Like all your classes are going to be here. So boxing was away from me to like meet some people who are a speech and language, hearing science majors and like P and B and political science. Like you just get such a wide variety of like majors and backgrounds in general that it's really just like eye opening to see like there are so many people at this school and there are so many different kinds of people.

[00:24:39] And they're all so nice.

[00:24:41] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:24:41] Yeah. That's awesome. So, why do you think it's important for students to get involved? And maybe, especially for students coming from one of the regional campuses up to

[00:24:52] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:24:52] getting involved, like college, you're going to have as much as your parents don't want to hear it, you're going to have a lot of free time.

[00:24:58] Like you can't go to class for. [00:25:00] Five hours a day. You can't do homework for six hours a day. Like it just doesn't work like that. So having something to just like decompress and having people to be able to talk to is a really, really big, big thing. Like people are, humans are social creatures just like we want to interact.

[00:25:16] So I think in general, like getting involved is really important in that sense. But especially from a campus change, like. Coming from one of the branch campuses, like from my experience in Hartford, everything was so like in your face and everything was so like, we want you to get involved. Whereas here at Storrs it's like if you want to, you can, you don't have to, and if you don't like, you're just going to hear all these stories about your, what your friends are doing, and you're going to see stuff like.

[00:25:41] On Fairfield way, and it's going to be like these big tents, these big popups, and you're just going to like going through it by yourself. It's, it's not a lot of fun in college in

general. Like you want to have memories with other people. You don't want to just like, remember sitting in the room and study.

[00:25:55] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:25:55] Yeah, exactly. Yeah. And just don't want to feel lonely. Yeah, [00:26:00] definitely. That could be a, exactly.

[00:26:01] So, how has this transition helped shape your unique student experience? Would you say. So like skills that you've developed. We talked a little bit about fears here, overcame, but,

[00:26:12] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:26:12] I'm not really sure if there's been any one particular way that it's helped me grow as a person.

[00:26:17] I think more than anything, like it's helped me stand out in terms of like interviews and just like. Talking to other people, like having the touch point to talk about like changing campuses and talking about your different experiences and how, how they're not the same. Like it's something that really helps you stand out.

[00:26:33] Like I said, in interviews, it's a really big thing, but then also just like talking to other people and making friends, it's like you have all these different experiences. and then. Going off of that, like you just get more comfortable talking, talking about yourself, talking about it, like just things in general because you might have these different perspectives.

[00:26:49] So I guess like for me personally, last year I wouldn't have wanted to come on this podcast. Even last semester I would have struggled with it. So I guess like it's helped me just [00:27:00] kind of be more comfortable communicating, especially about myself cause I was never really a super outgoing person. And now I'm trying to break out of that.

[00:27:08] So it's definitely something that I've. Been working towards.

[00:27:11] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:27:11] Yeah. And you're doing a great job. So, can you share your plans for the future after graduation, if you've thought about that?

[00:27:18] **Thomas Dineen:** [00:27:18] Yeah, so my plans for after graduation aren't completely set just because I'm still a sophomore, sounds a little far out, but for accounting, try to do 150 credits in four years.

[00:27:28] That way I can sit for the CPA exam right after graduation. Then I will hopefully be able to work in a big four firm for. A few years, we'll see how many, and then maybe maybe get an MBA and see if I can work up after that. But like I said, it's not entirely set yet. Those are just kind of ideas right now.

[00:27:45] So just kind of taking everything one day at a time, just focusing on what I have on my plate right now. That's pretty much it.

[00:27:53] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:27:53] Yes. Thank you so much for talking to us.

[00:28:05] [00:28:00] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:28:05] All right, Emma. So what did you think about first that conversation that we had with Kelli and Amy?

[00:28:10] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:28:10] So I feel like, in particular as something that they mentioned was the importance of, you know, finding your support network on campus. So intentionally seeking out advisors. The career center, faculty and TAs.

[00:28:24] So, you know, coming from a regional campus, you might not have had a TA before, and that's just something that's crucial to your success in a large, you know, lecture, classroom, to build that relationship. Since, you know, you might not have the same access to the professors. So your TA is, is you're into.

[00:28:41] Also building that connection eventually.

[00:28:43] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:28:43] Yeah, that's really important. I really liked the way that Amy and Kelli described the importance of getting engaged, like not just getting involved, but actually like going to class, sitting in the first or second row, asking questions, participating in the discussion.

[00:28:57] There's a difference between getting involved and getting engaged, [00:29:00] and I think. When students get engaged in student organizations and in opportunities on and around campus, they find their niche. And so it makes a big campus with a lot of people feel a little bit smaller. If you can carve out your little portion of campus and your group of friends and your community?

[00:29:21] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:29:21] Yeah, I mean, just drawing from my own experience as an undergrad, I went to Cal state long beach, which is a huge, you know, university as well. And coming there as a transfer student. The fact that I joined the philosophy club at the time just helped me get involved and engaged in my major and just navigating campus, had people to study with, have people to, you know, hang out with after class.

[00:29:44] Like that made a really big difference for me. Feeling at home. On campus.

[00:29:48] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:29:48] Yeah. I also appreciated that Kelli and Amy were both campus change and transfer students in their undergrad. So they really have real life experience [00:30:00] going through what some of our students are going through,

[00:30:02] which is, you know, by and large a positive process, but it presents some challenges. So I encourage you, if you are thinking about. Changing campuses or maybe you're in the process, they're great people to reach out to. They can empathize. They've been there and been through it as have Emma and probably some of the other staff and advisors that you work with on campus.

[00:30:21] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:30:21] Yeah, yeah. You really got the sense that, you know, they have a passion for this process because they know it.

[00:30:27] Yeah. So definitely, you know, talk to them and seek them out as resources.

[00:30:31] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:30:31] And so what did you take away from your conversation with Tom?

[00:30:34] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:30:34] I feel like tom emphasize to me again how you can find your community by joining a sport in this case that maybe initially you didn't think you are going to be involved with and that helped him meet people from other majors.

[00:30:50] Cause I think it's easy. You know, if you go to your major courses and then you're maybe not interacting with the other students because you have already completed like most of your [00:31:00] gen EDS and maybe electives. Getting engaged on campus through sports or clubs can help you broaden your network and meet other people.

[00:31:07] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:31:07] Yeah, that's great advice from a student who's been there and then gone through that transition, so, all right. Any final thoughts?

[00:31:14] **Emma Bjorngard-Basayne:** [00:31:14] I think that's it.

[00:31:15] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:31:15] All right. Thanks for listening to this episode and we'll be back with you soon.