

Subject: Chiara Alto

Topic: Northern Michigan University Experience

September 2, 2009

-Paul-Well, Chiara it's good to have you here.

-Chiara-It's great to be here.

-Paul-Excellent, well first of all let's start out by you telling me a little bit about yourself.

-Chiara-Well, my name is Chiara. I'm nineteen years old, I'm from Ishpeming, I attend Northern, I'm a freshman, my major is undeclared, I work at a small local restaurant. Well that's about it.

-Paul-Alright, so, Northern's a very unique place, wouldn't you say?

-Chiara-It sure is.

-Paul-Was it your first choice in colleges?

-Chiara-Yes it was my first choice.

-Paul-Any particular reason?

-Chiara-Well, one big reason is that it's close to home. I don't think I would really want to leave my friends and my family but I don't know where I'll end up. And I get free tuition cause my mom works at Northern.

-Paul-Well, that's pretty cool.

-Chiara-It's very nice.

-Paul-Speaking about Northern and the location, have you lived up here your whole life then?

-Chiara-Sure have. I was born in Ishpeming, Well; I've lived in the same house all my life.

-Paul-So you like the environment around here; the climate and such?

-Chiara-Well, I absolutely love everything about summer and fall here. Winter, I don't know so much. I mean I'm okay with the snow. I'm just not okay when it's freezing, freezing cold out. And then spring is just too mucky. I would just rather not deal with it.

-Paul-Gotta love those U.P. winters. So how long, Well is this your first semester this year?

-Chiara-This is my second semester.

-Paul-Being at Northern so far is there any special things that stood out to you?

-Chiara-There are a lot of special things about Northern; I guess my favorite thing about Northern is everyone is really friendly. It's easy to meet new people. I meet a new person, at least one every single day. Everybody's friendly.

-Paul-I take it that you're equally friendly?

-Chiara-Well of course.

-Paul-Well is there any particular class that stood out to you; any professors?

-Chiara-I guess one of my favorite professors so far was Dr. Ball. I had him for political science my first semester. At first I was scared shitless of the man. So, so afraid of him. But it ended up that we both smoked cigarettes. Before class and after class every day I would smoke my cigarette with him. And I got to really enjoy his company. He is a very, very intelligent man. You should take a class with him.

-Paul-I probably should, probably should I haven't had the privilege yet but...

-Chiara-Yeah.

-Paul-What class did you have him for?

-Chiara-Political science.

-Paul-Political science.

-Chiara-Which I'm not into at all.

-Paul-Speaking about classes; have you had any lecture classes yet or have they all been smaller classes?

-Chiara-I had, well; my first lecture class is this semester. It's hard to get used to. Because last semester I was in the freshman probation class so I was in a class with all of the same kids. But then there were other kids that would join our classes. Which I loved. I got to know them; I got to know everything about them you know? And that made it really easy for me. Because I was so scared going to Northern. It's a scary thing. But being in a class with all the same people, it was nice.

-Paul-It's a cool thing. That they do.

-Chiara-Yeah.

-Paul-So you can say that you would rather prefer the smaller classes than say the larger classes of bigger universities?

-Chiara-It's not that I don't prefer the lectures, it's just that I need to get used to them.

-Paul-As in going to them?

-Chiara-Oh no, I go. It's just that in the small classes I'm used to talking all the time. You know, you can talk whenever you want. It's more...

-Paul-Open?

-Chiara-Open, yeah. But in the lectures there are all different types of people asking questions and commenting, you know? So, I have to get used to not always opening my big mouth.

-Paul-You were mentioning earlier about everyone being so friendly, getting to know so many people from you first part of classes. Does the general body of students; do like the mix-up, the make-up of them?

-Chiara-I love it. Absolutely love it. I love meeting all different kinds of people.

-Paul-Alright, so speaking about the different groups of students, are you a commuter?

-Chiara-Yup.

-Paul-Being a commuter, you're a freshman you must live at home.

-Chiara-Yes.

-Paul-Would you rather live in the dorms? Do you enjoy commuting?

-Chiara-I wish that I could live in the dorms for the winter semester. I absolutely hate everything about winter driving.

-Paul-Do you think you're missing out on college life by not living in the dorms? Like not having the experience of...

-Chiara-Some, yeah. I mean I see kids in some of my classes they'll see a bunch of people from their dorm halls that they know. They're always waving to people. And that's cool they get to meet a lot of people. I think, it be neat to live there. Maybe I'll try to save up the money to live there for a semester.

-Paul-Yeah, have you had a chance to cruise through any of the restaurants that they have around here?

-Chiara-Yes.

-Paul-On campus?

-Chiara-On campus yes.

-Paul-Any favorite ones?

-Chiara-Tamaki and Tea.

-Paul-Why? Why Tamaki and Tea?

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-Chiara-Tamaki and Tea.

-Paul-Why? Why Tamaki and Tea?

-Chiara-Well I mean, just cause a kid drinks doesn't mean that they don't have a good head on their shoulders. I mean most, most people experiment with things at a young age. You know?

-Paul-But have you noticed people coming into class drunk?

-Chiara-I haven't noticed anyone coming into class drunk. I know there is a lot of drinking going on with the students at NMU but there is a lot of drinking going on with college students everywhere but all we can hope for is that everybody drinks in a safe manner.

-Paul-Good point, good point. Alright, now is there any particular thing that you want to come out of your Northern experience?

-Chiara-A good education, I love meeting new friends. Is it done? I guess I'm looking for a lot through Northern; I wanna lot to come out of it. A lot already has though; it's a big learning exp. It's a big step into the real world.

-Paul-And that's what it is the real world; preparing you for it at least. So, you said you had an undecided major. Have you talked to your advisor much? You have an advisor right?

-Chiara-Yes, I haven't met with my advisor yet this semester. Which is I know is bad but my advisor last semester, Faith Edwards, she was amazing, loved the woman. I mean I guess she was my advisor because she was my freshman seminar teacher because I was on the probation. The freshman probation, but I won't even lie to you I don't even know who my advisor is this semester.

-Paul-Well, you should probably check that out. Have you ever tried using ACAC the Academic Career and Advisement Center for your major help or anything?

-Chiara-Yes, I meet with Jim Gudanski I met with him a couple times. He's great too, helped me out a lot. But usually when I go there I just ask right to talk to him, cause I know him.

-Paul-That's another nice thing about Northern; as far as the administration, willing to meet the students directly.

-Chiara-And there all so friendly you know? It's nice, but it's nice for me because my mom works in that building so most of the employees that work in the Hedgecock building do know me.

-Paul-Yeah that must help a lot.

-Chiara-Yeah they do.

-Paul-As you were saying, yes, your mom does work at Northern but you are a commuter. Apart from dorm life do you get to see many events at Northern?

-Chiara-No, I need to get more motivated. I feel like when I don't have homework to do I don't really wanna spend it going to a hockey game, or a basketball game, or a football game, you know. I need to get more involved. I really do.

-Paul-Now, is part of that just the distance driving back here to go see a hockey game?

-Chiara-Well I mean I'm, I'm pretty poor, I'm a struggling college student you know? I'm a waitress I make two-seventy five an hour plus tips and Ishpeming isn't a very busy town.

-Paul-No it's not. Have you had the chance to meet with any alumni around town? Like anyone that had previously gone to Northern perhaps recommended it to you?

-Chiara-Many people. I mean most people I know did attend Northern, you know?

-Paul-Yes, now, you said you were a poor struggling college student, and you know that's always a rough thing. Do you think that there is anything Northern can do to help you? Are the textbooks reasonably priced?

-Chiara-Yeah, well I get free tuition so really it's not; it's not Northern I can't afford. It's driving back and forth. You know driving back and forth from, and you know I do have my own bad habits. I smoke cigarettes who can afford that nowadays, not many.

-Paul-True, very true. Speaking about cigarettes have you heard in the news a little smoke free campus hub-bub that was going on?

-Chiara-At Northern?

-Paul-Yeah, they were going to make Northern a smoke free campus. Do you agree with that? Do you think its reasonable asking you to not smoke cigarettes on campus even though you drive?

-Chiara-Well I mean I wouldn't like it because I am a smoker myself. I could see them maybe having smoking benches. I know at Michigan State they have benches just for the smokers that are a good distance away from all the doors and where any people would has to walk. So I mean, let's lock all the smokers away in one little section. (laughter) That would work.

-Paul-It would work good idea. Perhaps we should have you sitting on the council. Speaking about the councils and stuff, are you involved with any activities at Northern? Any clubs, groups?

-Chiara-I have not joined one club at Northern yet. I need to, like I said before I need to get more involved. Because I would like to meet more people, you know. Have more of the campus life, but I work too much. I don't have extra time really.

-Paul-So true, so little time. Well, wow. Speaking about carpooling, about driving to Northern not costing too much, do you think it would be a feasible, if not an intelligent thing for Northern for do to perhaps maybe have a Northern commuter center or somewhere that you could have a carpool?

-Chiara-You know that would be a really great idea, because I know a lot of people that don't have their own vehicle, that attend Northern that they have to take the bus every day. Especially in the winter they have to sit outside and wait for the bus. I would not want that. No, the carpool, that's a good idea.

-Paul-Do you think that they, do you know of any, have you ever heard of Northern's student council?

-Chiara-I saw like a booth, what was that big activity on campus, what was that? They had all those booths set up.

-Paul-The Academic Mall?

-Chiara-Yeah, was it like the first...

-Paul-Welcome week?

-Chiara-Welcome week? Yeah, I saw a booth for it there. Really I just stopped to snatch a free sucker. I didn't stay to talk or anything, I don't know. I guess I don't know much about it. I can't say that I do.

-Paul-Do you think partially is because you live off campus or mostly because you don't care?

-Chiara-Well if I lived on campus, joining a club would be a lot easier. I could probably make time, but I don't.

-Paul-I'm sure you have a lot of stuff to do.

-Chiara-Yes, homework. I just do so much homework.

-Paul-And friends, you have to have a social life.

-Chiara-My only relationship with my friends that I have on school nights consists of us studying together.

-Paul-Oh no, but after school.

-Chiara-After school yes, weekends, it's my friend time.

-Paul-Have you made any friends on campus? That live on campus or...

-Chiara-That live on campus? I've met a few yes that I could say are my friends because I talk to them whenever I see them. But I've made a lot of friends that commute from other places that I have never met before even.

-Paul-Where like Gwinn area?

-Chiara-Yeah, Gwinn, Marquette, Negaunee even people from Ishpeming that I haven't met yet.

-Paul-You were talking about not affording the gas to drive to Northern. Now I understand that you're a freshman and or first four semesters of Northern you have to live with your parents or something like that.

-Chiara-Yeah.

-Paul-Would you ever think of moving to Marquette to avoid the gas?

-Chiara-I would love to live in Marquette.

-Paul-Is there any reason why you don't other than the Northern regulations?

-Chiara-I don't think I could afford to live on my own right now. I need to save up some money before I jump into something like that.

-Paul-Have you looked at the housing costs in Marquette?

-Chiara-Yeah it's pretty pricey. I have had a couple that have got evicted from their apartments because they think they can afford it at the time, but they can't.

-Paul-Do you think there are any reasons for the price jump in Marquette? Do you think because it's a bigger locale, or people just taking advantage of college students there? Do they expect that all college students have rich parents will just pay for them?

-Chiara-Well a lot of kids do have it made like that. At the same time I mean, when you're going to Northern it is a nice thing to have your own little apartment that's off of campus. And a lot of people are willing to pay the price there. I mean, if I had the money, or if I had a daddy that would give me his credit card, yes, I would have a nice apartment.

-Paul-Have you ever thought about getting another job, say not in Ishpeming so you would have access to bigger tips?

-Chiara-Yes I have thought about it. The only thing that kills me, that keeps me at Bucks is my coffee guys. I always tell people I have thirteen grandpas. They're there every single day. I've worked there for three years; I know everything about every single one of them.

-Paul-Again that close knit community feeling. I take it they all know you go to Northern?

-Chiara-Yeah.

-Paul-So again going back to the locality of just precisely this location of what makes it special. That small town atmosphere whether you're in Marquette or Ishpeming with the coffee guys and such. Now in your own words now, would that be one of the most special things about Northern, if you had to sum up Northern in a little bit of a phrase how would you put it. Would it be the "Northern Naturally" motto they have now?

-Chiara-(Laughter) No that is a good motto though. Sum up Northern? I guess I have a long, long, long time to figure out what Northern's really all about, you know? I'm a freshman; I have a lot of college years ahead of me. But I do really enjoy being a student at Northern. I mean, I said I love the people; I love it because it's close to home. I have got along great with all my professors. All of the help in all of the offices I've went to. I do get free tuition. (laughter) That makes me enjoy Northern very much so. But I mean, there is nothing I can complain about at Northern. Nothing at all yet.

-Paul-Yes.

-Chiara-Yes. (laughter)



-Paul-Well, could you see once you decide what to do; do you think whatever that may be is going to be at Northern? Do you plan on finishing your schooling career there? Or just using it as an intermediary?

-Chiara-I am going to go to college at Northern as long as I can go there for free. If I want to continue to go to college somewhere after that, who knows where I'll end up. But I'm gonna take advantage. Isn't it, I think I can go to college for free until I am? Do you know it?

-Paul-Twenty-four.

-Chiara-Twenty-four? Yes, and I'm nineteen now. So I'm going to take full advantage of it.

-Paul-That's good to hear. Have you heard about the Wi-Max?

-Chiara-A little bit. Not much. Someone told me that you can, if you're a Northern Michigan student you can have free wireless, or connect up to the wireless at Northern for up to twenty-five miles, that's what I heard. Which that's nice because there were a lot of people in my first semester class that had kids, you know, they had families to support. They couldn't afford to have the internet. So they would sit on campus all day until they finished all their homework. That would be so inconvenient. I cannot imagine not having wireless at my house. I'm always sending e-mails, you know, you have to look at your e-mails all the time. That's a big must is to check you e-mails. I think that the new Wi-Max is a great idea.

-Paul-Have you, well you've just heard of it, but you haven't had the chance to benefit from it yourself? You have wireless at your house; do you plan on using it at all?

-Chiara-Well, maybe when I'm at my camp. My camp is within twenty-five miles of Northern, and it'd be pretty nice to have a computer out there.

-Paul-Another one of them Yooper things, a camp.

-Chiara-Yes a camp. Many, many people that I've talked to have written papers about camp and they say, you mean your cottage? And I'm like no, I mean my camp. I don't have electricity at my cottage, there is no running water at my cottage, no neighbors at my cottage. It's camp.

-Paul-Rightfully put. Well, alright Chiara I guess that will conclude our interview. It was a pleasure talking to you. Thank you for this time that you donated.

-Chiara-Yes, no problem.

-Paul-Anything you would like to add?

-Chiara-No, I think this is a very cool assignment. I wish I could do this. I wanna interview someone.

-Paul-Nice, take the class I guess. (laughter)