

**WE1S Focus Group 3
Undergraduate Group
5 March 2020 4:30-6:30**

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“In any public outputs of the project, your real name and contact information will not be attached to any of the answers that you provide to written survey questions or oral responses. You may skip or decline to participate in any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering and you may leave the focus group at any time. You have complete control over the amount of personal information that you reveal. For research and transcription purposes, the focus group will be audio recorded, but such recordings will not be publicly released... Your responses and comments may be used or quoted for research and teaching purposes by the WhatEvery1Says Team or by individual project members, including, but not limited to, presentations, publications (such as blog posts, journal articles, and books), and advocacy and pedagogical materials. Your data and responses may be transcribed and added to our existing corpus of materials, to be analyzed through digital methods. Your responses may also be shared with project collaborators beyond UM.”

All names and other overtly identifying information have been removed from this transcript.

00:31 AH: All right, so welcome, y'all, to the WhatEvery1Says focus group. I do appreciate you taking your time to hang out with us for a couple of hours on a Friday just before Spring Break. So...Um, we are going to spend just a few hours talking about the humanities, let's see real quick, let me go through a few introductory things. As you know, we have a whole lot of food, drinks, please, at any time in the next few hours, help yourselves, get up, walk around, use the restroom if you need to, nobody is a prisoner within this room. [laughter]. I will be sad but I will get it. So, briefly, this is the website for our project. Um, I will send you a link to this too later on if you want to take a look at. But we are WhatEvery1Says, we are a project that uses digital humanities methods to look at news discourse, um, pretty much since the past, the year 2000 or so. We've been collecting news and social media sources, largely English speaking. We've got about four million documents I think we've collected? Largely Lindsay has collected, as one of the principal investigators for this project. And we are just using machine learning techniques to kind of see like what people talk about when they talk about the humanities. Um, so what we're moving into now is human subjects research with us, our sister campus UC Santa Barbara is the main campus that really started the heart of this, they did human subjects research last year, same thing, interviews, surveys and we are now doing it this year, here, and our third project CSU Northridge, are they doing it this year too? Or are they not doing it? We're not sure?

02:09 LT: Yeah.

02:10 AH: Well, we're doing it, USCB is, and CSUN is doing many other things and maybe that too. To be determined. Um, yeah. So basically what we want to find out is to

see how local communities think about the humanities as a concept, um, Miami and Santa Barbara despite being both beautiful and coastal and vacation destinations do have like a lot of differences in our populations as cities and also as universities so we thought it would be nice to kind of trace the differences and the similarities frankly. Um, so yeah, do y'all have any questions about this so far? Okay great. Well, let's see, let me go through my checklist, I've told you all to eat food, great, I have everyone's consent forms, also good. Um, okay, so I guess we can do some introductions real quick. Um, as I've already mentioned, I am Ashley, I am the one who has been e-mailing you obsessively for the past few weeks so thank you for continuing to be here. Um, I am the project manager for this project this year, I am a third-year PhD student in the English department and I mostly look at sci-fi and fandom studies and digital humanities.

[M enters]

- 03:39 AH:** All right, we are in the middle of getting started. I am not going to put you on the spot. So why don't we go around this way instead, Abby, if that's okay, and then we'll make it around to you last. We're doing introductions.
- 03:49 L:** Hi I'm L, I'm studying Public Health and I'm a freshman
- 03:54 S:** Hi everyone, I'm S, I am an undergraduate music business major in the Frost school of music and I'm also a freshman.
- 04:02 N:** Hi, I'm sorry, I'm N, I'm a sophomore, and I'm an English Lit major.
- 04:09 AM:** I'm Alex, I'm a research assistant on this project, I'm a fourth year English Literature PhD student. So I work on seventeenth-century women's writing, that's what I work on.
- 04:20 LT:** I'm Lindsay Thomas, I'm an Assistant Professor in the English Department and one of the principal investigators on the project. I've been working with the project in one form or another since about 2012, so since I myself was a graduate student. Um, I teach and research on contemporary US literature and culture, and also digital humanities, like Ashley.
- 04:41 P:** Hi, I'm P. Um, I'm a political science and Spanish major, I'm in my second year but I'm a senior, and yeah, that's it. That's everything.
- 04:51 M:** I'm M, I'm a motions pictures production major, and I'm a junior.
- 04:56 AH:** Awesome, great thank you, and also M, I'm so sorry, if you wouldn't mind also taking one of these sheets of paper and making a cute little tent for however you wish to be called.
- 05:10 LT:** And also food.
- 05:12 AH:** Yes, oh my gosh, there is so much food. So, all right, so has anybody participated in a focus group before?

[One person raises hand]

05:22 AH: Hey, cool, great, afterward I would love to ask you about that. So you're already familiar with these rules, well, ground rules, so, basically, participation obviously is voluntary, you should speak openly however you wish and only as you're comfortable, obviously. So if something makes you uncomfortable, yeah, don't worry, don't say anything. Obviously the three of us are all involved in the humanities and this is about the humanities, but that doesn't mean you have to say nice things about it. We really, really want to know what people actually think or what you have heard. Um, and we've heard a lot so, we're used to it.

05:50 [laughter]

Yeah, so, all of your responses are valid, there's no right or wrong here, we really just want to know what people are thinking. if you find yourself disagreeing with somebody that's great, just make sure you do so politely, and we're going to try to stay on topic, we may need to interrupt every now and then, I may have to kind of like cut us off and move on because we do have a little bit of a timetable. Um, this is probably not going to come up or anything but try to avoid any really detailed information about like your personal health Um, yeah I don't really know that that's going to pop up for this. Um, and then also outside of the group please help try to protect everybody else's privacy by just not like talking about any really big details that we've discussed here. Um, any questions about that so far? Okay, great. Um, okay, so we are going to use this focus group data. We are obviously recording this session right now, we are going to be taking notes on your responses as well. Lindsay and Alex are transcribing it, we are going to be storing them on box, which is sort of like Dropbox but it's protected through UM only. We will have access to all of this, those of us working on the project, no one else will, we are going to anonymize all of your statements so they won't be associated with your names or anything. Your responses are not going to be linked to your identities in any way, just like with the survey. Um...I've got a whole list of things to tell you about this, I'm very excited.

[laughter].

Um, but yes, so this is going to be used in our project reports, we are in the third year of our grant right now, so we do yearly reports that we do send to the Mellon foundation who has lovingly giving-given us money for this. This will be in our research publications and it will likely be shared with our participants at UCSB and at CSUN over the summer. Um, but again anonymized so thank you. So briefly today we're going to have a two-part discussion. The first thing we're going to do is to talk about the humanities in general and then the second part we're going to ask you like more specifically about your educational experiences. So, ah with that said, if you wouldn't mind turning to the handout. We are going to discuss that very briefly if you wouldn't mind just taking a few minutes. Some of you may have already read this but if you just want to give it another glance. These are two different articles that we've pulled bits from.

[Cough. Quiet as people read - no dialogue. Eating/ drinking/ turning pages]

- 09:57 AH:** All right, looks like everybody's kind of finished, all right, great. So Um, what did you think about these?
- 10:03 M:** Um, the last one, B, it's relatable especially being in my major, a lot of people are like oh you're just in film classes like, they will, so I understand that stigma, where it's like, when you're kind of, I won't [inaudible] call it taking the easier one compared to your other colleagues.
- 10:24 AH:** Okay, great.
- 10:25 L:** Yeah, I agree with that as well. Like I'll often hear conversations between like friends of mine who are STEM majors and friends who are in the humanities and they'll ask each other their GPA and they'll be like Oh well you have a 3.8 because you're in film or because you're in communications or this and that. But you have to realize that not everyone has those like those skills that you have, like I wouldn't know how to set up a shot, like I wouldn't know how to plan something out, so uh you can go back and forth, you can make the argument that STEM is harder because you have to utilize all these parts of your brain but what about all the millions of the parts of your brain that you use to ... to helping them create-creating stuff in the humanities so.
- 11:00 S:** I agree with that. When I was in high school trying to choose a college major, I was, I was taking a calculus class with a very STEM oriented teacher who thought that math was the only important thing in the world bull blah that kind of person and I was really good at calculus and as soon as I decided that I wanted to come to the University of Miami for Frost and to major in music business he looked at me like I was kind of letting the world down. Like, Oh, I mean, okay, well, good for you. Yeah. And then I went back home in October over Fall Break to visit my high school and talk to the professor, or talk to the teachers, there and talk to the current high school students about the University of Miami and he said, "So are you still uh doing that music thing? How's that working out for you?" and it was really condescending and I thought like why - well not why because I kind of understand why we think that STEM is the most important thing because I feel like it has a very, very clear tie to what our economic system in the United States so obviously people are going to push you to do more stuff like that because it has a very clear link to high income jobs like becoming a doctor and stuff like that. But I feel like it's silly that we haven't broken out of that mold yet. That we're in the twenty-first century and people still think like that.
- 12:23 L:** I think, um, you can go.
- 12:24 N:** Oh mine is just short. Just like the comment about math, I thought was funny, because like I've always like, growing up, it was never just one specific subject, I was just across the board interested in all subjects before I chose my English major but I like, I remember sitting down, because I entered undeclared, and I remember sitting down and crossing off majors that I wouldn't do at UM. And I feel like I crossed off math because I could have learn that like out of a book so it's funny that he - that the person is saying that he can learn communities out of

books because I feel like if I just went to the library and got out a bunch of math textbooks I could teach myself. But I just found that ironic.

13:02 AH: Yeah that is interesting how they keep focusing on math. Somebody says ah, a signal to potential employers.

13:08 N: Yeah.

13:09 S: I feel like people value math skills just because it's hard. Because not a lot of people say that they're good at math so being good at math makes you more valuable. Whereas not a lot of people can say that they're good at playing the violin but people don't really care as much or in the same way.

13:25 L: I think another thing that I realized too is that our society is becoming more technology focused and more technology heavy and we're getting artificial intelligence, we're progressing in that way, so we're going to really need the humanities one day so that we can still have emotional connection, that's going to be the prize, the woah you're majoring in English, whoa, like that's it, I think there's going to be a reversal as we go back and as technology becomes so much more common place in the average person's and the average person has a robot in their home or knows how to use artificial intelligence or your four year old has a like - I don't know, I think we're going to get more technology dependent and the humanities are going to become a more special artifact well thing.

14:01 AH: Man, I hope so.

[laughter].

14:03 AH: Otherwise we're all going to have a little Alexa and Alexa will strike back one day.

[laughter]

14:08 AH: Okay great. Did you all have any other maybe thoughts or did one of these maybe resonate more than the other, or...

14:14 P: I mean, I definitely agree with both of them. Like, facing senior year as a poli sci major like I'm definitely like okay so what am I going to do now, because there's no high paying jobs for political science majors. I get sort of saved because I want to go to law school and I want to be a politician so it makes sense to me but at the same time like I understand science, I get math, so I am able to keep up with my STEM major friends but like when I tell them like all the things I have to do versus all the things they have to do, they have to do a lot of math and a lot of lab reports but when I tell them all the papers I have to write and all the like specific details, like foreign policy in the Middle East and in China, they're also like, wow, that's hard, I wouldn't want to do that, I wouldn't want to be in your place. [sounds fo agreement]. Yeah, so I just think like humanities has a special, a more special place because like you said, you can learn math from a book, but if you don't understand a person's society, whether you're business or whether you're in science, then you can very much find yourself in the wrong place

culturally or speaking to them or in any sense, so I think the humanities really helps with that.

15:17 AH: Okay. Yeah, no, that's, that's really valuable thank you. Um, well, if that's it I think maybe if we transition to a more specific discussion of the humanities and—
—I'm going to use the white board because I don't know how to think without a pen

[laughter]

15:59 AH: First general question, Um, , we've kind of talked about this a little bit so far but when you see or hear the word humanities, what words pop into your head? And I'm just going to make a big giant list, it'll look great.

16:16 P: I think of classics.

16:17 AH: Classics?

16:18 P: Like Greek, Roman, language, history.

16:21 S: Yeah, literature.

16:22 P: Yeah.

16:24 L: I think of the arts.

16:26 AH: Okay. Uh any arts like performing arts, fine arts, the arts in general?

16:33 L: Just in general like...

16:35 M: Um, I would say like liberal.

16:37 L: Sorry.

16:38 M: Like...most people—and sometimes I agree, you say easier or more enjoyable, for me personally.

16:50 S: Kind of like you elect to partake in the humanities, like you opt into it.

16:58 AH: So like an elective. Interesting, okay, yeah. All right.

17:02 M: Less stressful.

17:04 AH: Okay.

17:05 P: I think like necessary but undervalued.

17:10 N: I think like research.

- 17:12 AH:** Okay.
- 17:13 M:** Social sciences.
- 17:15 AH:** This is turning into the wall of crazy, I really like it.
[laughter]
- 17:20 AH:** All right, great. What else?
- 17:22 L:** I think of communications skills.
- 17:25 AH:** Communication skills, okay. So I'm seeing a lot about skills right now.
[laughter].
- 17:33 AH:** No, that's good.
- 17:34 N:** History, oh wait, that's on there.
- 17:37 S:** Essays, I'd say.
- 17:40 P:** Oh my god, large papers.
- 17:45 AH:** Okay.
- 17:46 N:** Yeah lots of papers.
- 17:49 P:** Definitely fine-tuned writing skills we have
- 17:53 M:** Would you say public speaking?
- 17:58 AH:** Yeah.
- 17:59 L:** Ooh creativity.
- 18:00 AH:** Excellent!
- 18:03 M:** I'd say, like, more open. Like you're kind of jobs that are more open.
- 18:13 AH:** Okay, like open as in more open and inviting kind of?
- 18:18 M:** Meaning like so you major in humanities, it's like, so I'm a film major, my job is like, me personally it's like harder to get one, like your industry is open, you've got to like go in there and search yourself.

- 18:31 L:** So like a less defined path. Kind of thing?
- 18:33 M:** So it's like broad.
- 18:35 AH:** Okay.
- 18:36 L:** That's cool.
- 18:37 AH:** Less defined—
- 18:38 N:** I have a side question, is that all right? I was just wondering as film do you consider yourself humanities or STEM?
- 18:44 M:** Definitely humanities.
- 18:45 N:** Oh.
- 18:47 M:** Like most of my classes, because I'm a transfer student, are all humanities.
- 18:52 N:** Okay. Cool. 'Cause I like - there's two sides to it 'cause like when I think about film in terms of like technique and like stuff like that then I think of STEM but when I think of stuff like script writing and stuff like that I think of humanities.
- 19:04 AH:** Yeah, you can make a case for the fine arts as well.
[crosstalk, agreement]
- 19:08 AH:** I guess we would call it interdisciplinary. [laughter] This is such a solid list. Do any of y'all have a phone? We could maybe take a picture—
- 19:10 LT:** Yeah...
- 19:11 AH:** —of my crazy scrawling?
- 19:13 N:** What school do you study film in, like, in what school again?
- 19:14 M:** Communication.
- 19:15 AH:** All right, awesome, so I want to pivot.
- 19:17 N:** Okay, I was wondering, I don't know why I didn't know the answer to that question.
- 19:22 AH:** I'm going to erase this but you don't need to take any notes, that's fine.
- 19:28 N:** Notes.

- 19:29 AH:** I feel weirdly guilty when I make the words go away.
[laughter]
- 19:36 AH:** Um, okay so I want to pivot now away from humanities as a concept and let's try this one, liberal arts.
- 19:46 M:** Film.
- 19:50 AH:** Is that a term y'all are familiar with, do you see it a lot or not as much?
[general agreement]
- 19:52 AH:** Okay, yeah, I'm sorry, someone said film.
- 19:53 M:** Yeah.
- 19:54 AH:** I assume.
- 19:55 N:** Art, like drawing, like sculpture.
- 19:57 S:** I think elite.
- 19:58 AH:** Okay.
- 19:59 S:** Like one of those elite colleges that like you could go to.
- 20:02 M:** Oh touché, yes, yes.
- 20:03 L:** Broad.
- 20:04 AH:** Broad, okay.
- 20:05 M:** You could also say like Ivy League.
- 20:07 S:** A lot of Ivy Leagues are liberal arts colleges.
- 20:09 L:** I think strong undergrad foundation.
- 20:14 P:** I think negativity, like, every time someone liberal arts schools, they're just like, "ugh liberal arts schools."
- 20:24 M:** Yeah.
- 20:25 S:** That is true, I do hear that.
- 20:29 AH:** Okay, why are they negative?

- 20:31 P:** Because they think it's something that you waste your money studying.
- 20:35 AH:** Okay.
- 20:36 M:** They feel like it's not that diverse, like you're not learning enough—
- 20:41 AH:** Okay.
- 20:42 M:** —that's what they argue.
- 20:44 S:** Yeah, like you're not getting an education that will make you useful in the job force.
- 20:49 M:** Yeah, like you're just playing around.
- 20:51 S:** Yeah.
- 20:52 L:** And like you said, everything is money, you know, like schools get money based on their research, based on their top professors, like ooh, that's like University of Florida that's how they beat us, now they're having more research, more funding in STEM, so like you say, Oh liberal arts schools aren't as good as research schools 'cause that's not where the money is, I feel like—
- [general agreement]
- 21:07 L:** —it always comes down to money, yeah.
- 21:08 M:** The capitalist United States of America.
- 21:10 L:** Yes! It's so unfair, it's so unfair.
- 21:12 P:** To be fair, but then they need specialists in the humanities to broker deals and things so either way they're need.
- 21:18 AH:** So one of y'all mentioned a waste of money, are liberal arts colleges, are they considered usually more expensive, or less, or, is that a thing?
- 21:23 L:** I would say more.
- 21:24 P:** Waste of money in like education, I think.
- 21:25 M:** Because they try to say, you're in liberal arts, you don't need to get an education, so like, I'm a film major, people are like you don't need a degree for that, it's kind of like when you say anything liberal arts, like say you get art history major, I feel like you don't really need a degree for that, it's kind of like, it's not necessary.
- 21:44 AH:** Okay.

- 21:45 L:** That's true.
- 21:46 N:** I usually think of people who go to liberal arts schools, I think of really rich, like really wealthy people who are probably going to become like a lawyer or something in the day, and I think someone said foundation, and like they have their liberal arts degree as a foundation to go to law school. That's like the picture in my head.
- 22:07 AH:** Okay.
- 22:08 L:** Um, I think of private schools. Like usually big public universities are like those research universities.
- [general agreement]
- 22:14 S:** I have a friend who was a freshman at Dartmouth and she was telling me about her about the curriculum they have all the undergrads do there, it's so strange in comparison to everything else. Like her terms are like twelve weeks long and she has three terms...
- 22:30 M:** Oh trimester, yeah.
- 22:31 S:** Yeah, and she takes like three classes per term and all these weird rules that are so foreign to me. Like oh my gosh.
- [laughter]
- 22:40 AH:** Yeah, it's a totally weird/unique system. I did that once for my freshman year, at a liberal arts college, [laughter] and it was very weird to get used to.
- 22:44 L:** Um, at UM I think of cognates. Like that's UM's ways of introducing everyone to the liberal arts, like giving them a shot at the issues with the subjects they're interested in, but trying to sneak in like those written skills, you know oral skills, trying to sneak it in through the cognates.
- 23:02 AH:** Awesome! This is a robust list. Thanks y'all. Would you mind photographing it again?
- [pause]
- 23:13 AH:** I have a whiteboard somewhere. All right and, finally, the thing that we've sort of been skirting around but haven't talked about too directly, Um, what comes up when I just write down the sciences?
- 23:29 M:** Money
- 23:30 N:** STEM.

- 23:31 AH:** I like how fast that was.
- 23:33 M:** Challenging.
- 23:34 L:** Labs.
- 23:35 AH:** I'm sorry, I heard two things at once, what was that?
- 23:38 L:** She said challenging...
- 23:39 AH:** Challenging okay.
- 23:40 L:** I said labs.
- 23:41 AH:** Labs, okay.
- 23:42 S:** Are we allowed to put like hard sciences like, biology, chemistry, physics, geology.
- 23:48 AH:** Of course, sure, do whatever you want.
- 23:50 M:** Headaches.
[laughter, agreement]
- 23:53 P:** Social sciences, question mark?
- 23:55 AH:** Okay, interesting—
- 23:56 M:** Question mark, hot take.
- 23:58 AH:** Why question mark?
- 23:59 P:** I don't know, because for a long time, like, I didn't even realize social sciences was something that could be considered, like, an actual science to study a lot of history, and I am like this is valued. That is was mostly like technical science.
- 24:12 AH:** Okay, so there's a difference between like sometimes we call those like hard sciences versus softer sciences. Sort of like that?
[general agreement]
- 24:18 AH:** So, is there like some sort of valuing or privileging going on here? Or like not a real science, actually a real science that...

- 24:25 P:** Now that I'm further in my degree, I believe it's real science, you know they say if you don't learn history, it's doomed to repeat itself, that's essential.
- 24:32 AH:** Yeah.
- 24:33 P:** So social sciences are just as important as research, as STEM research, I guess, you could say.
- 24:40 S:** I feel like there is a science to everything in a way, because science by definition, I don't know the definition off the top of my head, but isn't it just like, in layman's terms, the way things work?
- 24:52 L:** Yeah.
- 24:53 N:** Yes.
- 24:54 S:** There's a science to everything, I feel like. But when you say science, people think of the hard sciences.
- 25:00 N:** Mmm.
- 25:01 AH:** Okay. Yeah.
- 25:02 M:** I would say like PhD, like most people in sciences have their PhD, doctors.
- 25:06 AH:** Okay.
- 25:07 L:** I always have this unconscious bias that the hard sciences are futuristic and then the social sciences are the past. But that's not true.
- [general laughter]
- 25:16 L:** There's discovery all the time, like you can learn from, like that's what you just said—
- 25:19 S:** I mean you learn the past...
- 25:20 L:** Like, you learn the past from the future, but I always have this like total bias, like the physical sciences, oh they're the ones driving the future, they're the ones driving change, blah blah blah. I have to get past that.
- 25:28 AH:** So, when we say social sciences, like, what subjects come to mind for that?
- 25:33 L:** Anthro.
- [multiple: sociology]

- 25:35 L:** Psychology. Or that one—I don't know for that one I always think more hard science-y than social science-y.
- 25:44 AH:** Yeah, that one's kind of crunchy.
- [general agreement]
- 25:47 S:** It's multi-faceted.
- 25:48 L:** Very much so.
- 25:49 AH:** Okay, so, and somebody said anthropology as well. That one I think a lot of times gets catalogued as a humanities subject instead, but again, it sort of like depends on where you are. Like with psych too, you can do a BS or a BA. Right. Okay, so...
- 26:05 M:** Smart.
- 26:06 N:** That's what makes it a science...if you can do a BS. If there's a BS option.
- 26:13 M:** Intelligence.
- 26:14 AH:** Intelligence, okay. Anything else for the sciences? And did I miss something?
- 26:19 S:** Maybe elite, because people who are... who excel in the sciences are viewed as like more elite than people who excel in other things.
- 26:29 AH:** Okay. So there's some privileging going on here.
- 26:33 M:** Complicated.
- 26:34 L:** I'm sorry go ahead.
- 26:35 M:** Complex.
- 26:36 AH:** Complex, okay.
- 26:46 M:** But then it can also be kind of — open — like...I don't know the word. Like you know how like some — debatable.
- 26:49 AH:** Okay, hmm, how do you mean debatable.
- 26:51 M:** So like, okay, so like you know certain facts but then they, like climate change, people are still debating it so like in a lot of sciences everything's debatable, kind of like you can debate climate change, you can debate is the earth flat, you know just stuff like that, so, scientists love to argue.

- 27:10 L:** No, no, you're fine. The thing I usually think of this, like I want to get over this too, like everything that I say, I feel so guilty, it's like an unconscious bias, but, like, I always think evidence based for sciences—
- 27:20 AH:** Okay, sure.
- 27:21 L:** —which isn't fair, 'cause everything in the humanities is evidence based too, [Laughter] and I think of the scientific method, of things building on top of each other, being grounded in fact, being grounded in truth, like not feeling but truth, but I know it's not true but it's just what I think.
- [general agreement]
- 27:35 AH:** And I think, honestly, “truth” right here, that's like a landmine right there, good lord.
- [general agreement]
- 27:43 AH:** Like any major you choose is going to touch on that in a completely different way.
- 27:45 M:** Very true.
- 27:46 AH:** Which is going to bring about a complete existential crisis quite quickly.
- [Laughter]
- 27:51 AH:** Okay, scientific method, truth, fact, I think maybe I missed a new one.
- 27:56 S:** I was going to say innovation, [crowd ooos] because the hard sciences are always trying to move forward.
- 28:05 AH:** Okay, so maybe progress too?
- 28:06 S:** Yeah.
- 28:07 AH:** Okay. How's this looking
- 28:08 L:** Yeah.
- 28:09 M:** Looks good.
- 28:10 AH:** Okay, yeah, there's a whole lot going on here.
- 28:12 N:** Maybe obvious? would be a word. I think we touched on it—
- 28:17 AH:** Okay, in what way?

- 28:20 N:** —like there's a more direct way to see how the sciences would affect society
Um, , so, that's the word I'm going with obvious.
- 28:31 L:** Oh, only one answer. Like, you know if you're taking a science test, there's only one right answer.
- 28:40 N:** Like objective?
- 28:42 L:** Yeah, objective, yeah, yeah.
- 28:43 AH:** Okay, yeah. So objective, then also clear answers. Which sort of is another version of the obvious thing right.
- 28:49 N:** Mmm – mm
- 28:50 AH:** Yeah, hmm. Maybe one more picture of this list and we'll move on? Thank you. Cool, this was fun.
- 29:19 AH:** All right, now's the time to say goodbye to my friendly whiteboard and I'll come back to join you. One of these days I'll have one of these in my house. It will be the best thing in the world. All right, so I want to pivot based on what we talked about just now with all of our lists for the humanities and sciences [inaudible while moving] so yeah we had [inaudible] okay, give me one moment to—okay so based on all of these, it seems like we have like some sorts of trends that have been popping up about how we think about the arts, the liberal arts, the humanities and the sciences. Um, we have had an interesting finding on the survey where, hmm, many respondents said that they would not advise a friend to major in the humanities, unless the friend just like really wanted to do it and nothing else, but also they said that they would advise a friend who was interested in it to maybe do it as a hobby instead. Um, what do you think about this, the idea that maybe you should only do it as a hobby and maybe not as a job?
- 30:35 P:** I personally like my sister, this is not humanities, but my sister, she wanted to do engineering, she's really good at robotics, but she wants to do singing and I find myself being like “no...you should do something that will guarantee you a job in the future.” I feel that same way with my degree as well. Like me personally I feel like I could — I shouldn't have studied anything else, this is what I wanted and I did it. But I do find myself like make sure you know what you want to do at the end of this like if you're studying it know what you want to do with it.
- 31:06 AH:** Okay, so there is like a real sense of pressure, to be like when you graduate, okay so well now I have to do this thing.
- 31:16 P:** Yeah, because, well, like it's really interesting, but like if you end up—a lot of poli sci majors end up working at banks, like did you end up doing what you wanted to do, you know? So it would be cool if they could study humanities and then find a job that's related to what they loved to do.

31:28 L: I agree, it just always comes back to our capitalist society, you know, you're just always trying to climb the ladder, you know the top one percent makes more than the ninety-eight percent below it, you know there's always like I'm going to beat the system, there's always that like intrinsic human thing where you think you're better than the average, or that idea that like you're like, I'll be rich one day, I'll put in the hard work, I'll be rich one day, so when it comes down to it, you have to, you know, go to your advisor and make that decision for what your major is going to be, you have that dialogue in the back of your head, and then there's the dear of it too, what am I going to do after graduation, am I going to have something stable, so, I think those two dialogues run in your head.

32:03 AH: Okay.

32:04 N: I always think like why not do both? So before I became an English major, before I applied to school, what I really wanted to do, I wanted to work in fashion. And like I pretty much got like really well supported from my family, it was just like why not do fashion and business because you're probably going to need those skills in like fashion and whatever. So I always think we always like negate this option of like pairing things that could be very practical and sustainable in terms of a career. And like in terms of people who like might do, like humanities and stuff as hobbies, I think that's fine, because if like, if you're not passionate about a certain thing in the humanities then maybe it isn't something you should do like maybe choose a major just because, because I am majoring in English but I also have a plan so I want to work in museums and stuff so I am using my English major towards that but I probably wouldn't have chosen it if it was just like this broad thing of I really love to read and write, I'm going to do English and I don't know what I'm going to do after that. So I feel like there is that balance as well, of including those practical things.

33:05 AH: All right, and you just mentioned the idea of double majoring. Is that something y'all have considered or have any thoughts about?

33:10 M: When you mention like the humanities or a liberal arts based major, people always try to push you to dual, because they're like, yeah that's cool, kind of like they say, oh that's your hobby, or you need to have a more realistic degree to guarantee you a job, so that's kind of like...they always push you because like a lot of schools, speaking from my set, when you do a film major, you have to minor or you have to double major, because they're saying, basically, your chances of getting a job outside are not that great, right off the bat, so here why don't you do this, why don't you do something else?

33:55 AH: Okay, so, those of you with friends in STEM which I assume is everyone, frankly, these days, do they feel the same pressure to double major or is it mostly like humanities and arts centered?

[sounds of agreement]

- 34:06 L:** I think when you major in biology you're a god, just like don't worry, just keep just keep reading that textbook, you're going to be fine.
- 34:15 P:** I actually feel the opposite though, because, like my cousin, she majored in immunology and biology and because she's going to med school she's okay, but she even told me a biology major is not a good major—
- 34:23 P:** —to have you can't get a job with that. SO I think the sciences do deal with that as well. And my friends in finance or business administration are like, “that degree is worthless,” like sometimes in business you don't need that degree, you learn as you go, so I think it's definitely — a degree is a starting point but you really tend to learn what you're doing when you go on the job. With anything.
- 34:40 N:** That's good, yeah. I think post grad is huge, regardless. Like I have another friend, who's majoring in bio at UCF and she's thinking of changing because she doesn't want to go to med school and if like, if like you, you said you're going to law school after poli sci, but if you weren't what would that be, or like me with my English, so I think the postgrad plans also are like a huge deal in terms of factoring in whether people choose which major.
- 35:05 M:** I think—
- 35:06 P:** I agree.
- 35:06 M:** —I think when she was mentioning how STEM majors are also double majoring, I think it comes down to the point where a lot of people are now going to college, getting a bachelor's degree, so now in order to for you to get that job out of everyone else you have to have like the master's or your PhD, it's becoming so normal to have a bachelor's, where in order for you to stand out, you've got to have this higher, higher, education.
- 35:38 L:** Yeah, that's true. And I think advisors, or society as a whole don't really frame like, whatever major you choose as just being a way for you to gain skills for you to gain a foundation. Just as you were saying, you learn everything on the job, so if advisors could be like, “Oh you're really interested in English but you're not sure you want to get your Masters in English or teach in English that's still amazing, you're going to learn amazing oral skills, you're going to learn how to synthesize, like, analyze,” but if like you told that English major these are a bunch of internships you can do before you graduate. Like you're going to get a job, they're going to be like look at this girl or guy, he rocked all their English classes, he had he worked at this museum or he was a docent or he worked for this publishing company, like, nobody cares at the end of the day what you major in...
- 36:03 M:** That's true.
- 36:04 L:** —Like there's no, like there's no denying, someone with an English major, someone with a chemistry major, they're going to go different lengths in terms of math, or something like that, you're not going to expect the English major to have done calculus three, but when you just like look at general skills it all comes

down to internships and that's what employers looking for. I mean what were the people who was referenced here [looking at initial handout] of the two recent treasure secretaries one did Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, the other majored in English. Like I'm sure that guy Tim didn't just show up for the job, and was like, "you know I have nothing under my belt, but I just have Asian and Middle Eastern Studies," that guy went out there, he did interviews, he did jobs—

36:39 M: That's so true.

36:40 L: —and then he found his way, he found his journey along the way. So I think that majors should be pitched more as just a way, a way of adding to your toolbox without the stress, of oh like, oh like I don't know.

37:05 N: That's a good point, that's a good—like internships are huge. Like you could apply, too, well, usually for freshmen and sophomore years, when you get to upper class sometimes it's more strict, but you could apply to virtually any internship under any major. Like a lot of the ones for the first two years don't have requirements, so it's a really good point.

37:22 AH: Yeah, no, this, please talk more about internships, this is not something we'd really considered too much like through the survey, but I think what you're saying here is really, really important. Like do you feel—is there pressure to try to get into internships as part of graduation, is this like a built-in thing that people have to do or is it just a good idea?

37:39 M: Like, she was saying, like in order to make yourself stand out in jobs, you've got to have those internships, and it's all about networking, like okay, what did you do your junior year, your junior summer, what you do your senior summer, they want to know where's your experience, like, and then even to get the internships, they want you to have.

38:00 M: Unique experiences, so it's challenging 'cause like if you want to go, like, intern for HBO they want you to have like five years of experience, but like who's going to give you that five years of experience it's just like, yeah, internships, like nowadays, they want to be like when they look at your resume, they want to see what have you done outside of your education, they want to see that you're not just going to school and like doing whatever.

38:27 S: Yeah, as a major in the Frost School of Music, there's definitely a huge pressure to, not an overwhelming pressure, but Um, a really big drive to go and do internships. All the music education majors have to spend an entire semester interning at a local school before they can get their degree and go on and become educators. And I know the Music Therapy majors have to go and do like observations and have to go and work with patients or young children or whatever before they can graduate. And as a music business major I am constantly being told there's an internship over here, there's an internship at this company, at this company, with this person, Um, because at least for my area, that I'm going into, the degree matters much, much less than what I know and who I know. And I feel like that's becoming more and more important as time goes on. Like a degree is a degree, like people, for all intents and purposes the

degree weighs less than what you know how to do with it and who you know. So I think that getting an internship and like adding that internship's experiences to your mental inventory of skills is what makes you stand out, because it shows I went here, I learned how to do this thing, these are skills that I have, and this is something that I've done before.

39:36 L: Hmm.

39:37 AH: Okay something that yeah—I'm sorry, I cut you off there.

39:40 P: No, no, I was going to say that, I agree that internships are so valuable. And not just internships but volunteering as well, like the reason that I've gone in certain internships is because I had volunteering under my belt and they saw that I did so many different things *for free* but that I knew had those technical skills. So I think like with me internships aren't stressed as a poli sci major, maybe just me, but I think it's so invaluable and it's something that needs to be stressed more. Because it's really true and like if you're a finance major, yes, you'll get into a company with your finance degree, but a poli sci major can know finance, or an English major can know finance, I think experience is what gets you thought the door.

40:20 L: Please go ahead.

40:21 N: Oh, I was going to say for me internships have been huge in terms of navigating what I want and don't want. So in high school I did an internship at a science museum and I was like I don't really like this, and we did like computer work, we like built an app or whatever and I was like, this is meh, I'm not sure how I feel about this, and so then I was able to cross that off the list. And then last summer I did two internships, One was like a week program at an art museum and the other was like. doing, it was unpaid, doing social media with my city. But I like learned so much about social media and about the place that I live in, which is pretty cool, Um, and those both added value, might not necessarily have to do with my career, but they added value in terms of different skills that I learned. And then the thing at the museum really let me know what I wanted to do and understand what the thing I wanted to do, because museums are just like a really big sector and so deciding those specifics, and so those really helped not just in terms of having something on my resume but just learning about myself. And I feel like whatever field you go through, like, having an internship in some way or form does really help you like figure things out.

41:24 AH: Okay - I'm going to, I'm so sorry—

41:25 L: No it's fine.

41:26 AH: I'm going to pivot us back a little bit. What I've noticed, the trends in what you've been talking about, especially with internships, uh, we've talked a lot just about the relationship between your degree and getting a job and like that's kind of what I wanted to move us to next, what do you think like the point of actually, of a

degree is, what is the purpose of being in college and why did you choose to go? Was there ever like a thought about maybe just not going to school or...

41:38 M: I think, at the end of the day, my mom reminds me that the reason to go to school is to get a job.

41:48 AH: Okay. So school is for jobs.

41:59 M: Yeah.

42:00 P: To be fair, sorry, to be fair, I feel there are some jobs out there that you can finesse your way into without getting a degree, but I think, this chair makes a lot of noise, but I think at the end of the day, getting a degree and going to school, it teaches you discipline, it helps you make connections, you learn new things about your environment and the people around you. And I think those are invaluable, along with what you learn with your degree.

42:31 L: I think, yeah, I think today, in our society, we, it's like a fake meritocracy. So we think like merit, like the harder you work, the farther you're going to go, but that's not really true, like, if you want go to school to get a job, you'd go to technical school, like you'd get your butt and you'd do a ninety-day welding certification and you'd be making twenty bucks an hour at the end of those ninety-days and if you lived in a meritocracy and if you worked hard for twenty years then you would have your own welding company, you'd be the project manager, you'd be bringing home a hundred k. But it doesn't really work that way, like, obviously, you have to, if you want to be a doctor, if you want to be a lawyer, there's no denying you have to get an undergraduate degree, but I feel like a lot of the time if you're not doing that, then you're like, like you said, you're getting a job in business or like this and that, it's for an elite status. That's how I feel sometimes too, like to be with the educated. [sarcastic/self-effacing]

[Laughter/agreement]

43:20 N: With the educated.

43:21 AH: Back with the liberal arts again. So, you mentioned your mum, and we haven't really talked about this too, too much but like um, how did your backgrounds influence your choice of major or even just your choice to go to our college or this college?

43:38 M: So me personally, I'm not, I didn't do the traditional route, I actually did two years at community college and then I transferred here. So even doing that, you get a lot of stink eyes, Um, so, even doing that, it's just been...difficult at some times, because then it's like okay, so you went to a community college, oh you did like a fine arts major there too, so you're just wasting your time. Um, so now that I'm here, me personally I find that I'm questioning my degree, I'm kind of like, want to add in something else, cause it's just because my professors personally, they're like you know, once you graduate, you're not going to have a job, so they kind of - putting it in your head that this degree isn't going to get you that far. At the end

for the day, like they said, it's who you know. 'Cause they're saying no matter what it is on a piece of paper, if Bob knows you and recommends you, you got the job, it's not that, "Oh you have a degree from the University of Miami."

44:33 L: Your film professor said that to you?

44:35 M: Oh yeah.

44:36 N: Oh my gosh.

[sounds of sympathy/surprise]

44:38 AH: What about the rest of y'all, just in terms of maybe even just high school or education or friends or family, like, was it, was it, yeah I think about that a lot in terms of how we choose our colleges and our majors and just whether there is or is not just even emotional support to do so?

44:58 N: Um, I think I'm definitely not the norm in my family. So most of the women in my family are nurses, and I have some sort of medicinal something background, so for me to do humanities is definitely, like, different, but I, I like, didn't get a lot of pushback, like I said before, it was fashion and I got a lot of support there and so there wasn't much pushback in the humanities but it's also like when I like see extended family members and stuff and I tell them I'm an English major they're like "Oh what are you going to do, are you going to become a teacher?" so it's also like — and it's also not like people trying to be insulting, it's like they really don't know like the possibilities with an English major so I feel definitely like me taking that step is like opening up this whole new world of possibilities in terms of like what one can study. Um, but I was going to say something I forgot—oh the college experience. And so like um, in terms of going to college, I graduated high school um, I did, like, dual-enrollment courses all my courses and I got an AA when I graduated high school. And I'm staying the whole four years here, I'm in my second year, but I had the option if I wanted to just do two years and get a degree and go, and I have a couple of friends, one at UF who is graduating this semester, and one at Nova who is also graduating. But I chose to do the four-year route. Um, and part of that is because I see college as not like you're getting a degree but the experiences, like the people that I've met in the past two years are like huge resources, and like the different experiences I've had that might not be specifically tied to a class or a paper um, or something like that have been like I knew this going in, but even now I'm just like wow who would have known. So one of the things for me in terms of going to college and staying the whole time was those experiences and those resources and those people I wouldn't get if I was just like, you know what, like [snaps fingers] get this degree and go. So that was really important to me in terms of the whole process.

46:51 L: Um, one thing that was a driving force for me is that my dad's an immigrant from Ethiopia so his big thing is that, you know, like we come to this country and like achieving the American dream, part of that is through educational attainment, like, you know, like it's—he has such a generational mindset where I was able to — like, it's almost like you know what's that thing in the Olympics when you go running, pass the baton, yeah like, if I was able to pass the baton to you and I've

gone this far then here, this is your baton, this is your chance, now see how far you can take the next generation of us. And so it was never really like—

47:14 AH: A lot of pressure.

47:15 L: —Yeah, so it was never like a heavy pressure, but at the same time it was like, run bitch.

[Laughter]

47:23 L: Drive me home, you know what I'm saying, like drive bitch, like you can go to law school, you can kind of read through the lines, you can't be a Walmart people greeter even if I really want to, like yeah.

47:38 P: I agree. So for me, college was never a question. I think not going to college would have been more questioned, because both my parents are engineers, and I didn't go that STEM route, so Um, I also graduated with my AA, so I kind of fell into my degree because my senior year of high school, I was going to graduate and come here as a junior, I already had to know what I was going to do, so I decided policy, poli sci so I could do policy and then I would possibly do a double major in business. But after last semester last year I found out I was going to be pushed out of the door and wouldn't have financial aid to do two more years so I kind of have to graduate now. So I kind of fell into my degree but I like it, I did feel that pressure as an immigrant that I have to go to college, it wasn't a question, I have to be here.

48:28 M: For me, I graduate high school at sixteen, so when I did that a lot of people were kind of like, so you got to go to school. So when I took a semester off and didn't enter college immediately, people also gave me stink eye.

[sounds of laughter]

48:36 M: They were kind of like so what are you doing, what are you doing with your life? And when I first started talking about how I wanted to do — because I did IB in high school, and I was like I don't want to go that route, I don't want to be forced. So that's how I got into the film major, and as I kept telling people that I wanted to do the film major, they'd just look, stink eyes again, just what are you doing, and like as I told my family, this is what I'm really passionate about, this is what I really love, they kind of got more accepting. But even when I tell my coworkers, because a lot of my coworkers, they're like generation, they're like immigrants from here, I'm like, like they talk about what their kids went to do and they're like no, you have to do engineering and stuff, they're kind of like, why are you doing that? So it's just — for me, my family, they like learned to love. Like learned to support me, but they, like I still get questioned.

40:38 AH: Okay.

49:39 S: I know for me, Um, , my mother is a mechanical engineer and she was pushed very, very hard by her parents to get a degree so that she could get a high-

paying job. And she only got to go to college because she got a scholarship to go to an engineering school. And so for me, that was what got her moving forward when she was a teenager and in her early twenties. So I was always pushed to go to college to get a degree that would you a high paying job. Um, find something either that you love that will pay you a lot of money or find something that you can stand, so that you have enough money to support your hobbies on the side or whatever Um, and that's partly how they let me major in music business now because I um, they said don't be a teacher and don't be singing on the side of the road because you're not going to get any money like that.

- 50:03 S:** Which I agree, it's pretty funny. Um, but yeah they said they said we're sending you to University of Miami to get a degree to get a job and now that I'm here, I agree with what you said about how college is all about the experience and meeting people and stuff like that. But I came in here saying like I have a mission, my mission is to get an education so that I can have a career to like, to sustain me—
- 50:36 AH:** That is—
- 50:37 S:** —in something that I like and I can stand.
- 50:39 AH:** That is so much pressure.
- 50:41 L:** Same.
- 50:42 S:** A little bit but [laughter] but I enjoy music business so it's not that bad. But—
- 50:45 AH:** Sure.
- 50:46 S:** But my younger sister is like seventeen and she's trying to decide her major and she doesn't do anything but read books and paint.
- 50:55 L:** Ooh.
- 50:56 S:** So my parents—
- 50:57 M:** Liberal arts.
- 50:58 S:** I know, it's like pulling teeth, they're trying to find something that's not liberal arts because they don't want her to major in that. And she has no idea where else she wants to go because she doesn't like anything else that's traditionally you know, like, the STEM, whatever.
- 51:22 P:** To be fair, like, liberal arts or humanities is one of those underdog majors, they look like, people think that if you get a degree in the arts you're going to be on the side of the road asking for money, but there's so many people out there who make it and do something important and like who do make a lot of money, you just don't see it immediately when you study. And then there's people who study business and STEM and just end up making like very little money. Like I was in a

Spanish class last year with a math major and we were talking about what are you going to do after graduation and he's like, I don't know, I'm going to have to get a PhD just to get a job, because there's no jobs out there for me in math.

51:50 AH: Wow.

51:51 N: I guess it's also like the jobs that you look for. 'Cause I feel like it goes back to the internships and the post grad—

52:00 S: But also like how much math do you possibly need?

[laughter, agreement]

52:05 S: Do you need to know like calculus to do that many jobs? No.

52:10 L: Yeah.

52:11 N: That's so true. I remember my godmother, Um, she works for some big organization, but I was talking to her and she only has her Bachelors in economics but she also went to an Ivy so I guess that kind of cancels out somewhere—

[laughter]

52:24 N: —But I considered, Um, I think at one point I considered like a business major, and she was telling me, she actually was telling me not to think about getting a business major because she was like it makes more sense to major in something else and get your MBA.

[general agreement]

52:35 N: Because like in terms of that, that really might not help you as much as you think it does. So I think it, I think it always goes back to what are you going to do with what you have, regardless of what you choose.

52:51 L: And like right before what you said about the Masters is really smart. Yeah I agree with you. A positive trend that we're seeing now is graduate schools and professional schools like medical schools and, uh, law schools since the fifties and sixties there's been a big shift for them to be more holistic so you know you don't have to walk in and have that Biology major, that biochem major going to med school, you can have an English major or a sociology major. And it's funny, admissions officers drool more over those kids who come in with majors from the humanities because it's like oh you have a fresh perspective you know how to synthesize, you know how to read, you know how to communicate, so I think that's very encouraging. Like you said, you can have any major and go get your MBA so that's one thing that's been a positive, if we want to talk positively, [laughter] has been a positive change of in your...what ...the types of graduate schools you can go to with a humanities major.

- 53:39 AH:** Okay. Okay. So Okay. There's two questions that I want to go for. I want to do one first, to kind of pivot off what y'all have been saying. Just as a thought experiment, what do you think it would be like to attend a college just to be where you are right now where you don't have to think about jobs or careers or anything? You can just go to go but what might that be like?
- 54:01 P:** So just go to college for fun?
- 54:02 AH:** Yeah - what-
- 54:03 N:** Just a waste of my time.
- 54:04 AH:** What's, what's the point of college without jobs I suppose?
[crosstalk]
- 54:06 AH:** To have one guaranteed, perfect magic job and just do whatever you want, we live in fairy land.
- 54:07 N:** I probably wouldn't go, I'd probably travel—
- 54:08 AH:** Okay.
- 54:09 N:** —if it was kind of like that situation, I probably wouldn't go to college.
- 54:11 AH:** Okay, so if you didn't have to, you wouldn't?
- 54:13 N:** If I didn't want to have a career, and if I just had money where I could travel the world and do that, then I'd probably do that, but my career is my passion so I'd want to go to college, and do all those things.
- 54:33 AH:** Let me clarify this way, um, if we had guaranteed universal base income, and everyone was guaranteed a living wage to do whatever, how would that affect your choices in college?
- 54:45 M:** Me personally, I would still go, 'cause I've found when I wasn't in school I was really bored.
- 54:50 AH:** Okay.
- 54:51 M:** So for me it's a chance to meet people, form relationships, just have people skills, Um, so I think, if I was given in that situation, I would still go, have fun, and—one thing for me personally I kind of like, I like to stay on my toes so even though I'm a film major I still take like math classes, so people can't be like, what do you know?
[laughter]

- 55:04 M:** So for me, it's all about being competitive, so it's like, yeah, you know, I don't need to, but you're not just going to belittle me, I've done the same classes as you, so just stay on the same playing field, I would still do it.
- 55:25 AH:** Okay.
- 55:26 P:** Yeah, if I could do that, I'd feel like I'd definitely have less pressure and I wouldn't rush my life more, because like, as I am now, I'm thinking ten years ahead because I need to make sure I have a guaranteed job and I go to law school. But if I had a job guaranteed, I wouldn't rush my life, I'd travel, I'd study everything I can because there's so many things that I still want to study.
- [sounds of agreement]
- 55:55 S:** I'd probably do a bit less homework, with less pressure, but I think, learning is enjoyable for me, I like learning about things and I probably honestly if I had, in this utopian job scenario where I had a job after I probably - I don't even know if I'd have a major declared, I'd probably just take a bunch of classes all over the place if I wanted to.
- [sounds of agreement]
- 56:18 AH:** Okay, well that's probably a really good transition into the second half of the pivot that I wanted. Both of you have mentioned actually everyone here, gen eds, interdisciplinarity, and other different, aside from, you as well taking math classes, which is pretty amazing actually.
- 56:31 M:** Yeah, it's cool.
- 56:32 AH:** I wish I'd done that as an English major actually, but so how does, and this is a personal sort of interest thing to, but in terms of what we're discussing for the humanities and for college in general, um, how do cognates affect this? Because we do those instead of declaring a minor here. Right? Is that a thing or do your cognates and you get to do a minor as well, or you could do both?
- 56:52 L:** Cognates are required but minors aren't.
- 56:54 P:** Cognates are required for my school.
- 56:58 AH:** So cognates replace a gen ed requirement? So how does that work? How's your experience of cognates been in terms of moving outside your field and just being able to choose different subjects.
- 57:14 M:** So, for me, since I'm a transfer student, basically I'm not really required to do cognates, but I'm still taking other classes, like I'm in a marketing class, to just stay on that playing field, so like some might look at my degree, but I also took a marketing class, I took a pre-calculus class, it's making me more diverse so I definitely say that cognates and electives keep you more diverse and people will like want you over someone who didn't have that.

57:44 AH: Okay.

57:45 L: I think they keep you humble. Like I have friends who like you know get As in biochemistry or in o-chem two, and then they'll be like crap, like this anthropology class is really kicking my butt, or like this intro to archaeology class, why do I have this C? And I think it's good, I think it's good for people, for some to be humbled by the type of skills you have to have to be an English and a humanities major, and vice versa, I think it's important for there to be that like give and take respect.

[sounds of agreement]

58:10 N: I Um, so like Um, I'm not required to take cognates, sorry my brain was just moving very slowly but I have one in museum studies because our cognates show up on our transcripts and I want when I'm applying for things for people to see that I have that since my major is English. But I also am like interested in the coursework Um, but I've also like I really like one of the reasons I like UM so much is because of the flexibility of what I can study. So I have the museum studies cognate, then I took like guitar my first semester, like a one credit guitar class, and Latin coursework for a semester, and I was a Da Vinci scholar in the first A&S, I've taken a classics course, I've taken a course in climate change and sea level rise, I'm taking a course now that combines art and computer science. So it really helps me 'cause like I'm a total nerd, I have a lot of interests in a lot of different areas. And so having the cognates or like whatever program that allows you just to be flexible just to touch everything I really appreciate. And it's just really weird because somehow somehow like my courses will overlap and like connect in the most random of ways. So I feel like it's important to have some sort of like gen ed or elective like build up in your college education because you never know where connections can be made with certain subjects and classes.

59:31 P: Yeah, I agree. It makes us well rounded, like most of my credits coming in, I had too many, so they all filtered to other classes, but I did get to do one class in my cognates, it was on environmental oceanography, and I got to explore my passion, and like science behind climate change and sea level rise. Which is something I'm passionate about but my humanities major would never have allowed me to explore and I really love it so I'm glad the cognates let us do that.

59:57 M: I think by having gen - like when you have general requirements, I think by the freedom of the cognate, it's a lot different it allows students to really do what they're interested in. Versus other schools where you have to take this requirement, but just how open it is, it allows students to become more humble in the other fields because they're like wow, I didn't know psychology was that hard, it just allows students to become well-rounded.

1:00:29 L: I think at UM we're really lucky, because like our Dean of Education and senior vice provost, Dr. Green, he's the biggest champion of interdisciplinary studies like I remember at orientation, he went on he was like be the kid who double majors in physics and classics, be the kid who takes classes just for fun, so I think we're lucky that we have someone who's the voice for our curriculum, it encourages us,

like I feel that climate, I feel like my advisor wouldn't look at me crazy if I wanted to, you know, choose a major in something totally different, those are the kids who are highlighted, those are the kids who are spotlighted, and people who decide to explore an interdisciplinary path are made into heroes.

1:01:08 AH: Okay, so y'all don't feel pressure to like stick with one thing and like tunnel vision through?

1:01:15 M: No, I definitely say—

1:01:16 P: I thought it was looked down on.

1:01:17 M: —like when I went to the 'Canes kickoff, President Frenk was talking about how a lot of students start here with one major and what they graduate is something completely different. And they really like encourage you to just go crazy, which I really like that about that here, like they encourage you, like oh you like this, let's take more classes here to see if you really like that, okay you want to do this, let's add a bit—it's like very welcoming.

1:01:41 AH: Okay, let me touch on that. Did you feel pressure before y'all came to college to, like, not experiment, but to pick one thing and stick with it? I keep saying that over and over again but I am just remembering when I was in high school for this too and I feel like has this been your experience in high school leading into college? Like you wanted to choose one degree and then maybe it sounds like that shifted a little?

[sounds of agreement]

1:02:04 AH: Was there pressure?

1:02:05 P: I thought that if you didn't—that if you deviated you wouldn't graduate in time. But with cognates you can actually graduate on time and do something different.

1:02:13 AH: Okay.

1:02:14 M: For me, like before I graduate high school, I had a set plan, and then like my last year I'm like screw it, like I actually want to do what I'm interested in. So I've been doing that and then it's kind of like so my mom's kind of encouraging me, like don't rush, she's kind of like, she'd rather me do what I'm really satisfied with then just trying to get it over with. So it's kind of like along the way things change.

1:02:40 AH: Had any of you chosen your major in high school or really thought this is a thing that I'm going to do and maybe selected UM because of that?

1:02:50 N: Oh—oh, go ahead—

1:02:51 S: Oh, I just, I wanted to major in music because I really liked it, and then my parents were obviously like you better get a job that has money in it, so I was trying to find Um, a high paying musically affiliated job that I would enjoy. So that

was one of the criteria for me picking music business. And I'm from Florida, I wanted to stay in state and this was the only school I considered that had a music business major so that's why I'm here.

1:03:13 AH: Okay. And I think you were going—

1:03:14 N: I was just going to say, in high school, I thought about a lot of things, I thought about business, I thought about engineering, just because I have interests everywhere, and so part of the reason why I picked UM is because I was undeclared and I feel like—like we've discussed, it really had the environment for me to be undeclared and explore lots of different things, so there was never really this one set thing, it was always going to be I'm going to make whatever I'm going to do work for me, but I was just, I still am, I like a lot of stuff.

1:03:45 AH: No, freedom of exploration that's, frankly, really nice to hear. Um, so sticking with the high school theme too, were there any teachers in particular who maybe inspired you or made you want to move towards where you are now? Field wise, what was that?

1:03:58 M: Oh I'm laughing, because I graduate early, my teachers were like oh you're not going to do that.

[crosstalk]

1:04:00 M: So in the midst — so for me personally, in about October I was done with school, I was like, forget this, I want to leave, so I graduated a year early, so a lot of people were like since it's so last minute you're not going to do it, I'm off across state [inaudible]

1:04:26 P: Whoop, there it is.

1:04:27 M: For me, high school, really helped show me what I did not want to do—

1:04:30 AH: Okay.

1:04:31 M: — It showed me how I did not want to be forced to do this just because it's what society says you need to do. So, it was just like, goodbye.

1:04:41 AH: Solid.

[Applause and cheering]

1:04:43 P: For me, my AP world history teacher, he was so quirky and funny and he really opened dialogue for me and like my best friend to argue every single class over history and policy, that I just fell in love with political science and humanities.

1:04:58 L: Um, I was homeschooled for more than half of my life Um, and for all of my middle school years I participated in this co-op where a bunch of homeschooled kids would come together and it was based off a classical education model. It

was really nice, because we developed such an appreciation of the arts, we learned Latin, that was a really big thing, we had to learn so much Latin, we would all like, there was art every single week, there was so much emphasis on developing your public speaking skills, there was like learning about the greats like Archimedes and Plato, just thinking about thought like the Socratic method, like all that stuff, I felt very lucky in that way because that was the basis for my elementary and middle school years.

1:05:45 AH: All right, I want to back up for a moment, well, I say back up, I want to talk about majors again, kind of leaning back towards that. Another thing that we found with the survey results that I think is fascinating is that people said that they do not have preconceived ideas about others based on their majors but that they think other people have preconceived ideas about them. So, which I guess is sort of human nature, I don't judge you but clearly y'all are judging me. Um, but do y'all think? Like do you think that people have preconceived ideas about you based on your major that's with sort of come up a little bit in conversation already, and if so, what are those ideas? Um, and do you - what do you- do you find the same thing, like oh man that guy's an engineer he's blank or whatever.

1:06:30 P: Um...

1:06:31 AH: Like does it define you? Especially, as much as we've talked about interdisciplinarity, which is fascinating.

1:06:41 P: I think I have preconceived notions about myself. [laughter] Like every time I interview for something, or people ask me, "Oh where do you go?" I'm like, Oh UM, they're like wow, what do you study, and I'm like political sciences and Spanish, and they're like dude that's super cool, and I'm like no, political science, there's no money in there.

1:07:01 M: Oh my gosh.

1:07:02 P: Yeah.

1:07:03 AH: Okay.

1:07:04 P: And then my best friend in high school, she's studying, she was doing Journalism and she switched to English, and I believe English is such a critical major, but I do find myself asking, What are you doing with an English major, or what do you do with a Classics major, even though I have preconceived notions about my own major like, yeah, like yeah.

1:07:24 AH: Okay, so it's like a job-related concern.

1:07:21 P: It's a —yeah. For me it's a job-related concern but for me there's fundamental things that should be learned.

1:07:31 S: For me, whenever I tell people, when I tell most people, that I'm a music business major, everyone thinks Oh my gosh, that's so cool, wow, she's

interesting, she's multi-faceted, she's a music business major, and I'm here like, I'm just me, but [laughs] but when I was in high school I also did IB and because IB is so — they have a push on being interdisciplinary but at least in my high school program there was a really big push on um, the hard sciences and math and different levels of um, those things, so, a lot of people from my high school — I was one of two people who majored in music. Um, out of like, out of our entire senior graduating class. And for the people who didn't know what they wanted to do, they went into biology or biochem or chemistry. So because I had been in that environment for many years, now when I meet people who say that they're a bio major or a chem major or anything in that area, I wonder, why do you want to do that? Do you want to do that because you really feel passionate about it or did you not know where else you want to go. And you figured, I'm good at biology, I should go into this. Which is kind of judgmental of me, because people say the exact same thing about music, like, you didn't know what you wanted to do, so you're just going to major in music. Um, I don't know, and I kind of worry for those people. Like if you just picked you know biochem because you're good at it, but you're not really passionate about it, like are you going to be happy with it? You know? why did you pick that and where are you going to go with that? Are you going to stay on that path or are you going to change it? You know.

1:08:54 N: I think um, like what you were saying about taking all those courses in high school, so like in high school, in middle and high school, growing up with different teachers and stuff, because I was like good in math and science and stuff, they were like are you going to become a doctor or an engineer, you should definitely do engineering oh my gosh these skills, and I actually really like calculus I just don't want to use it for my career—

1:09:02 L: Same.

1:09:03 N: —I think like that would be the preconceived notion, because I am good in this skill, I should do it. And it was more of just me saying like what do I like, what do I want to do with my life and how am I going to get there? And what's like going to bring me this joy? And English was a function of that. So I think people definitely project things onto you based off—it could be positive or negative but they might see that you have this certain skill and they'll like project this thing onto you really out of goodwill, like they want something good for you, but they'll just like, that's, a lot of time people don't know there are other options so that's something I dealt with in high school. But in terms of preconceived notions in college, when I tell people from high school, like this is my major now, they're like actually that makes sense, I can totally see you doing this or whatever, Um, a lot of the stuff that I do has to do with black studies. And so I remember a friend from high school, I was talking to her about my stuff, and she was like, wow, like I so could have pictured you as like an African American studies major whatever, and I'm like, yeah I'm just good at that stuff, so it just comes like full circle when people pair who you are and what you're studying so.

1:10:21 L: Unfortunately, like, I see a lot of people that are like peer to peer belittling based on major. I've probably had—I'm just a freshman, like you guys, so it's only my second semester here, but I've already had at least five people belittle me based on my major. I don't know — like there's something about the premed

environment where everyone's on crack and [laughter] comparing each other so much. I've had people who like, "Oh so you're majoring in public health? Like okay so you're going for four years and the whole premise is to just get a flu shot? Or act like why are you choosing the prissiest major.

1:10:51 P: No way.

1:10:52 L: Yeah, people are like they're so mean, I don't know why—They're like that's the stupidest major, oh you want to go to med school, blah blah blah. I just -- it's so unkind. Even last semester when like departmental honors when out, like Dean's list, president's list, blah blah, like people were talking about it and it was just like people who were in the humanities who got high GPAs they were totally discredited, well like of course she got a 4.0, you have to be stupid not to get a 4.0 in film or you have to be stupid to not to get a 4.0 in English. And I'm like you hold a goddamn camera, like, good lord, like it's crazy, I don't know what it is, I don't know if it's the people I'm surrounding myself with or I also feel like it's the immaturity of like the freshman mind, the more you [inaudible] the more respect. Like freshman, I don't know if they're coming from this really competitive IB, AP high school environment, or whether they're just like, they're so fueled off of their, I don't know, their STEM drive, but, I've seen a lot of belittling based on majors.

1:11:40 P: Wow, I feel like public health is such a good premed major, like it's so weird to me that like — that's so funny, especially like UM, that's a great place to do public health, that's so funny.

1:11:53 L: Thank you.

1:11:54 P: I think until as a society we really change how we like how we discuss, how we view different jobs, there's always going to be like belittling. 'Cause when I tell people I'm a film major, they're like oh you're going to be broke coming out of school, oh it's going to be really hard to get a job and stuff, and that's what you learn in classes, and you learn it's like really tough and it's kind of like it's no, um, until society really says it's okay to do these arts majors, it's okay to do these humanities majors, people are always going to belittle you because they think society's telling them that's not the way you want to go.

1:12:30 AH: And actually based on that, I want to take us back to what was supposed to be the first part of our discussion but I got really excited when we were talking about your educational experiences. But since this is a project about the humanities, we probably should talk about them a little. And also because it's almost six o' clock y'all, I'm sorry, you're too much fun to listen to. I want to go back to talk about the humanities just a little bit before we run out of time and pizza. So what do you — I uh I'm trying to think about how I want to phrase this question. When did you first come across just the idea of the humanities, just this as an idea or a concept. Is it a word you use a lot or is it newish, oldish?

1:13:12 P: Oof, I remember, I remember that when I was in high school and I had to choose an elective for my AA, I was looking at it and I was like humanities, what is it, that's so interesting. And it said American history from like the 17th century to the

18th century, and I'm like what, that's what a humanities is? So I was so confused, it was so foreign to me. And now it's not. Mind of a child.

1:13:38 M: Um, I would say it came like last semester. I just was in these majors and these categories but I never really labelled it. It's kind of like I always saw liberal arts, fine arts, I never really thought of it as humanities based.

1:13:53 N: Yeah, like the word humanities, I think maybe senior year of high school—I think I really started to pay attention to that. I think I also looked at the course thing for dual enrollment. But in terms of the concept of humanities, that's always been something I've been surrounded by and loved so I loved like looking at Black poetry and literature and history and all this other stuff, and my mom, like exposed my sister and I to the arts, so humanities was always a concept that I was comfortable with, I just didn't have a word to put to it. Nor did I ever consider like making it a career, until the last couple of years or so.

1:24:27 AH: Okay.

1:24:28 N: Yeah.

1:24:29 S: I guess, similar to you I never really used the word humanities voluntarily until probably like three years ago, honestly, when I was a junior in high school. But up to then, like I remember being in middle school trying to pick my you know, my one elective that I got every year and I was fourteen so I was trying to pick it because it was super important because everything's important when you're fourteen, but Um, but I would always notice the difference in what I wanted to do versus the other people who would take an extra math class or an elective in something like that. And I sectioned it off in my mind as this type of class and this type of class, um, but I didn't really put a word to it until later.

1:15:08 AH: Okay.

1:15:09 L: I feel kind of similarly too. I think I think I kind of had an understanding of the humanities like earlier on, like middle-school age. Um, and I mean like I guess it's stupid because the word human is in the word, but there was always a sense of like admiration, like wow, this is the study of things that really make us human this is the study of things that allow us to connect with others—

[affirming sounds]

1:15:24 L: Like this is the study of things, it just, I don't know, like whenever I thought humanities, I thought warmth, I thought cozy, I thought grounding, I thought like I don't know about y'all but like when I think about doing math or science, I don't feel cozy, like I always feel on edge, like woo, there's something about the humanities, and that's not a testament to that it's difficult or anything like that but I always kind of felt like oh people before me study this, people now study this, people later than me are studying this, like, I don't know, we're all connected, like we're all humans, it's all so stupid but it always made me feel like so cozy and so warm, like more than any other any other grouping of subjects I could study.

- 1:16:04 M:** I like that, that's cool.
- 1:16:05 P:** To be fair it's a broad and expansive word.
- 1:16:07 AH:** So that's interesting, that—I uh it seems like there's an emotional component in some way to the humanities that maybe other fields don't have. Does that resonate?
- [Agreeing sounds]
- 1:16:18 N:** I would say at first glance maybe, but I've met some like STEM people who are like incredibly passionate about like the research they do, but I think definitely at first glance like humanities definitely super, super emotion based. Yeah.
- 1:16:37 M:** I guess you could argue if you're in the STEM majors, if you're passionate, then there's emotional compartment behind it 'cause like people who are really passionate behind environment you see them really fighting for climate change, like fighting to delay it, fighting to just be more green.
- 1:16:52 L:** I — oh sorry, please go.
- 1:16:53 S:** I find that Um, that I feel like the humanities are more Um, personal opinion based Um, that if you want to pursue them or go very far with them, you're probably going to get further if you have like that fire inside you behind what you're talking about. 'Cause for me in high school, I found it pretty easy to succeed in Biology without intrinsically caring about it. Um, but as a singer, like I can't give a performance of something, unless I care about the music I'm performing. So...
- 1:17:28 L:** True
- 1:17:29 M:** That's a really good point.
- 1:17:30 AH:** So there's something about the humanities where if you want to be good at it, you need to care, in a way that maybe for other fields you don't. Is that kind of what I'm picking up?
- 1:17:45 P:** I think humanities helps us connect with people. 'Cause like think about if you study Literature, or Politics, or Music business, there's like that element of human connection, like when you meet a person, say you talk to them about something you really like in African American studies, or something you learn in music or business or music business, it's something that helps you relate or get that connection started so you can continue to talk about something else.
- 1:18:01 L:** And yeah, I think it's fascinating, like you mentioned, the people who are really passionate about STEM, like if you isolate what makes them passionate, or why you perceive them to be passionate, it's because they're good at wielding their humanities skills.

[sounds of agreement]

1:18:13 L: So you have the doctors who's like holy crap look at my cancer research, it's because she's able to speak well, or it's because she's able to sUm, arize, or because she's able to put together a really compelling visual art presentation. You know, like, the very things that make that person seem so passionate, seem so emotional, it's because they have those humanities tools in their toolbox. I think it's cool.

[general agreement]

1:18:34 AH: Is that something else that y'all notice perhaps, that's excellent by the way. That was great, let's take a moment and sit with that, that was very exciting. Yeah, I mean do you think—everyone's been really positive about the humanities here, which I guess is not unsurprising considering many of you are adjacent to or in those majors. Um, I mean, I won't lie, it is nice to hear. [laughter] But, Um, , yes I also think we've taken some guff for it too, I'm an English major myself and I'm sure the two of y'all have like always having to justify your choices. But yeah it's my god, I'm trying to figure out how I want to phrase this specifically, but you have brought up the emotional component, just the idea, the importance of history and human history and us all being connected, Um, , yeah, uh, do you think, that, do y'all find that you have a relationship with the humanities as a field, now that we sort of it's a term we all use? Is it an important part of your lives even aside from just your major, just your career, just your life?

1:19:41 S: I feel like the humanities fill in the gaps.

1:19:43 AH: Okay.

1:19:44 S: Between um, I mean if we're comparing humanities and not humanities as in like hard sciences and STEM and stuff side by side, like the argument that I've always had with people in my high school because I was one of the only musically driven people, is that you can be a neurosurgeon and go to work and do neuroscience all day and blah blah blah. But when you go home, you're not going to do research and more neuroscience, you're going to go to a museum on your free time, or watch a movie, or go and play sport or do something different so I feel like it's more — like it takes up the rest of the space and humanities encompass a lot more than people want to think about.

1:20:28 AH: Okay, how do you mean?

1:20:29 S: Like how, when you think of STEM, I mean, it's the acronym itself only has four letters in it, but the humanities are basically everything else, you know.

[sounds of agreement]

- 1:20:35 S:** Um, and it's kind of ironic in that sense that people downplay the humanities so much but they make up so much of what we consider to be like the academic world.
- 1:20:48 AH:** Okay, interesting. Um, so with what you've just said Um, another finding that we found with the survey, another finding that we found, it's getting close to six thirty, I can tell, most of the people who filled out the survey, despite the make-up of this group, Um, were not humanities majors. But most of the people who took the survey, and I think they weren't just trying to be nice to us, they did feel very positively about the humanities, and they felt that they were valuable—
- 1:21:08 M:** That they weren't?
- 1:21:10 AH:** That they were, that they are valuable.
- 1:21:12 M:** Oh sorry, I didn't hear very well.
- 1:21:14 AH:** So, what do y'all think about that? Most people aren't humanities majors, but they do think that they are valuable and worthwhile. Where might that that discrepancy be?
- 1:21:27 P:** I one-hundred percent agree. But in the sense that like I don't think humanities fill the gaps, I think the humanities are the basis of everything. Like for me, my parents being engineers, math was always easy for me, I excelled in science, that's something you can learn, humanities is something that you need to focus and actually understand and feel like if you don't understand how society has advanced, how the history behind how medicine has advanced, you can't really do much with what you're seeing on that day. You need to understand the past, in order to be able to shape the future and humanities well helps you do that. And it also helps you develop great language and writing skills and and all of that that are very necessary for society.
- 1:22:13 N:** I think it, oh, go ahead.
- 1:22:14 M:** I think at the end of the day, everyone realizes how important the humanities is, I think everyone realizes how it is vital to human, like you need to know these skills in order to fully develop, like interact with people and everything, but I think it comes down to some people are too scared to like take that path, 'cause they don't want to be ostracized, like they don't want to live with that fear. Like at the end of the day everyone knows how valuable it is, but only like the strong can take that path.
- [sounds of agreement]
- 1:22:45 AH:** Okay, okay.
- 1:22:46 L:** Yeah, actually, going along with what you said, you said it so well, but yeah, I think ideally people understand how important the humanities are but then when they see it within their best friend, or their sister, they're like oh gosh like I want

you to have a good job after college, I want to make sure you're looking out for yourself, like, I think like on a whole everyone can have a mutual appreciation of it, but when a colleague or someone of you know that you're close to, you're always worried about how that's going to impact their future, so you may on a one on one basis show that negative perception of the humanities, whereas the grand idea that you may have...

- 1:23:20 N:** I think it goes back to like elitism and access. So, there are people who might be in STEM majors or what not, that never saw the humanities as a viable and sustainable career path, because for most people in the world you need a job to be able to live and do all that jazz, and so I feel like because they don't have exposure or access to the fact that humanities can make a good career, like people turn that down. Um, and it goes back to these rich people for years going to these liberal arts colleges and still being able to make a living. Um, a lot of that exposure wasn't left to the rest of society. So I think that's a huge thing because like when people can see that you can get a major in whatever and make it work, then that'll open it up for people to be like, well, maybe I can do what I'm interested in and not like fall on this back up degree. So I think a lot of it has to do with access and exposure that a lot of people are not given. Um, and that could be, on a small scale level like in families, having family members who have done things and then championed those things but it could also be on a wider like society level about who can study what, and go here, and do this, and make it and be successful. Um, and so I feel like and so for me personally, in my experience, that's been huge and realizing that I can have a humanities career, uh because I didn't see that growing up. Because I like I'm not from like a super wealthy background to be just going to some liberal arts college and just doing what I want and making it work. And so I feel like exposure is huge and for this next generation for people to see people who are in humanities fields that can make things work, I think is really big because I feel that will open the door, because when people see things and they'll be able to put that in their own lives, but when they don't have the exposure, like, they probably won't go that route, so.
- 1:25:02 AH:** What might people in those fields look like?
- 1:25:05 N:** In humanities fields?
- 1:25:06 AH:** Mmhmm.
- 1:25:07 N:** Well that's the thing, you could look like anything. Um, like if you study humanities you don't have to stay in the humanities, you can study humanities and go in business, study humanities and go wherever where else, but I think it's just the openness of talking about your experiences, and letting people know that I started here, and I got here, Um, but I didn't have to do this one track mind of doctor, lawyer, and even if I am a doctor or lawyer, like maybe like I studied Asian studies or something in undergrad or whatever, and it was still useful. So I think those conversations and that openness is huge.
- 1:25:39 M:** I think the stereotype is mean-spirited.

1:25:42 AH: Okay.

1:25:43 L: Yeah, I think people who choose humanities and stick with it, those are the kind people, those are the empathetic people. Like, you know I went to Wynwood Walls for like the first time and I saw this really good quote, it said like "The only job of the artist," it could also say humanitarian, "is to truly understand the time period in which they're living in." So I think anyone who studies the humanities has that really, really special understanding and for that reason—I don't know, I just always think human 2.0, I don't know, it's so cute, I always think yeah, it's kindness, empathy, great things I think of.

1:26:18 AH: So for those of y'all who have friends, and this will probably have to be our last point because it's getting time to wrap up, uh for those of y'all who have friends who are in STEM, because again, there is a very large push for that, it is a large number of our majors here, do you find that they are as nice and supportive of the humanities as you are.

[sounds of agreement]

1:26:36 N: Yeah, actually, my STEM, I have a lot of friends who are premed, and STEM, business, and we always talk about our coursework, and they're always like oh my gosh, your schedule is like so interesting and so exciting. Um, and they're always like, and we always have conversations about the classes I'm taking and they are interests in what I'm taking and so like I feel like they have the excitement, it's just like, going back again to is it feasible? Do they see it as a feasible thing for them to do like and still have a hold on life. So I think the excitement is there, it's just that the practicality of it all, maybe not that understanding.

1:27:17 S: I feel like, sorry, I feel like practicality is also a really big deal. Like for me, I have a Music Business job and people always ask where in the music business do you want to go? And then I tell them and they're oh that's fascinating, that's so cool, good luck, blah blah blah. And most of my friends outside of the music school are STEM majors and they actually have a really good appreciation and respect for the music that I'm doing and my roommate, who is also in our friend group, is doing, because a lot of them, I mean a lot of people that come to college, because college is so competitive now, you have to have this you have to have that, so everyone here that I know is already very well rounded, who already did music in the past, or did sports, or a bunch of other humanities things. So they understand how important it can be to you. And like I have a friend who played piano for several years so she understands exactly how important music is. But I Um, feel like that's a good thing now, that people are coming to realize that humanities are important, and humanities are valuable. Um, but I agree with what you said, when we talk about coursework, it all comes down to what are we going to do with this? Because I have a friend who's a bio major who wants to change her major because bio is boring to her and she has no idea what she wants to do with it.

[Sympathetic sounds.]

- 1:28:30 S:** So she talks about how stupid this class is, and how dumb this exam is and stuff and...
- 1:28:36 AH:** Okay.
- 1:28:37 M:** For me, I get mixed views. So like I have, like I'll be complaining about homework and my friend's like you're a film major, like, big whoop. And then they're like I'm in Earth systems and this and that. But then also sometimes you have the people are like I wish I could have a class that allows me to be so creative, to like have that much freedom. Oh I wish my homework was to go pitch an idea to someone and interact that much with people. So you kind of get a mix, like people who are like I yearn to have that much freedom, and that creativity. And then you have the people who are like, that's not that hard.
- 1:29:11 AH:** Okay.
- 1:29:12 M:** So from STEM majors, I get both. And then you get the ones who dip their toes in your major and are like wow I respect you now. So you get it from all sides.
- 1:29:21 AH:** Okay. Um, okay well before I wrap this up I did want to turn the floor over to my colleagues just to see if y'all wanted to ask any more follow up questions? Any thoughts?
- 1:29:32 LT:** Alex?
- 1:29:35 AM:** Yeah, I think I'm good. Lots of thoughts but no questions.
- 1:29:36 AH:** Yeah.
- 1:29:37 AM:** This was amazing, thank you so much.
- 1:29:40 AH:** Yeah, we're going to have a great brainstorming session afterwards. Just so many things, like maybe the humanities are actually worthwhile and a thing that you can do and everyone respects and college is still certainly for jobs and you should have a plan, but also doing what you like is critical, because it is your life. Um, is, is there anything else, any questions that you wanted to ask or any final thoughts that you want to share with us?
- 1:30:04 L:** Like a final thought, anyone who doesn't appreciate the humanities, anyone who doesn't see the importance it has to society, can't ever be a successful leader. I don't, I just, I don't, I think they go together, how can you have respect? How can you be a good leader?
- 1:30:23 S:** That's interesting, my mother is a mechanical engineer and she had worked up to like a senior position at her job as a manager of like managers or whatever. And whatever, and I've always been a music person, and whenever she comes home from work aggravated, I ask her what's wrong, and she says, "Oh well, so and so was being super aggravating today because he's such an engineer, he doesn't have any empathy. Have you ever met any of those people—

- 1:30:40 L:** [encouraging] Yeah.
- 1:30:41 S:** —who are super invested in STEM and have no people skills, and she goes oh my god he was being such an engineer today. And stuff like that which I just thought was really funny. And a lot of times the people who make it really far are well rounded. And um, and in a parallel vein I think it's really awesome that people are, like the general population of the United States and the rest of the world is starting to appreciate the humanities a lot more than forty years ago I'd say and I don't know what specifically happened, but I appreciate it.
- 1:31:17 AH:** Where do you see this appreciation coming?
- 1:31:18 S:** Uh, well, I mean in my personal life, when I tell people that I'm into music, they think that's really cool, like that's a really interesting thing that I can't do but I think is really fascinating and really valuable, Um, and I feel like if I was born fifty years before and it was seventies? and if I was trying to major in music, they'd be like why don't you go become an astronaut.
- 1:31:40 L:** Unless you're going to Juilliard, unless you're going to the top stuff, [in a silly voice] oh you're a genius blah blah blah.
- 1:31:50 N:** I actually, oh, I actually feel kind of opposite. One of the reasons I so considered a STEM major in the being was also because I knew there was money in terms of getting scholarships and stuff for STEM and so I feel like even though like on a personal level people are really appreciative of the humanities, and I understand that, and I know we talked about economics and stuff like that, I feel like, like in this country, and probably globally, there's a huge push for STEM. We're starting to hear STEAM a little bit, but it's still mostly STEM, so I feel like it's kind of the opposite. Everything is so STEM focused because it's super competitive and we're in such a global society and we want to be competitive with other countries and stuff like that—
- 1:32:39 M:** —It's political.
- 1:32:40 N:** And so, and it's also very political, but I feel like in terms of that whole scene, I don't feel the humanities is as prized. I feel like, maybe in the seventies, eighties, it might have been a little more prized because maybe that competition wasn't there with maybe the technology in society that we have today. So I feel like it might be, from my perspective, it's a little harder not necessarily in terms of interpersonal like individual interactions, but in terms of society in general, I feel like it's a little harder to be a humanities major in this day and age, so.
- 1:33:07 M:** One thing I found hard is that yes, people are becoming more accepting of humanities, but then people get this stereotype, like yeah okay you want to be a film major, are you trying to be the next Shonda Rhimes, the next this or that, so they compare your path to their path and they're saying basically if your path isn't like that, you're going to be a fail. So there's one thing that's kind of now that we're being more accepting we have to kind of make sure that people aren't just

keeping those like those idols in their head because then people compare your path to the idol's path and because you're not on the idol's path they're like oh you're not going to be successful.

- 1:33:43 P:** [to Ashley] I'm actually glad that you said that a lot of non-humanities said that the humanities are important because when I graduated high school, like the four years that I was there, I was there all the way from middle to high, I slowly saw how my Um, my high school was weeding out the arts and humanities and putting in their place STEM programs because that's what would get them the recognition in the county and it would get them the good funding and all of that. And if you look at statistics like funding for the arts and humanities going down every single year, and it's kind of scary because humanities is a foundation that everyone should have. It shouldn't just be science or STEM based, like that aggravates me because humanities is necessary.
- 1:34:24 L:** I think it would be a fun, not fun, it would be an interesting social experiment if you went to people with STEM majors and be like, "What are you going to do with that? Are you sure you're going to get a job?" Like, if you went up to someone who's like biochemistry, "What are you going to do with that? Like are you afraid? Like would your parents support you?" Just so you could feel it for once, like, not just because two wrongs make a right, but I think it would be a fun social experiment.
- 1:34:45 P:** To be fair physics, chem majors, they also face the same problem we face, like what are you going to do with that degree?
- 1:34:50 N:** Unless you're pre-med.
- 1:34:51 L:** Unless you're pre-med.
- 1:34:52 P:** Unless you're pre-med, or pre-law, like you face a similar thing.
- 1:34:54 N:** That's what I'm saying, like the grand plan, pretty much any major, unless you're business, unless you're pre something, what are you going to do with that?
- 1:34:57 AH:** So you have to go to grad school then.
- 1:34:58 N:** Yeah, increasingly I feel like you need to go to grad school now.
- 1:35:05 M:** There's no ands or buts about it, if you want to have a job, you have to go to grad school.
- 1:35:15 L:** The market's competitive.
- 1:35:17 N:** It's just become so easy for people to go to college and get a four-year degree.
- 1:35:20 AH:** Fair enough. Well, unfortunately, I want to ask you so many more questions—this has been so good—but I have to let you leave, and rejoin your lives in the world. Thank y'all so much, this has been great. Hang out and talk with us

forever, please, this has been delightful, and let's see we will send you an email probably by the end of the month and let you know who's won the gift card. I have everyone's consent form, except for you, and by all means, please as you leave take some food with you. This is a veritable feast.