

Abby Sebastian Podcast

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

illinois, internship, graduate college, class, graduate, high, undergrad, work, champaign, research, thought, social, hr, virtual, abby, school, person, ler, community, skits

SPEAKERS

Sebastian, Abby



Abby 00:02
I'm Abby.



Sebastian 00:03
And I'm Sebastian.



Abby 00:05
And you're listening to the Illinois Graduate College Podcast,



Sebastian 00:08
Where we cover topics related to higher education and offer insight and resources to help you be your best and succeed in graduate school at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign.



Abby 00:19
In this first episode we would just like to introduce ourselves and discuss our graduate experience with you all.



Sebastian 00:25

We are members of SAGE which stands for students advising on graduate education, and it enriches our graduate student community and builds leadership skills and also strengthens graduate college services and programs,



Abby 00:38

we would like to thank you for listening, and let's get right into it so Sebastian, could you start with introducing yourself.



Sebastian 00:44

Yeah, of course. So my name is Sebastian and I go by, "he/his" my area of study is human resources and industrial relations. And one thing that I'm not is Toby Flenderson from, "The Office", which is what a lot of people think of when they think of HR. How about you?



Abby 01:01

So, I'm Abby, and I go by she/hers. I am in the master's program of social work with a concentration in school social work. And one thing I'm not, I cannot write you a prescription for your anxiety. What about you?



Sebastian 01:21

The reason that I'm in my field is because I was very interested in organizational behavior. And I was originally going to do a PhD but I thought that I really liked the practice side more than the theory side so i thought you know what better way to practice that then learn more about how to practice it in organizations and study it in one of the best master's programs in the country for it. How about you?



Abby 01:44

What made me go into social work was. I also did my undergrad at U of I, I got my undergrad degree in psychology. And I also thought that I wanted to get my PhD in psychology. But I actually had the chance to do a class, combined with an internship and go into the schools in Champaign and do skits on safe touching and like trusted adults, for the kids and Champaign. And so, like you said, seeing that, you know, practice side of it, really sparked a passion for social work and particularly as it relates to the school setting. So, when I started out, I wasn't quite sure where I wanted to go with it. I thought I wanted

to go into, you know, the kind of the research side. But I took a research class and it just didn't really grab my attention. It wasn't something that I was as passionate about as I thought I was going to be. So I took an Intro to Social Work class, just to knock out some of my Gen Ed's, and I read a, it's a pretty common article but it's called, "Unpacking the Privilege Backpack". And it just talks about all the things that people, you know, who are white take for granted, you know, so like having representation in the media, you know, go into a store without, you know, being suspected of stealing. Just really things that honestly I had never thought about. And so that was really powerful for me and kind of got me thinking, and then I got the opportunity to do a combined internship and class. That was related to social work where we got to partner with a local Rape Advocacy Center in Champaign so we got to go into the local Champaign-Urbana schools and perform skits for the K through fifth graders on. Yeah, like trusted adults and safe touching and just different areas like that and then we would give them time after you know we would sit outside the classroom and if there was anything they wanted to talk about, then we would provide that. So, that is really what sparked my passion and being on my journey. How about you?

S Sebastian 04:17

I think that there's a lot of differences when you find somebody that's doing mainly research versus when they're in a corporation, you know, managing their entire HR management system. And so I think that there's definitely a lot of similarities but, you know, in our two fields in terms of why you get into that field, and why that track and why that degree. Absolutely.

A Abby 04:38

What about you?

S Sebastian 04:39

"Why graduate college?" I think that just... It's a really rich community that has very close ties to one another and I think that sort of community that I found at least at Illinois through undergrad, only sort of strengthened. Because there's smaller numbers in the graduate college so that's why I really wanted to, you know, continue my education journey.

A Abby 05:03

I picked, Illinois. Well first I did my undergrad there and like you said I really loved it and I

had a really great experience. But I also, you know, work full time and I do have a family. I have two kids, so I needed a program that would allow me to keep my job and do my school online and kind of on the weekends and at night kind of an alternative schedule and Illinois is actually the only distance social work program in all of Illinois. So that was really a huge driver behind why I chose that. So...

S

Sebastian 05:44

Thank you. All right, well, let's take a break and say something about Graduate College highs and lows.

A

Abby 05:51

So this is where we talk about our highest and lowest points in graduate school and reflect on how we got past our lowest point and learn how to reach our potential and achieve our highest points in grad school.

S

Sebastian 06:06

So Abby Could you take it away and give us your high and low?

A

Abby 06:10

So my high actually just came last week I just accepted my internship. As one of the area's schools so in the fall, I'll start getting into work directly in the school setting. So it's been two years, two and a half years in the making. So it was really amazing to get that call. I would say the low probably a lot of people's low has been COVID. Just because before COVID, we, our cohort had the opportunity to do some classes on Saturdays. In person so that was really cool we got to do two before COVID hit and we got, you know, it was just really amazing to get to do small groups and you know you get to know your classmates a little bit more. So even though we were online we did get a little bit of that in person. But then, when COVID hit obviously since we are from all over. I think we have some somebody that lives in like Indiana, someone that lives in California just all over. So, because of the testing requirements, it would have been almost impossible for us to come, you know have enough time to get tested, and then have class so they just decided to make them all online until the pandemic has passed so that's been kind of a low but I will say because we do do primarily online, I think we were in a better position than most to kind of handle that and it was certainly an easier adjustment to make than I'm sure for people who were going fully in person and then had to make that. So, what about you? Highs and Lows?



Sebastian 07:52

See, I think it's sort of similar to yours it's related to an internship, and I would say that it's it's both a high and a low it's a high because I found out sort of what my placements going to be for my internship I'm interning with a pharmaceutical company up in North Chicago, and the high was that we found out that we were going to be virtual so I knew exactly what was going to be happening because the last batch of interns was virtual as well. And, but they just sent the email very recently, along with a cozy blanket. But I would say that that was a high because it was, you know, fantastic now I don't have to you know wonder whether or not it's going to be virtual and next sort of outline you know the reason that we're doing this is because the pandemic we don't want to tell you that it's all touch and go which was a really impressive sort of strength for me to see, you know that they're saying you know I know that you want it to be in person but even if you know we can't take those chances which is a great, great for their for their insight and then it was a low just because I mean who doesn't want to be in person? You know, for an internship like that, I would say that it's sort of a low just because you don't get to meet those people but I definitely don't think that were ever fully going to go away from virtual so I think it'll be good practice for me to, you know, work, virtually versus just doing school virtually so it was, you know, very bittersweet so it's a great high low both, but that's that's what it was that all internship related.



Abby 09:20

Yeah i think it's it's interesting because I think both of our fields, you know, social work and kind of business, HR it's really hard to translate those, you know, via the internet. They're just you know they're. There's so much about you know there's so much relationship based, but it's, it's definitely been a work in progress to try to switch gears. Now let's get back to our previous conversation



Sebastian 09:51

With, you know, virtual everything why I mean you already sort of explained this, but why specifically sort of Illinois or I guess how do you see how that relates to other social work programs?



Abby 10:04

Yeah, I think just because, you know, they, they did offer that pivot option so you could do both. Also just, you know, I think Illinois is very well established they're very well regarded in the community and I think there's, you know a lot of opportunity for growth and I think

they have a really good standing, I'm from Springfield so you know it's it's a little bit further away but it's still, you know, kind of the connections reach over really well, so I felt like I would be in a really great position to get an internship and got the job after I graduated.

S

Sebastian 10:46

Yeah, I think I chose Illinois, like there was an option of several three I think for at least LER which is the School of Labor and Employment Relations, which is where I study HR there compete with, you know, two other schools for sort of that top place every year and Illinois was luckily one of them having gone to undergrad here, but I think sort of the research behind. You know, the professors that exist in teach at LER, but also in the psychology department where a lot of that Organizational Behavior arm comes in as well you have faculty from there. So I always thought, you know, you know, given that I was going to go into a PhD the research side of it was extremely important to me so I wanted that to be top notch and I think LER or Illinois in general is a great, great place for that and then I was really not happy but it was a silver lining, I guess, to see the Illinois is their testing culture and the availability of tests that we have become very happy to be on campus to just have access to that because I think it's like one of the safest places in the US to be.

A

Abby 11:52

I think also the commitment to diversity you know our campus is extremely diverse and so, like you said, that's been, you know, a really big quality of social work so I wanted to go somewhere that valued that as well.

S

Sebastian 12:05

And where are you, like, along in your research?

A

Abby 12:08

So, yeah, I'm in my last semester of kind of the class portion, and I'll take the summer off, and then I just will have my internship in fall and spring so I will graduate next May of, 2022, so. Almost there I can see the finish line. What about you?

S

Sebastian 12:30

Coming up, ours isn't research base there is a component where you can elect to have a

research base, I think. But my specific program isn't. And I'm on three semesters so I'm currently under semester two. And it's been going great. I think that the faculty has navigated how to do this very well so has the administration so other than just looking at zoom all day it's been it's been fantastic and I'm learning a ton.

A Abby 12:59
Zoom fatigue so you'll be, you'll be done in fall of 21?

S Sebastian 13:05
Yes So December, whatever whenever people graduate in December, I'll be in this sort of crew of December graduates provided everything goes smoothly.

A Abby 13:14
I know you never want to say, my husband the other day that I'm writing everything in my planner down in pencil.

S Sebastian 13:21
Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I stick to electronic now because I used to be a hardcore like a hardback book person and I'm like always crossing things out now.

A Abby 13:32
Canceled, canceled. Yeah.

S Sebastian 13:34
Yes. Well, I think we've reached a good point, and a conversation for now.

A Abby 13:40
Again, we would like to thank you for listening, and please be on the lookout for more graduate college podcasts in the future on our website and grad.illinois.edu, and until next time, I'm Abby,



Sebastian 13:51

And I'm Sebastian and you just listened to the Graduate College Podcast.