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*How did you choose CCSF and tell me about your background in HS (Lincoln High).*

*Why did you choose not to go to a four year school? Your high school background. How did you decide to go to CCSF from Lincoln.*

To be honest, in high school, I was not a good student at all. Barely graduated and that type of crowd, so I did not think about four-year university at all – until my senior year in high school when I realized, “Oh, people are going to college.” My parents hadn’t really given me much guidance. They’re first generation here and came over when they were 20 or something. No guidance at home, hung out with the bad crowd. I think it was a 2.0 at graduation when I graduated. I couldn’t even get into SFSU – which was easier to get into. So, CCSF was the next step, you know. I think that is a turning point in my education – when I realized that I have to try a little harder and figure out what I am doing. So, that’s how I know CCSF was for me – it’s near home, cheap and my only option.

*How did you feel upon entering CCSF and what was your first touchpoint? Did you see a counselor? Or did you just sign up for classes? Did you know what your path was going to be? Did you have any direction or idea at all when arrived at this large, large institution?*

I don’t think I had much direction the first year. I signed up for general education classes and I had a few business classes. I was kind of always naturally interested in business, so that is what I decided to pursue. But yeah, I don’t think I saw a counselor early on at all. So, it was a matter of just starting to take classes and figure out what I was interested in, which is how I ended up in your class (kakkle), and figure things out from there. It was useful having other friends around who were majoring in business and see what they were busy doing and what other schools had business majors – and not all of the UCs have business majors – just Berkeley and Irvine, I guess. So, I guess I just kind of followed [www.assist.org](http://www.assist.org) and word of mouth. Pretty much self-managed most of the time.

I was born and raised in CCSF, and I had a lot of friends who came from Lincoln and other local San Francisco high schools at CCSF. There are two crowds. There is the one crowd, my high school groups, that wasn’t very driven in education and those sort of things – and there are the others who also started ABG with me and they know

Jeff Wu is the one who came up to me and asked me if I wanted to start ABG – he came from Lincoln and was doing really good already back then and wanted to go to CCSF for two years to get into an even better UC. I learned a lot from him about navigating the application and college process and what to look out for.

Was he your mentor?

Unofficially, he and a few other peers who knew what they were doing in terms of how to get into a UC, what classes to take and what to look out for and study buddies. So, I hung out with them a lot studying nights and weekends and starting clubs, getting involved and doing things I just hadn’t thought about doing in high school. That was the turning point – knowing how to join/start clubs and study well -- I joined the other club first – AGS – the community service one – just to get involved and see what other people were doing – and essentially, that is when I figured things out.

*Did you ever visit the transfer center?*

I’ve been to the counselor once or twice, but that was more toward the middle or end of my time at CCSF. I was not part of the honors program.

*What was the experience like at CCSF in terms of community and classroom environment?*

Obviously vs. a four-year, the biggest difference was the class size. I actually told a friend of mine that I have a college professor coming to visit me and she said, “Oh, UC Davis or community college?” At a four-year university you never know your professors. I actually changed my major to OB because I didn’t like economics – and at Davis, some of those classes were a little bit smaller with one-on-one but in terms of community, going from HS, you’re surrounded by friends all of the time, but going to CC was hard, because everyone takes all these classes

It was hard to be a part of a community unless you actually seek it – a good amount aren’t, they just go to class, study and go on their way. You see people during passing, but you actually do not see them all of the time, so I don’t – it was hard to become part of a community unless you actually seek it – such as starting and joining clubs and creating study sessions with other people. I knew Jeff and big group of other people from high school, and actually I studied a lot with him because I can’t study at home. It was the first time I joined a club and met random people, and it was the first time I socialized with other “groups” if you will. If you’re not seeking it, a good amount of people just go to class and then go home, and it’s not really there unless you seek it.

I did absolutely nothing in high school – no sports, no extracurriculars . I did not study at all. I just got by. So, I didn’t discover any of that until community college. College was the first time I joined a club and met random people.

*So, what changed? Did CCSF seem like a new chapter, or did you have the perception that it would be an extension of high school?*

It was a new chapter – in high school I just got in trouble a lot, and I even got arrested once, so that was the turning point (shoplifting). I wasn’t a bad kid. I just hung out with a bad crowd and didn’t have the proper motivation or guidance – and just didn’t know what to do. I just floated a lot. Community college was my second chance to turn things around. I discovered studying my senior year of high school – like, “hey, if I read this book, I can actually get an A.” So, that kind of carried over to CCSF. I still wasn’t a perfect student, but I was a 3.3 or 3.4 when I transferred over to Davis, which was significantly higher than high school.

*What was your experience like at CCSF in terms of professors?*

I mean there are both sides of it – those who are way more connected to their students like you and Dennis Mullen – involved and care for you. And there are some that are also “in and out.” There were both, but that comes with any school. The professors and resources are there, but only if you seek it – you have to want to seek it out.

*What was it like at Davis as a transfer student as compared to the folks who had been there for a few years?*

The biggest part from CCSF to Davis was the semester vs. quarter. Pace as one factor, and difficulty and a harder level. Davis was definitely harder. And then the third item, I was also pledging my fraternity of my first quarter and everything stacked on top of each other, so I definitely didn’t do as well as I would have like my first quarter. In terms of comparing a person coming in from a two-year university to someone who can in from the start, you miss out on the excitement of the freshman experience, including the dorm. They might not know what they’re doing the first year, and so you miss out on that “real” college experience. In community college, people come in and out there’s no real formal plan. It felt like an extension of… the mentality was like an extension of high school… same classes, lunch, and the social aspect actually went down – so it was harder in terms of the social aspect.

I only had two years at Davis, so I definitely made the best out of it. I didn’t do any transfer programs dorm or anything like that, only because it wasn’t a very nice apartment, so I lived in an apartment. I did do the business fraternity though – and I met other likeminded people who were pursuing business and kind of those endeavors in the future.

What were your interests while at Davis in terms of classes? At CCSF, I was more interested in general business and at Davis, there wasn’t a formal business program – the closest thing was managerial economics and business economics – so I did that for a quarter or two, but I am just not that good at math and quantitative economics in general, so I just didn’t do well. I wasn’t very “businessy” in mind at that point. It was different than what I originally thought or wanted, so organizational behavior was another option for me. It was definitely more of the liberal arts and less quantitative aspect, but I ended up in a business and tech function, which I developed an interest in at the end of my college career – just tech in general.

*How did you develop your interest in tech while still in college and how did you pursue your first job in tech?*

I think just technology was always an interest of mine. I was always a first adopter like MySpace and with mobile phones, I was always the first and at the forefront with my friends. And also just joining that business fraternity it was nice to see what other people were interested in – some were interested in finance, some were interested in tech and you see what other jobs people are applying to and what majors they were interested in just kind of gives you a bigger sense of what’s out there.

Recruitment presence wasn’t super big at Davis, but none of them are companies that you would line up for – not like the ones at Berkeley – the Googles and Facebooks of the world – a lot of random company names, so my first experience getting a job or internship was after my junior year, I had a small entry level internship position. Morgan Stanley had a program where they had 100 people come in. It was a classroom setting internship kind of not like a typical internship – summer in Sacramento. A good name for the resume, but it wasn’t like doing any crazy financial analysis or investing. It was more a classroom type of setting. It was unpaid.

The downfall of coming from a two year university, you’re slower at the game of getting job and internship experience. I feel like if you’re at a four-year university, you start a little bit earlier. Coming in from a two-year university, not many people seek out internships, so I feel like they’re a little bit more behind than those at a four-year. There was a career center which I did not take advantage of. I did go to a few recruitment events just to check out and see what was there, but I didn’t go to a counselor or anything. The business fraternity I joined helped with that a lot – workshops and prep workshops and that was another resource, I guess.

Did you think you would enter the field of finance after Morgan Stanley?

Definitely no! My second internship was after I graduated. I didn’t have that much internship experience in general. In early college I worked at an after school program so it was totally irrelevant, so I tried getting a full time job lined up before I graduated, during my senior year of college, but it was also very hard, so I was open to internship opportunities. I did that for six months at Radium One as a Business Development intern while living at home, so the easy foot in the door for me while living in SF (paid intern), not a full time, 6 month program. It was an online advertising company so my job was to go out there and look for new data partnerships or online publisher partnerships to work with us and help show our advertising, essentially. So that was my foot in the advertising technology space. I got converted to full time there in like two years.

What made you decide to transition away from Radium One?

The company wasn’t doing that great, and I was a little bored and wasn’t learning too much anymore, which is when I started passively looking. I came across the role at Oracle and this one presented itself. It was a natural stepping stone in the advertising technology space and also business development, so it was the next level up from my previous role. I was still doing something similar, but it was on a higher level, more strategic point of view. I have been at Oracle for about two years now. I definitely would not have gotten this as my first job. When this job listing was posted, it asked for 5-7 years of experience and at the time I only had two, but while at Radium One, my BD experience was similar to what they were seeking here, that even though I didn’t have the years of experience, they were willing to make an exception and train me up there. I came in at the right time as they were in desperate need of someone.

While you were a student, could you have anticipated what it would be like to work for a big company?

Back at City College, I would not have imagined that I’d work at such a big, well-known established company like Oracle. Back at CCSF and high school, I don’t think I would ever have imagined that I’d be sitting here right now. In high school, I never thought about it and my first year at City College was more focused on transferring to a good school or decent school moreso than thinking about career at that point.

*Can you think of any skills or what you took away from your City College experience? Friendships?  
Or would you say that what brought you here today was more a result of an accumulation of other types of experiences?*

In terms of classroom education, not so much. I think what was most memorable about CCSF was just having that second chance of figuring out -- working hard, studying hard does kind of pay back – there are rewards -- working hard does payoff. That’s when I actually started working hard and studying and locking myself in libraries for finals and things like that.

*What was most memorable about City College?*

City College for me personally, was not so much the classroom education – obviously general education courses and business classes tailor to everybody’s needs. But for me personally, learning that working hard does pay off and that’s essentially when I began to study, push myself, branch out to create new clubs and getting involved in extracurricular activities and really trying to utilize the resources that were in front of me.

Where do you see yourself after two years here, where do you think this experience might take you? In two years, I will probably still be here. I definitely don’t want to be here…. I don’t shouldn’t say it too loud… for life. Speaking of. I am currently transitioning to another role internally to focus on our international efforts --- still the same broader business development. The opportunity came up BD efforts and data partnerships for advertising and marketers solutions – what were essentially doing is providing data for marketers to target advertisements. So, if you see ads online sometimes you may wonder, “Oh, why am I seeing these ads for shoes sometimes that I did not decide to buy?” People give us that data – so, we use data to target ads. It is distracting and sometimes can get creepy. The idea of it is to tailor the ad to you. All of the ads online, we power and get them out there. In my new role, I would be doing the same thing but focus on Asia region, Latin America to do the same thing there that we did here. Those markets are a little bit behind the U.S. and UK, so we are kind of trying to bring our efforts there. Bring data to markets and advertisers who want relevant advertisements, essentially.

We provide the technology to serve these ads and there are the agencies that work with these types of technology partners to serve these ads for their brands and marketer clients like Verizons and Disneys of the world – so people kind of jump back and forth between advertisers and technology partners.

As you, as an Asian American, do you feel like you fit into the culture and the environment? Is there diversity as an Asian man?

Hmmmm. It has not been a problem – I think being in SF and the Bay Area, it’s very diverse. Our San Francisco office has the most Asians, but our senior director is also Asian as well and it’s a pretty diverse team, so no problems here. Pretty good mix of males and females as well.

Is Oracle a young company? I forgot, but I remember seeing the statistics on this as compared to Google, Snapchat, Instagram – and the median age here is late 30s, and those companies are mid-20s.

In your new role, will you continue to contribute to a business unit in terms of revenue responsibilities? It is a team revenue we have to hit. Not a frontline salesperson – we do have to think about business as a partnership and where they are signing on and how we work without partners is a revenue share and if they don’t make money, then we don’t make money and if they’re not a good brand or someone that marketers are going to want to buy their data, then – my role is to get that data on to their platform.

My role is to kind of get that data onto our platform. Imagine an eBay marketplace for data where people can come in and buy and sell data for advertising purposes – so I am just trying to get more data and data inventory into the platform. We have sales people out there trying to sell this data.

I am definitely more in touch with the UC Davis people – many of whom moved to the Bay Area. The fraternity does a good job of facilitating keeping in touch not just with alumni and the people who are still in school, the undergrads, but I think people just hang out more in general.

Did you know there was a career center while at CCSF? Yes, I did. I just not take advantage of it.

That’s the thing with me too – no one really speaks about all of the CCSF resources. When I got there, I just took random classes and follow IGETC. I could see how some people might say, “I am going to take these random classes” and find out later a semester or two later that it is a complete waste of time and doesn’t help them transfer somewhere.

I don’t remember seeing a counselor. I got out in three years, because I was still making up a lot of my English and math courses from high school. I never took the SATs – and I’m not sure how I would have performed. At the transfer orientation at UC Davis, you did have to do a sit down with a counselor to kind of figure out what classes you’re taking I think.

*So, you did a lot of that engineering on your own?* The takeaway is joining a club – for those who join a club – they’re actively seeking opportunities to push themselves and learn and to take away at CCSF that they didn’t’ know existed. I would not know that there are these opportunities—even at UC Davis, they can just fall into taking classes online and come out with a worst job as compared to someone who went to a CSU. You are one of the most successful CCSF alums to date and working for a corporation. In terms of corporate, a few of you have really climbed the quintessential corporate ladder. Yeah.