

VOICES OF EQUITY PODCAST

Episode 6 Season 1

STUDENT SENATE

FEMALE VOICE (singing): 0:00 We are the voices of equity podcast. We are the voices of equity podcast listen up ...ooh ... ooh...ooh...ooooh listen up.

MUSIC: 0:18 (Inaudible)

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 0:23 Thank you for joining us the Voices of Equity Podcasts at Lorain County Community College. We are your Co-hosts Denise Douglas...

KIONNA MACINTOSH PHARMS: 0:31 And Kionna Macintosh Pharms.

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 0:34 As the Co-chairs of the Equity for Students Team at LCCC, we are excited to share the work of this team, the voices of those who do this work, and the voices of the students who are the reason for our work. We continue to conduct our interviews remotely due to COVID-19 pandemic. Students at Lorain County Community College are primarily taking their courses online this Spring. Our guests today are the leadership team at Lorain County Community College's Student Senate.

KIONNA MACINTOSH PHARMS: 0:58 We are so happy that today's guests, Miss Zarai Aquino and Miss Danielle Pavilack are with us today. They were able to take time out of their busy schedule to join us. If you all wouldn't mind, if each of you could share your role in Student Senate and some of your background with our listeners.

Things like your year in school, your major, anything that would be pertinent to our listeners.

ZARAI AQUINO: 1:25 Hello, as Kionna introduced me, I am Zarai Aquino, and I am the current Student Senate President at Lorain County Community College. I'm currently in my third college year pursuing an Organizational Leadership Bachelor's through the Cleveland State University partnership.

DANIELLE PAVILACK: 1:42 And I am Danielle Pavilack. I just completed in May, my Associate of Arts and I begun my Associate of Human Services while I wait for the pandemic to end before I start my Bachelor's in Organizational Leadership. And as far as what year I'm in, I honestly couldn't tell you, because I'm a nontraditional student. I've been back and forth a couple of times. In the Student Senate, I am the Executive Secretary. So, I just keep documents of everything that we do through the years.

KIONNA MACINTOSH PHARMS: 2:16 Thank you both so much for sharing that information. And as you all know, with Student Senate being so close to my heart, I'd like to know what you do with your role within the Student Senate. To say what are you passionate about? What was your main reason for joining this particular group? With this group being leadership of the student body across campus. You are named Student Senate with a wonderful opportunity. So, what do you do within the Student Senate?

ZARAI AQUINO: 2:53 What drew me to the Student Senate was the desire to have my voice heard and to make change in my community by proposing projects like sidewalks around campus. That was my main thing that I wanted to introduce to the Senate because I live close by and I don't have a reliable vehicle. So, I would have to walk on campus rain or shine or during snow. And there was just no secure pedestrian pathways to campus. I would either have to walk straight through the snow and come to class with wet shoes. And I wanted to tell that because through that I

met other students how to do that as well. I wanted to get that project going and I knew that Student Senate would be the right pathway and platform to do that on. The project has not been completed. It went to the back burner because of Covid. And into that I wanted to make a change in my community by hosting student community building events and representing students' voices and assisting them in being heard. That's what drew me to Student Senate.

DANIELLE PAVILACK: 4:01 What drew me to Student Senate was knowing all the struggles and I went through both as a freshman college student and returning as a nontraditional student. I wanted to become like a liaison for the students to help connect them to campus services, community resources, and help speak out for them to realize that they too can have success and help.

MUSIC: 4:23 (INAUDIBLE)

KIONNA MACINTOSH PHARMS: 4:30 Well, I'm very happy to hear those aspects. And it was various things that you need to this day I still say that I need advocacy and that's what I'm hearing from your description. So, thank you for sharing that information.

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 4:44 You mentioned Covid pandemic Zarai already, but I would like to hear from both of you. How has Covid impacted you personally as well as how has it impacted the work that you're doing on the Student Senate?

ZARAI AQUINO: 4:57 Covid has personally impacted me in regard to academic growth because I am a hands-on visual learner. And I enjoy in person classes because I can learn from my peers to as well as classmates through course collaborations genuine conversations about the student experience. However, Covid has rid me of that privilege and has been a challenge to keep me motivated and feel that the new college experience is worth it. But my professors and classmates have

worked hard to power through that and keep each other supported through it all. So, Covid has impacted my work in the Student Senate by ridding all in person meetings for students to come and enjoy food and LCCC merch freebies in addition to prizes. And playing games and feel connected with the Student Senate and the fellow student community. Now everything is online, and although we are trying our hardest to keep events happening, students are experiencing high levels of screen burnout and are just not interested in attending another virtual meeting or event.

DANIELLE PAVILACK: 6:04 And I would say definitely ditto about COVID-19 has affected Student Senate work. As far as how COVID-19 affected me personally, it has delayed my bachelor's degree start because there's classes that I need to take before I begin. And I need those classes in person. I attempted them on online and it did not go well. A positive way that it has affected me though it has allowed me to sit at home and focus on personal development and self-care. Which is definitely been great for me and my mental health.

KIONNA MACINTOSH PHARMS: 6:36 Those are very passionate and very deep answers also catalyst to the questions were asked, answered earlier in terms of what was happening; about what drew you to Student Senate. Because it certainly is more personal circumstances that you did outline that is going to help you answer the next question. How will the work of Student Senate change after the pandemic? Especially based off of your own experiences. How do you see Student Senate differing after the pandemic?

ZARAI AQUINO: 7:15 As of right now we're trying our best to get through this semester and we simply don't know what the future will look like for the Student Senate, because right now we were ahead on our events for the semester. Everything's online although, we're documenting everything in detail as best as we can for future senators. We just hope that they will be able to learn from us and come up with creative ways and more effective ways to get the students involved with us. And hear their voices, hear their concerns, and help them feel connected and valued as a student

on campus. Because that's another reason why I wanted to join Student Senate, because I wanted to bridge that communication between the students and the faculty on campus. Because as a student worker for two years, and a student, I saw that need, I saw that, and I wanted to help as best as I could.

DANIELLE PAVILACK: 8:16 And what I'm hoping comes from the pandemic and how Student Senate are doing things now, I'm hoping that it will reach more of our students are not at the main campus. So, in the end, I really hope that no students at the different learning centers, students who continue to do their degree strictly online, early college; everybody has a bigger awareness of Student Senate. What we do in our events, as well as that we now have alternative ways to hosting these events to be included.

MUSIC: 8:48 (INAUDIBLE)

KIONNA MACINTOSH PHARMS: 8:54 I hear in your voices that you know; you know you are very much entrenched with what's happening around campus. Under the lens of equity, we often talk about a sense of belonging. And I think that you all are sharing with us today are good examples of how you're helping Lorain County Community Colleges' students understand that they do belong here. Despite where they come from, despite their circumstances, and despite what's going on in society.

MUSIC: 9:24 (INAUDIBLE)

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 9:29 Bringing the difference in concerns and issues as well as your own presence on campus really advances equity for us. But I do have a specific question for you about the equity goals of the Student Senate. Could you share with us what those may be?

ZARAI AQUINO: 9:45 I'm actually glad to say that this semester, I am seeing this particular goal flourish and hopefully by the end it will continue

