



**Season 8, Episode 2: Student Immersion and Leadership**

**Host:** ESF President Joanie Mahoney

**Guest:** Eden Gardner + Bailey Cunha-Bustamante

[MUSIC]

**Eden**

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**Bailey**

Time is this weird little construct where it can always feel like there's not enough of it, but that's something you have to kind of grab a hold of it and make it work for you. If you don't make the time to relax, to take care of yourself, you're not going to be able to do all the things that we do for this campus.

**Eden**

Value the relationships that you have and to really cherish the friends that you make here.

**Bailey**

I'm here now and my life is incredible, and I get to be involved at one of the probably best colleges in the world, in my opinion. Like, I think this place is incredible.

**Joanie**

Welcome back to season eight of Campus Conversations, the podcast. I'm Joanie Mahoney, and I have the honor of serving as SUNY ESF president. This season, we're working to explore the engagement of our ESF community across all facets of academic life, and especially if it means we get to talk to our phenomenal students. So, I'm honored to welcome two outstanding student leaders today, Eden Gardner and Bailey Cunha-Bustamante.

Eden and Bailey have elevated the work of the mighty Oaks Student Assembly, serving as president and Vice President this year. And I'm excited to welcome you both. And I think a college like ESF, I get to work with students more closely than maybe some of my counterparts that are at enormous institutions. So, I have been at events with both of you multiple times and been in conversations with you. And it's one of the things that I really love about ESF.

So, Bailey, I want to start with you. What was your path here to us at ESF?

**Bailey**

My path to ESF was kind of strange. So, I grew up in California. I didn't even know about the SUNY system until I was like 19 years old. And when I was applying to colleges, I have family here, and they've spent my entire life trying to beg my mother to come back to New York. And that didn't work.

So then they saw me as an opportunity, and my uncle reached out and he was like, you should look at New York schools. You should look at the SUNY system. If you come out here, you can stay with me. It'll be great. And so I literally went on the SUNY website, and I searched all of the colleges by the major that I wanted, which is biochemistry. And ESF was one of the ones that came up. And even though I applied to a few other schools in the SUNY system, I knew right away that this was where I wanted to go.

**Joanie**

That's fantastic. It's always good for us to hear how students find us. What part of California did you grow up in?

**Bailey**

I'm from wine country, so like the Sonoma Napa Valley, about an hour north of San Francisco.

**Joanie**

And when you came out, did you in fact stay with family?

**Bailey**

I did, yeah. So, I moved here a year before I started at ESF so I could get in-state tuition. And I said, my mother and I moved together and we got an apartment near the rest of my family, and we spent the whole year just kind of hanging out. And I got the chance to get to know them, because living across the country, you don't build those relationships as much when you're going up.

**Joanie**

That's a fantastic story. And your mom came to. So, a win for us, a win for your family and I would imagine that you think a win for you because your involvement has been so deep and so broad here at the college. I hope you've had a wonderful experience.

**Bailey**

Oh definitely coming to ESF is the best thing that I've ever done. This is the greatest home that I've ever had.

**Joanie**

Oh, that is so nice to hear. And are you still a biochemistry major?

**Bailey**

Yes, I am.

**Joanie**

And what year are you?

**Bailey**

I am a junior. I'll be graduating in May of 2026.

**Joanie**

Good. So we'll see you more around campus. Eden, on the other hand, is about to graduate, right?

**Eden**

Yeah, almost out the door. I still don't know how to feel about it.

**Joanie**

You are a New York resident. I know you are from a little bit more down state. What was your path here to ESF.

**Eden**

Similarly nontraditional. Coming out of high school I was going to go to the University of Hawaii. That was my I was dead set on it like we had paid the tuition deposit. We are all set. Flights were booked. I graduated right around the end of Covid and 2021. And right around that time, due to Covid, both my parents lost their jobs and the University of Hawaii is, a couple thousand miles away, very expensive tuition and would be out of state.

So we made a last minute switch to say, okay, let's let's kind of think about this again. The only school that was still sending me emails to apply, like, hey, come here wasn't SUNY ESF, it was SUNY Maritime.

And that was in June, I think, of 2021. I really didn't want to take a gap year or, you know, I didn't really have any job prospects. I said, okay, I'll just go here for a year if I really have to get my general education credits and figure it out from there.

And right around that time, one of my best friends from high school and now here at ESF, Quinn was back in the city on fall break, and he was in the middle of his first semester at ESF, and he came down with a couple of his friends that he'd made, and he told me, hey, let's go out for brunch, and you can we can catch up and I'll tell you about the school that was when I first heard about SUNY ESF. It was just from texting my friend when we were both environmental science majors at our high school. And so we took a lot of the same environmentally focused classes. And so and I don't think I'll ever forget that brunch, like we just met up in the city, got good food, and I learned from three students from different majors at ESF, everything that they were doing, what the school was like, what the mission of it was, the fact that it had environmental in the name was amazing to me, and I was kicking myself for not having heard about it before.

And what I also realized at that time is you don't have to wait a full academic year to transfer. You can do it on a semester-by-semester basis, which was huge for me. And so it was the only school that I applied to transfer to after my first semester of college. And my plan was to either get into ESF and I'll go and I'll keep doing college or I'll I don't know if you've seen the movie or read the book Into the Wild, but like Devin Supertramp,

**Joanie**

That was plan B.

**Eden**

Yeah, I would just kind of jump ship. But that didn't happen. I got in and I have not looked back since.

**Joanie**

That's fantastic. And that is yet another in a long list of examples that I especially want to point out to young people. It's only in hindsight that you see the benefit of a time in your life that was difficult, and for you to have Covid and have your parents go through this transition with work, and then you change your plans and then be able to look back and say, I ended up at this place.

That was perfect for me, and those are my words, because you just seem like the poster child for ESF. I mean, your academic performance is outstanding. The extracurricular activity president of your class, it's amazing that you came in as a transfer at all, because it's hard sometimes for transfers to find their feet. And I'm glad that we are the kind of place that we help transfer students do that.

**Eden**

Yeah, and I will say that when I first transferred in that the process wasn't as smooth. It was also in the, you know, post-Covid transitional period. And that's something we've worked with a lot in student government over the last 3 or 4 years to try and improve some of those systems and voice some of the concerns that even I felt.

Like I when I first got here, I wasn't in the Syracuse system. Like, I guess for listeners out there who aren't super familiar with our I.T services, we get two emails. We have the Syracuse and an ESF email account. And for some reason, when I first got there, they didn't talk to each other.

So every time I needed to access the Syracuse service, I had to go, wait wait, wait, wait, hold on, I swear I go here, just let me in. It's in there. Like, okay, like I'm trying to fix it. Now pull up my, was it like the orange helpdesk emails being like, see, look, I emailed them and we're trying to figure it out.

**Joanie**

Interesting. And I know you've played a big part in their conversation about why students have to have SYR.Edu and esf.edu, and I think that a few years ago we thought we were going to be able to fix that. But with what's happened with computer security, it's become more and more and more difficult to integrate.

So, our students, I would say, have to put up with that. But the upside is this wonderful partnership that we have with Syracuse University and your access to Syracuse University in your time here as an ESF student.

So Eden is transitioning out. You have a couple really big jobs left as president of the class, but we're in the midst of elections while we're recording this. And Bailey, you are a candidate for president, right?

**Bailey**

As I am.

**Joanie**

What has that experience been like?

**Bailey**

It's been really exciting because when Eden and I ran last year, we were unopposed. There was no competition. No matter what we were going to win. So, the stakes weren't as high. And this time around, there are two excellent qualified tickets. We'll have great candidates and it's made for a really fun week. I feel like students have been engaging with us.

They've been voting. They're we're already at over 25% voter turnout. About 400 students have voted. And we're both going out and campaigning. And every single person we talk to, we go, have you voted yet? And the answer is yes. Wow. And that's just such a wonderful thing to see, is to see so many people engaging with MOSA and knowing what we do and what we are, and caring about it.

**Joanie**

Well, so you're almost a victim of your own success. Yeah, because you've done such a great job, you and Ethan and the rest of your team elevating MOSA that now there is this interest. And so you've bought yourself some opponents because you've just made it such a big and very relevant organization on campus.

**Bailey**

And I'm very glad we've done that.

**Joanie**

Yeah. That's great. What kind of change have you seen in the time that you've been involved in Mosa? I know that in some of your predecessors defense, Covid had a lot to do with it. But the rebrand to OSA and then just a lot of legwork on your part to get activities that students want to participate in. And what have you seen happen at MOSA in your time here?

**Eden**

When I first joined, I remember the first meeting that I went to was in the basement of Moon Library, and I think it was moon 19. If you've ever been in that classroom, it's just a small classroom. There were 11 people there. It was my first meeting. Yet somehow I was going in as the vice president because there just wasn't a vice president over Covid.

Student government at ESF shrunk down to four members, and they would meet once a month to, you know, talk about what designed to make the new logo or just very inconsequential things, because it was all that they could do. And since then, you know, I think this year we meet quorum with around 60 voting members, and our meetings usually have 80 plus in attendance.

**Joanie**

Wow.

**Eden**

So just the organizational growth and therefore the required kind of management and infrastructural growth that that we've needed to see happen has been immense. And that's a big task because when you have so many more voices and so many more inputs on the way, things can go, all of a sudden the tree has a lot more branches and there are a lot of different ways things can happen.

So that's been really fun. And it's been a learning process. Just trying to process that and trying to work through some of these kinks as we go. It hasn't been easy and it hasn't been perfect, and we've made mistakes along the way. But ultimately, I think the student voice is much better served now than it was, you know, even a year ago, just in terms of the amount of reach we have into

different arms of the campus, whether it's meeting with the student affairs staff or different academic departments.

**Joanie**

You and I meet.

**Eden**

Yeah, yeah. Or me and the president, Joanie Mahoney, meeting once a month to talk about all sorts of cool things. And we're lucky to have such an engaged and active student body. Weirdly, I think SUNY ESF might be the only school where a student can do this, but I have been a part of three different student governments in my time here.

At one point it was all concurrently. It is it is no longer so. And held leadership positions and all of those student governments and I've seen a lot of the same kind of mismanagement issues and difficulties, scheduling difficulties, getting people on the same page and what I wanted to do is take everything that I've seen done well, everything that I have, you know, since and less than well, and bring all of that knowledge back and make sure that MOSA, the Mighty Oaks Student Assembly here at ESF is the most active, most perfect student government it can be. And that's been extremely fun.

**Joanie**

And it's really amazing to watch. I'm sure you've heard this before, but can you imagine what it would be like if our local, state and federal governments operated the way MOSA does and had the civic engagement with the number of students that you said have already voted and slates of great candidates.

I'm hoping that this will translate into more of that civic engagement on the outside. For people who have gone through this process at ESF. So I'm I'm curious with all of the things that you're doing, what do you do to relax?

**Bailey**

Yeah, I mean, I think it's so important to make time. Time is this weird little construct where it can always feel like there's not enough of it, but that's something you have to kind of grab a hold of it and make it work for you. If you don't make the time to relax, to take care of yourself, you're not going to be able to do all the things that we do for this campus.

So I find myself I have kind of specific times that I know that I have space to either play guitar or I like to read every night before bed just to kind of calm down and get away for a minute and there's some times where you feel like you have all of this stuff going on, but then it'll takes a lot less time than you thought it would, and suddenly you have like 15 or 20 extra minutes that you would plan

to be doing homework, and you have to seize those chances and check out for a minute and go for a walk.

Or I like to sit. We have this chair in the office. It's the Office of Student Success and Engagement, but it's also the office where the MOSA president and the Graduate Student Association presidents spend their time. And I brought in this really comfy chair that used to be in my apartment that had enough space for when I moved. And we keep it in one of the cubicles and it's the nap office. Now, sometimes it's nice just to kind of lay down there. Somebody brought in blankets and pillows and just kind of take a break.

**Joanie**

I did not know that. See the things I learned talking to students. And I appreciate that reading. I personally find that reading is one of the activities that I can do that makes me more present. You know, you're not able to read and worry and think about all the things on your to do list.

How about you Eden?

**Eden**

Yeah, ESF definitely is an academically challenging school, especially with my major. As as being an environmental studies student, all of my classes have, you know, 40 or 50 page readings that, that, that I need to get through. And it's oftentimes very technical reading. So getting that more escapist side of things. I'm a huge sci fi fantasy nerd.

**Joanie**

I don't know if I've ever done that. I didn't know that.

**Eden**

But like George R.R. Martin, Brandon Sanderson, Patrick Rothfuss, Scott Lynch. All of these very escapist, you know, dragons and mystical towers novels I love. And the thing that sucks about being a senior at ESF is it's right when you find out where all the best nap spots are on campus is when you graduate. So like that, that couch came into our office like that start of the semester.

**Bailey**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Eden**

And I love it. And it's now graduating. And then also to point Bailey, I think ESF is a really musical school just by nature. It's weird. We're very I mean, we're a STEM school, but we're maybe one of the most artsy Stem schools out there. I live in a house with four roommates, and two of them are



guitarists. One of them's a drummer and one I have a bass. I just kind of like, give one of them the bass, and then we go and sit on the porch when it's nice out and play music, and we can do that for us all it 3 or 4 hours until our hands get sore.

**Joanie**

That's great.

**Eden**

It's fun.

**Joanie**

I do think that goes together doesn't it. STEM and music and art. I think you'll find that a lot of scientists have that music talent you know.

**Eden**

Yeah I think people just want to exercise their brains as much as possible. And at ESF we've got some strong brains.

**Joanie**

Absolutely. You have to have done really well in high school and you have to have taken really difficult classes because we have some pretty strict credentials that we look for to come here. So you must have been not only good students in terms of earning good grades, but you must have really pushed the envelope in terms of the schedules you put together and the classes that you were taking in high school.

Do you think that that prepared you for ESF? Because I do think ESF, I know ESF is academically rigorous. I think students are sometimes surprised. But because you had to take those classes in high school, the math, the science, and get really good grades. I mean, it's a long time since I've been in high school, but I know by senior year students were taking a lot of electives. You guys weren't able to do that, right? So do you feel like you were prepared with your high school experience for what ESF is?

**Eden**

I feel so. Again, I graduated during Covid. The entirety of my of my, you know, end of senior year was online as actually the last year and a half of of my high school career was online. And a lot of things definitely fell through the cracks there. Like, I don't know if you've ever tried to take AP calculus through a laptop, but,

**Joanie**

I have not.

**Eden**

It's rough. But I think ESF does a good job of creating those support systems. I had a lot of good support systems between my friends and professors that I would talk to when I first got here. That helped me get up to speed on the things that I needed to be caught up to speed with. And yeah, I do think the technical stem nature of my high school, it was kind of a very ESF experience that that led me into it.

**Joanie**

What was the name of your high school?

**Eden**

I went to Brooklyn Technical High School. It's the biggest high school in the country by student population. That's one of seven specialized high schools in New York City. It's a weird system in New York City where even though it's a public school, you have to take a test to get in. And there's, you know, certain thresholds, for admittance.

So definitely another academically rigorous and challenging school. But, yeah, it was a good experience.

**Joanie**

How about you, Bailey? Do you feel like being, educated in high school in California? Were you ready or what ESF is, especially that first semester, freshman year?

**Bailey**

I think I was ready in all regards except for math. Because I also, you were a junior when Covid started. Yeah, yeah. So we were graduating high school at the same time. I took pre-calculus as a senior in high school completely online. Did not learn a thing. And then I came here to ESF and because I'm a biochemistry major, the first thing I was supposed to take was science and engineering calculus.

And I dropped out of it. In like a month, I had to go back and retake the pre-calc. But I made it through all of the calculus classes, and I ended up loving it. And we have this incredible math center here with all of these. Actually, one of the math center tutors that I used to go to all the time as one of his roommates, and there's like two guys that just kind of got me through that course of classes, and.

**Joanie**

It's fantastic. How, how do we do as an institution in accommodating a student that maybe needs to brush up on math? Did we offer the pre-calc?

**Bailey**

Yeah.

**Joanie**

The convenient time. And then we have the tutors available to you. Is it your experience that most of our students avail themselves of the Student Success Center when they need it, or use our tutoring?

**Bailey**

I think so, I think more students should be using it. I think there's still maybe this stigma maybe about needing help, needing to go get tutoring, but I think that any good student knows when hey, I maybe don't understand this as well as I could, so I might as well go find out if somebody can explain it to me better.

**Joanie**

Right. Because it's probably a lot of high school students who didn't use tutors in high school. But I have advised my own kids about the value of tutors in college, and I think they found the same thing that it's you get a much deeper understanding. You get that one on one attention.

**Bailey**

Totally.

**Joanie**

So I have a couple more questions for you. One is if you could go back to that 17 year old self. I know you said you were 19 when you heard about ESF from your uncle, but if you could go back, what advice would you be giving yourself?

**Bailey**

That's a really tough one. I feel like when I was in the midst of it and the gap year and everything that came before my time here, I feel like there were so many things that I wish I had done differently. But at this point, I'm here now and my life is incredible and I get to be involved at one of the probably best colleges in the world, in my opinion.

**Joanie**

My opinion too.

**Bailey**

Like, I think this place is incredible.

**Joanie**

Yeah.

**Bailey**

I think that I would have told myself to just stress out a little bit less. I was always worried about because I, I got in when I was a senior, but then I deferred for a year and I was always freaking out about, what if I don't get back in? What if something goes wrong? Should I be taking classes at like a community college right now?

Should I not be taking classes? Will I ruin my chances of getting back in if I do badly in the classes? And I was just overthinking every step of the way and at the end of the day, like I got here.

**Joanie**

Yeah, it worked out. And you're thriving. So yeah. That's great. How about you? What would you go back and tell your younger self?

**Eden**

Oh boy, so many things.

I think one of the biggest things and it's, it's very much an intangible that I've learned in the last four years here is to value the relationship that you have and to really cherish the friends that you make here. I'm someone who, when I'm going to get really introspective here. I moved around a lot growing up, and so I think I missed out on a lot of those potential, like lifelong friendships. Like, I get really jealous when people say like, oh yeah, I met my best friend when we were four in preschool. And then we're, you know, tied at the hip now. And I think that left me with a kind of lack of understanding of, you know, I can't find the right word here, like people permanence if you're thinking about it that way.

And that that's caused me to, you know, just not value some of the relationships that I've had here with friends and professors and, you know, all of that sort of stuff.

And it's definitely something I've worked on over the last, you know, 2 or 3 years especially. And, and that's something I wish I had started doing sooner. So if I, you know, eating fresh out of high school could talk to him, I would say, you know, just try and make as many friends as possible and

generally be a good person and foster those relationships as much as possible, which is, I think, something everyone can take a page out of.

**Joanie**

Absolutely. I would say my experience was the opposite. I grew up here in Syracuse and then attended Syracuse University, and my high school friends were around, so I stayed real tight with my high school friends and didn't avail myself, really, of those opportunities to create those deep friendships because I didn't need to, right? I mean, I had friends and I had, you know, people to go out with, and we had a lot of fun.

But when it came time to those hours long hanging out like you described, I was always, you know, able to fall back into that group and they're still my friends today. And I'm very yeah. And I am very happy about that. So I guess we could all sort of take a page out of Bailey's. Just go. Just don't stress out about it as much.

Right. And I think at, at such a young age, for you to realize that is great because I have the wisdom of looking back a lot more years than you. And you see these patterns and like, you know, I said to you, Eden, there's a lot of times of adversity and then you realize, oh, something really good came of that.

And when you see that, then those moments of adversity aren't so troubling to you because you just think, I just got to keep doing my best. I'll get through this. We'll look back and something good will have come of this.

So, you know what I think you two are in a perfect position to answer for me is what is it about ESF? Bailey, you just said you think it's one of the best colleges anywhere. Can you put in words what makes ESF, ESF?

**Bailey**

I think it must start with the vision of ESF. I think we all come here because we want to improve our world, because we care about the environment and social justice. So I think having one unifying goal in our lives brings us together. But there's also something really special about the way we interact. And I don't know if it can be fully explained by our values or if it's something about the culture that brings it out in us, because I've been involved at ESF and I've been involved at Syracuse University, and while Syracuse University is a very fine institution, I've been in rooms full of students where nobody's interacting because we don't know each other.

And then I'm imagining if I was at ESF right now, even if we didn't know each other, we would all be talking. We would all be bonding. There would be something to bring us together. And I've never found that in any other environment. Something about ESF, just the second you step on campus. We're a family and it shows in the ways that we engage with every single student, even the ones that we've maybe only talked to one time.

And it just I think about it a lot because I'm not graduating quite as soon as years, but even a year from now, I can't imagine stepping out into the world and leaving this behind. And I know that my biggest goal is when I move forward into the world to try to bring whatever special magic is at ESF and put it in other community spaces and try to create this community in other places, because I don't know what I would do without it.

**Joanie**

Oh, that is that is wonderful. You did a great job explaining ESF. And everybody says it's the students. I hope that when I look down the road in five years, that our alumni association is as active and robust because all of you do stay involved at ESF.

How about you? Do you want to take a stab at that question?

**Eden**

I mean, Bailey here.

**Joanie**

She did.

**Eden**

Like I feel like I'm not even needed here. I think just the. Idea of everyone at ESF having that common throughline of we are here to save the environment. I like to think of everyone at ESF as an empath, like we all just kind of feel for each other, and we all understand what each other going through, kind of even without verbal communication. And that immediately makes everyone, you know, just on the same page when it comes to how we interact with the world and how we conceptualize things and through what lens we talk about things when we're talking in class or talking outside of class.

You know, having everyone at a school united for one common purpose is something that you just don't get. If you go to, you know, X, Y, Z State School or even like some poly technical school, it's just a very unique thing that makes ESF, ESF.

**Joanie**

I hope I maybe can use your words going forward, because when I get to talk to accepted students, I try to say that. But I think you've both said it really well. And that unifying mission of improving our world. I've said to families, whether you're in the library or at a table, having lunch or in class, you're among people that get you and that you will get and that you have this common purpose.

I, I don't know of another institution anywhere where these like minded, idealistic, brilliant people come together.

When Chancellor King was asking some of the senior staff that same question about what makes ESF, ESF, everybody talked about the students. And what I tried to say to him. As you know, Chancellor, when you're out in your daily life and you're just kind of going through your very hectic schedule, occasionally you'll run into someone that you'll think that is like the best person, like they you know what I mean?

I said, that's how all of our students are. They're the best people. They're the kind of people that you're going to want in your life, and you're going to want in leadership positions in this country going forward.

So that's my next question is, is that going to translate? Do you think, given where we are politically and the division and the fact that every level of government could benefit from the mentality of the ESF students, do you think that students, people your age are going to be willing to throw their hat in the ring and get involved in politics outside of school?

#### **Eden**

I would be lying if I said I don't have a little bit of trepidation about it. We are in scary times. There's no way to avoid the elephant in the room. But I was so I I'm in an environmental economics class right now. And yesterday we had a presentation from an NPS candidate here at ESF. And he is someone who's getting like his second NPS. He's had, you know, he'd been a geologist for 40 years. He's in a very experience person in the field. And he described these different eras of the environment and how we can interact within the United States to where, you know, we'd be industrial, post-industrial, Love Canal in the 70s and the modern era, for lack of a better term now.

And I asked him, do you think we're entering a new era with the new administration, with, you know, all these threats to the EPA in the DEC and local and state and federal systems? And he said, you know, I've been around for a long time. I've seen a lot of presidential administrations come and go from Kennedy up until now.

And he was very firmly of the belief that the course is going to right itself, and we're going to get back on track when it comes to these things, because, you know, all those EPA employees are just going to get rehired in four years, and we're going to be back to business as usual.

And so hearing that from an ESF student, albeit a very experienced ESF student, is very reassuring to hear. And I've heard a lot of common or similar things from different people in different fields.

Another one was so I was speaking to, a friend, Eddie, who has graduated from ESF, I think, in 2021. He's a lawyer for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. And I asked him, like, you know, how are you feeling? Are you worried about your job security with all these threats to environmental law?

And he said, no, if anything, we're going to need more environmental lawyers now than ever, because we're going to face so many more threats to the laws that that help us do our jobs. And we need to file the lawsuits to do the litigation and to advocate for ourselves. So if anything, that it's more job security.

So ultimately, I think students are going to get in there. They're going to do the good work. That's why we graduate some 300, 400 students every year that go out into the workforce. And even if they, you know, aren't specifically advocating or doing advocacy work, it's evident in everything that they do produce as future employees and as future professionals.

**Joanie**

But, you know, and I appreciate that perspective. And I'm really I'm also very optimistic. We've been around a long time But you can almost instantly change the narrative with a handful of like minded people in the US Congress.

You know, one of the big frustrations is that Congress is kind of abdicating its responsibility right now, but with very few I mean, the division is so close right now that with very few smart, committed people with integrity willing to speak truth to power, get into the Congress. You can instantly change the narrative because there is a lot of power in that branch of government. And that's why I have this. Just hope that our students are going to do that. And just across this country, wherever our ESF students land, that they will play that role with civic responsibility.

I've had the benefit of being involved in politics, and I get why people aren't attracted to it. But you can't just sit it out because that's how we get where we are. And when you talked about the number of students Bailey, that are voting, it really makes me hopeful, because I do think that more and more and more people being involved, even if all they're doing is voting, is going to change things.

**Eden**

If I can say, I think one of the challenges when it comes to that and just like getting our foot in the door in terms of changing the political spectrum, is that at ESF, we very much learn and think about the way that the world should be, and it all kind of makes sense to us, like, let's change this, let's change this.

But learning how to play the political game is, you know, it's an entire college degree and it of itself. And so there's, there's a, a gap between the people who are, you know, first and being able to make the change. And people that know what the change that needs to be made is in the first place. And I think that's another thing that, you know, at least my major we try and do is kind of bridge that gap and bring the change makers with the people who know and are experiencing the changes that need to be made, together into the same room and say, figure it out. Let's all figure it out together.



**Joanie**

So you know what I want to do? I want MOSA to allow me some time on one of your meeting agendas, to bring the people who are on the Board of elections in our community and just get into the real nuts and bolts of how you get involved in politics. Like, what is the process for passing petitions? How do you even who even creates the petitions. Right.

I mean these simple things that if someone tells you no longer are barriers, but there's a few of them. And if you didn't grow up around it as you just said, you know, it's not something that's just innate. But I would love for someone to come in and just tell all of our students on an annual basis, this is who you should call in your community, who's the counterpart in your community, and these are the steps that you would take to get your name on a ballot. And then you're off and running.

I think that if we get people that are in it for the right reasons involved, you'll start seeing people be better trained and understand that whole process. But I, if most of once, I would love to just come and say, here's how to get involved, because your smarts and your idealism and your integrity matched up with how do you get on a ballot could be really powerful.

**Eden**

Yeah. And there's a really similar analog, I think, to the operations within MOSA that last year we didn't have a board of elections. That that was part of the organizational growth of coming out of Covid. Is figuring out how do we run a proper election, especially if it's going to be contested. I'm sure you can talk to this more than I do, because you actually helped write the election codes, right?

**Bailey**

Yeah. I joined when I was a sophomore and I was reading the bylaws. I've always been a big fan of the bylaws. Which is good, because that's the vice president's job. But I very quickly realized we didn't have any. Like, there were things in the bylaws where this is how we'll run an election. This is who's in charge of it. But it fell to the communications officer, and it wasn't very fleshed out. And it wasn't really a problem because at the time there weren't contested elections. But I knew that we were growing and that at some point that would change and we would need a structure to handle that.

So I got together with one of the other senators, and we just kind of worked with a couple people. We talked to Eden, we talked to Silas Cochran, who was the president before Eden, and we wrote the election codes, and we created the Board of Elections and the position for the chair. And we have that this year. And that's awesome, because our chair of the Board of Elections Everett Tucker has been making sure everything goes smoothly, communicating all the candidates, keeping an eye on the numbers as they go up and down when people vote. And that wouldn't have been possible.

**Joanie**

Bailey, thank you for doing that. Anybody who's listening to this is going to be so helpful. The fact that you did that, that you actually read the bylaws and participated in a process to make them work so that this contested election can go the way it's going. It's incredible. And that is what the world needs. So don't stop and please don't stop.

So I know your answer to this question about what's next is senior year here, Eden. What's next for you?

**Eden**

Oh, boy.

**Joanie**

No stress. I'm sorry.

**Eden**

Yeah. No, it's been something I've been thinking about a lot lately as I kind of transition into the next step. I know that law school is somewhere down the line to me. And you and I have talked about this before. I've co-founded with my friend Maia, a pre-law society at ESF last semester. And that's been an amazing learning experience, you know, talking to all these different lawyers, learning about these cool, different topics.

The other thing that I've been thinking about is I've worked in the Office of Sustainability at ESF for the last two years, and they have done an amazing job, prepared me well for the future of whatever my life ends up being. And I it's I kind of liken it to them putting me on a slingshot towards the moon and just kind of saying, you know, to go off and do it.

However, I had an interview yesterday for an internship position with the International Well Built Institute, which I'm sure was.

**Joanie**

Yes. Our board member, Rick Fedricci, is involved. And you can tell people what that organization is.

**Eden**

Yeah, they basically just try and make built and designed human spaces as beneficial and as healthy as possible. What well focuses on specifically is the human and mental health side of things. So making sure that, you know, lighting fixture fixtures aren't too bright, that there are too many distracting noises, and that spaces are designed ergonomically and, accessibly.

**Joanie**

Air quality's good.

**Eden**

Air quality is good. Yeah, all of that sort of stuff. And I think it's a very important organization with a very important mission. And I was asked in that interview, like, why are you applying for this? Like, what do you want to get out of an internship experience or a job? Or what do you want to get out of your career? And I really have to pause and think about it.

And I said, I responded, I want to do work that I think matters, and that will make the world a better place. And I think, again, that goes back to the through line of students at ESF, is we all want to do work that matters and that will improve our world, both locally and globally. Just the mission of the entire college.

**Joanie**

That's amazing.

**Eden**

And I think this is an organization that that does that to the fullest extent.

**Joanie**

Now that my attention has been drawn to the Well Built Institute. I see it in other cities when I'm walking into a building, I'll see the seal on the building that says that it's certified by, well, building. It is for the inside of buildings, what the green building and Leed certification is for the outside of the buildings. Yeah. How I think about it.

**Eden**

I, this is I think last summer Rick and I got coffee. So Rick, super impressive individual founded the US Green Buildings Council. He's been on the board of trustees at ESF for a number of years, and he's just a friend to the entire campus as a whole. And I got coffee with him in the Gateway Center, which is a Leed platinum building. It's one of the assets, you know, bright, shining stars in terms of what we want to show off to our students. And he sat down and he, you know, he saw a cart rolling by, with, you know, some catered food. It was like, you know, they designed the wheels on that or to be quieter, to be made of rubber instead of plastic. Then students that are in here studying or just trying to get some, some mental space for themselves would be able to do that so much better. And, you know, if if these curtains were drawn and in just a slightly different way, there wouldn't be light reflecting into the eyes of students and people eating here.

And it really opened my eyes to those little subtle design changes that that can be made that matters so, so, so much. Like if you get a lamp that doesn't have that kind of like a little ring in your ears, that makes a world of difference. If you're, you know, spending hours and hours, as a lot of our students do in the library every single day,

**Joanie**

That's great.

**Eden**

I can't remember where I was going with that.

**Joanie**

Let me just say that if I was interviewing you, I would have said, right, there you go, you got the job. So, but I, I predict really great things for you in law school. You described your undergraduate program as having to read 30, 40 pages. That's pretty much what law school is, right? That's a lot of reading.

It's a lot of conversation. And I predict that you will do really well with that. And I appreciate on a personal level that, you know, you're here at ESF, starting the the pre-law society. And then my son is in law school starting the Environmental Law Association over there. So the two of you have had conversations, and I really appreciate that kind of cross-pollination with, a lawyer wanting to be more environmentally friendly and an environmental student wanting to understand the law. So yeah, that's been great. And yeah, I really appreciate that.

So this has been wonderful. This is one of my favorite podcast is when I get to stop and talk to students. I talked to Silas. Was that only a year ago? Seems like a long time ago. I wished them the best.

And Eden, I wish you all the best. I hope you're back a lot. Please don't be a stranger.

And, Bailey, I will look for you on campus and look forward to working with you more next year. So thanks for stopping in your busy days and taking time to talk to us.

**Bailey**

Thank you for having us.

**Eden**

Thank you.

[MUSIC]