

EXTRA CREDIT

A SUMMER & WINTER SESSIONS PODCAST

Season 2, Episode 4 Transcript

[00:00:00] Introduction: Welcome to Extra Credit, hosted by the Rutgers University Office of Summer and Winter sessions. Listen to hear from students as they share their experiences at Rutgers and some tips on how to navigate a condensed semester. Also gain the perspective of professors and learn more about the courses they teach.

[00:00:21] Sammi: Welcome back to another episode of Extra Credit. Thanks for joining us this week, we have a fantastic student. Can you please introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about yourself?

[00:00:32] Nashmah Mamoon: Hi, my name is Nashmah Mamoon. I'm a sophomore currently at Rutgers University - New Brunswick and hoping to major in Cell Bio and Neuroscience on the pre-med track. So hopefully become a doctor one day. Um, and in my free time, I love to read and draw. And I have a pet duck, so.

[00:00:54] Sammi: Oh, that's awesome. So, you started at Rutgers in 2020, correct?

[00:00:59] Nashmah Mamoon: Correct.

[00:01:00] Sammi: And how has starting college during the pandemic?

[00:01:03] Nashmah Mamoon: Um, it was tough, but I like, I was already looking forward to it because I had already spent one whole year online plus previously senior year. So, I was looking forward to being back on campus, um, which like if you're looking forward to it, that makes it much easier because you're excited about it.

It was pretty tough. All classes were online, uh, really hard to join extracurriculars because Zoom fatigue is real. And, um, but I hope that now that I am back on campus, I can take advantage of all the things I missed out on the whole of last year, uh, including like extracurriculars that I wanted to join and just like meeting professors, people in person. I haven't see people in so long.

[00:01:50] Sammi: There's so much that you can do on campus, so I'm sure that, you know, it's a great transition to be back on campus. And I'm sure you're gonna make the most out of your time now. Are there any like extracurriculars that you're like thinking about, you know, wanting to join or interested in?

[00:02:04] Nashmah Mamoon: It's only been one month in-person and like, there, it's already so much more different, but. Uh, I'm currently treasurer for Dental Knights Association. And then I want to join a clubs that pertain to my major, but also my interest, so thinking of joining the Cell Bio Neuroscience

Society. And then I also want to join clubs like Bengali Student's Association, because I am interested in my cultural background.

[00:02:30] Sammi: That's awesome. That's really awesome. So how's the transition been from moving, you know, on campus and being able to be in class with your peers?

[00:02:38] Nashmah Mamoon: It was very interesting because again, I hadn't, I didn't, seen people in this format for a year now and like, I forgot how to work in groups, like do worksheets together, take tests in-person... that was so weird, like. And also when it was online, everything was open note, which is slightly easier. But no, I'm glad it's in-person now. And, um, moving in, like it was like, I was a little anxious at first, but now that I'm situated, it's so much fun, just walking around campus, seeing. And Rutgers is huge. There's so much to do, so much to see.

[00:03:17] Sammi: How have you liked the New Brunswick campus so far? Is there any places that you really enjoy going or studying?

[00:03:23] Nashmah Mamoon: Like I, I've come to love this campus, and I'm glad I live here compared to the other campuses because there's so much going on here, so many events every day. Um, everything is within walking distance and I really liked the city vibe. So, and I'd say my favorite place to study is the library. The library is huge and it just, it looks so nice. Like, I can't explain. It's like very pristine. Um, yeah.

[00:03:49] Sammi: Yeah, I mean, it's a great place to study. All right, so what is your favorite thing about college so far?

[00:03:56] Nashmah Mamoon: Oh, what a great question. Um, it's only been one month, but I, okay. I guess. Favorite part would be meeting new people. I don't know if that's cliché, but you like, you're always meeting new people, especially at Rutgers, because again, Rutgers is huge and so many people go here. And like every day, I get on the bus, I never see the same people twice, unless I purposely meet up with them. That's what I like. And it's much easier to find people with similar interests to you, much different than high school. And I say that because, the last memories I've had are of high school, cause I just started college in-person and I don't count the online semester.

[00:04:41] Sammi: Yeah. Right. I'm sure it's like so great to just, I mean like I know from me coming from my small town and into the huge place of Rutgers, sometimes it kind of felt overwhelming, but I'm sure it is even more overwhelming right now, moving from like online to in-person trying to like navigate, you know, being a sophomore, right.

[00:05:00] Nashmah Mamoon: Right. Like I still, sometimes I, like, catch myself, I'm about to- someone asks and I'm about to say I'm a freshman, like, no, I'm not a freshman, but I feel like a freshman, because this is what I expected my first year to be like.

[00:05:12] Sammi: Yeah, of course. Well, I'm so glad that you're now getting the college experience. So you mentioned that Cell Bio and Neuroscience on the pre-med track are most likely going to be your major when you declare, but could you walk me through how you decided on them?

[00:05:27] Nashmah Mamoon: Okay. So actually, I, it was because of a summer class, Summer Session that I chose my major. Um, I came into Rutgers like just, um, I didn't declare obviously, but I was hoping to do Biochemistry. So I just, I, I couldn't take those specific classes until later on. So I was just taking

pre-req classes freshman year. And then, um, when the offer for summer classes came up at the end of freshman year, I was like, I don't know what this is about, but maybe I can take a class and see what it's like. So I just like, I chose Fundamentals of Cell and Developmental Biology. I don't know the reasoning behind it. I just decided like, let me just see what this is like.

I took it, I loved it. I feel like a nerd saying this, but Cell Biology is my favorite subject now. I, I loved it so much and that, and that kind of, I'm glad I did that because that made me switch to considering a Cell Bio Neuroscience major. And, um, hopefully as I take more major specific classes in the future semesters, I can declare it.

[00:06:36] Sammi: Well, I love that. I love that you were able to take a summer course and kind of just fall in love with something that you weren't expecting. I think that's the beauty of summer courses sometimes because you kind of go out of your comfort zone and then stumble into something great.

[00:06:50] Nashmah Mamoon: Yeah, I agree. And I was not expecting it at all. The favorite part about my summer class was also the professor who taught it because he was just so interested in the subject. And like, I dunno, I really- I think he was also a reason I enjoyed the class very much. And, uh, I would suggest taking a summer class, cause sometimes the professors you see in the summer, like you don't see them on a season during the school year. So there's like that too.

[00:07:16] Sammi: Yeah, and I'm sure that that's part of the reason... sometimes teachers have such an impact on how you think about something that you didn't, you know, didn't do. And you said that this class became like, you know, revolutionary for your career, you know, where you want it to go. So maybe it was his passion that kind of got you even more interested in a subject.

[00:07:33] Nashmah Mamoon: Yeah, exactly. And it was interesting to see that because he, he said he was teaching it in the summer because during the normal school year, he can't teach because he goes back to India to, um, work on his research, which is like in the Cell Biology field. So I like, if I didn't have a summer, if I didn't take the summer class, I may have never met him, may have never known that.

[00:07:57] Sammi: That, I mean, that was a great opportunity for you then. How was it taking an accelerated course? Obviously you've taken online courses before and you were able to manage that. But how was it taking, you know, a six week course, you know, in compared to a 15 week course?

[00:08:12] Nashmah Mamoon: For summer classes, like the one I took, I actually, I'm glad it was online that so I can do it from the comfort of my home. And it was, it was fast-track as my professor would always remind us, but I think it's easier than a 15 week course because you're not just slogging through it, just waiting for the semester to end. Um, and like it, um, I could live from the comfort of my home and I'm sure like people that live out of state, it would be so tough to just travel back just for the summer.

So I think that was probably why I liked it even though. Um, the 15 week semester was kind of tough. I think having it shorter period of time allowed you to do something you're interested in, but at a more accelerated rate. And you know, it didn't seem like boring. You just had to get through it to get to the end.

[00:09:06] Sammi: Yeah, I'm sure. Cause you have, you know, a lot of work, but it's, it's manageable, right. Because you're just taking, I mean, you just took one course, correct?

[00:09:13] Nashmah Mamoon: Right and yeah, like about that, you, um, you could just devote all your time to that, whereas during the regular semester, like yeah, you have more time, but it's also a lot more classes, so you have to figure out, um, what requires more attention at the moment. But in the summer, like, even though it's shorter, you can spend more time, like every day was Cell Biology for me. But I did not mind that at all.

[00:09:40] Sammi: Can you give advice to any future Summer or Winter Session students about an accelerated course?

[00:09:47] Nashmah Mamoon: I would tell them, definitely do it. If you have the time to like, if you're willing to devote your break to doing that. I would say like, but make sure if you do decide to, um, be prepared and know that it is going to be very fast, as you said, accelerated earlier. So always stay on top of things. Try not to procrastinate. I did procrastinate a lot, but I tried to keep that to a minimum during the summer. But, yeah. And also I would suggest like doing classes that maybe fit your core or classes that you are interested in, that you might not have had the time for during the regular school year. So that.. Like use it as an opportunity to explore. Just so you don't risk yourself during the regular school year. During the normal school year, you, uh, you take classes that, you know, you have to take and you want to do well in them, but, um, during the summer or the winter like that, I think that's more time to explore. And like, you don't have to worry about, oh shoot, I have a midterm tomorrow. I can't give enough time to this class.

[00:10:59] Sammi: I'm sure that's how you really got into just like really being interested in Cell Biology.

[00:11:04] Nashmah Mamoon: Yeah, probably because I'm just wondering if I took that during the school year... like would I have liked it as much, I'm not sure.

[00:11:12] Sammi: What made you go into more STEM fields versus, you know, humanities? Like what, I guess, did you have anything in high school that you really, like impacted you or in your personal life?

[00:11:22] Nashmah Mamoon: Yeah, definitely high school. And my parents are both in the STEM field, my dad's a chemist and my mom's a dentist in her country. I think that influenced me, like I would go with them to work sometimes. And I dunno, I just, in high school, I ended up taking mostly science classes as well, and they just seem more appealing and fulfilling to me than like English. Like I loved English and History, but it just, I couldn't see myself going into a career in other fields. Like I don't, I don't know if it would have been as fulfilling for me or some.. Like I said, I saw other subjects more as like something fun, like something I could do on the side. I could relax with.

[00:12:03] Sammi: That's great though, that you have like this personal connection to STEM and everything.

So, last question. What is your RU Bucket List or RUcket list for, you know, being on campus? You know, things that students at Rutgers have always done that you just haven't gotten to do since you're new to campus and you really want to.

[00:12:24] Nashmah Mamoon: Trying new food places and restaurants, and also not only making friends, making best friends, that will be sustained after college as well. I wanted to try Surreal Creamery cause that- everyone says good things about it and it looks so nice if you've seen their Instagram pictures, like the boba tea and then the ice cream on top, it looks soo good. Um, and I actually tried that

two days ago, so already checked one thing off. I saw Passion Puddle, cause I don't have classes on Cook/Douglass, like as the bus was passing it, that was when I saw Passion Puddle. I do intend to go back. So I, like it's so cool going to Rutgers. Rutgers has everything, like you just think of it, they will definitely have it. Yeah, especially College Ave, because it has more of the city feel to it. Um, like there's so much to do.

[00:13:19] Sammi: Yeah. That is extremely true. Well, I am so excited to hear that you are making Rutgers your home and that you're enjoying your experience even after such an unusual introduction to college life. I hope the rest of your experience at Rutgers is just as great. And I thank you again for joining us for this episode of Extra Credit.

So yeah, I really hope that you'll join us for another accelerated course in the winter or the summer. And I hope you have a great rest of the semester.

[00:13:54] Nashmah Mamoon: Yeah, thank you so much for inviting me to this. I really enjoyed sitting down to talk about my experiences because I did enjoy, um, the summer class I took and it's nice to like, let everyone else know about that as well.

[00:14:07] Outro: Thanks for listening. And we'll catch you next time on Extra Credit.