Joel Ramirez: Good afternoon everyone. How's it going today?

Audience: Good.

Joel Ramirez: Good. My name is Joel Ramirez. I work here in the Wildcat Leadership Center as part of Student Life and Leadership. I am the Assistant Coordinator for Student Organizations and Leadership Education. I'll be sharing this out of the classroom into a job. How involvement impacts your student life presentation with Art Cox from the Career Center. We will be splitting time. I'll get started and then I'll hand it off to him, you know finish it off strong.

So before I get started some of you got these nice hand fans that you can, you know breeze your way if it's a little warm in here. But they are also a yes or no paddle. It's our way to engage the audience. We use it with students all the time. We can ask a simple question. You know is it warm in here? You can just go ahead and pop those up, yes or no. Any yes or no question that I ask just you know please entertain me and go ahead and show the yes or the no, it's a good one. And if you're feeling a little, I threw you a curveball and you couldn't really know just go ahead and show me something in the middle, wave it around, whatever you like. Get creative with these. Feel free to have fun. You know before I get started off, I always love to get started by sharing. One I am an alumni, I went here to Chico State. I actually haven't left since the very first day that I moved in. I been here, I got my master's here, and I started working here. And I absolutely love it. Yes or no, how many alumni's do we have in the crowd? Alright a couple. Alright hey I got to ask that one more time. I only got a couple participants. Alright I got to warm up a little. Alright yes or no, any alumni's?
Good alright mostly no’s but we got a couple yes. I love to see fellow Chico State alum’s come back and share your student with us. But the reason I haven’t left is because everything I can talk to you about today is how important that involvement was to me. How it got me to where I am today. How I am successful because of the time that I spent outside of the classroom. All of my involvement opportunities. My ability to get a job here at Chico State. I truly didn’t find myself here at Chico State, you know find my sense of community, find you know like I was going to really belong here until I started working the second semester. And I started being a referee for basketball intramurals and I will explain a little bit about what that is. And it was absolutely what was my opportunity to start meeting other people and what really started opening doors for me. And that is what I want for your student. That is the common interest that you and I have and so many staff members here at Chico State have is that I want your student to be as successful, more successful than I ever was here at Chico State. Because the opportunities that exist here, there are so many in the classroom, out of the classroom for your student to be successful. And that is what I want. And you know I can throw out my title but really what I say is just I am a connections coach to your student. And I hope that you can consider that. Consider me that to your student because I will never turn down any of your student’s if you send them my way. I will, if I don’t have the resource, if I don’t have the opportunity, I’ll make sure to find it for them.
Joel Ramirez: So to get started is why should I encourage my student to become involved? You know what benefits exist by having my student be involved? And the first one we start off with is academic success. What we find so often, what I see you know year, semester after semester is the students that become involved, the students that have a plate that is manageable and balanced, and that will be different for every one of your students. Some students will dive in week one, they will be looking for everything. Some of them may already be looking for different positions and jobs here at Chico. And then some of them you know it's normal to take that first semester, maybe that first year and really try to find themselves like I spoke about earlier. But busy students are academically successful by putting a manageable workload on their plate it teaches them a lot of different transferable skills. Those skills that they use in the moment and can transfer into different positions, it can transfer into anything that they're doing. By having a full course load a full you know college load than they can really start you know learning organization. They can you know start prioritizing their tasks. They will start to look at their day and say, “Well I'm going to be on campus from 8 AM till 2 PM I know I want to go to the gym somewhere in there. So I know between six and nine I really have to study. That's what I have to do”. And when they start prioritizing those tasks and managing their time those are the skills that we want them to learn. Those are the skills that hopefully they already have now or can develop. That's what’s great about that academic success in becoming involved.

The second point that we go to is that transition piece. And we should not forget what we are asking a 17, 18-year-old student to do. That transition piece is it can be difficult. Yes or no your you know could have some concern about your student and transition that they might face here at Chico State. Mostly yes. That's a normal concern to have. Absolutely. They're leaving your support, they're leaving all of their friends, they're leaving a familiar area, a familiar environment. And that can be really difficult. And you may get that phone
call that says “Hey Chico State is not really what I imagined it to be. Chico State is not like it is back home”. And that is when you tell them “Hey it’s been one day give it a chance. Give it a little more opportunity and see what happens”.

Audience Member: What do we give them three days?

Joel Ramirez: Right. Where do you draw the line, right? The community can help so much with that transition. The community is everything that you do back home. You have a community back home whether it be your church group, whether it be you volunteering, whether it be you getting together with your work friends. Those are, that's your community that you’re building. And that's what we hope and we offer to your student here at Chico State. We offer them the opportunity to start building that community. Within those first three weeks of before classes even get started we are going to offer so many different opportunities. So many different events for them to meet other people. Anything from a movie out on the lawn to an involvement fair with over 125 student organizations all you know pleading them hey join our student organization because I know if you don't join mine you're probably going to join some other. And that will be so important. So many of those different events all for them to build community.

And you know the last point that I will cover is the career success. Yes or no, you do hiring in your current position of work? And when you do that hiring and you take a look at that resume I'm sure the only thing you're looking for is not hey that they have a degree. Now that's great you're hired, ends there. And so often that is not where it ends. All the time that is not where it ends. That is at simply where it starts. You look at that and then you start to see what other experiences they had. What else did you do? Were you, do you have a certain amount of volunteer hours? Did you help after class with one of your
professors? Did you know get involve highly with a student organization? What leadership experience do you have? All of those come usually outside of the classroom. And that career success is so important that we see the students that simply hang out here in this Wildcat Leadership Center those are the students that maybe it's because I have interaction with them day-to-day but those are the students that I see successful. What I see you know rarely but I do see happen and I don't want it for your students is every once in a while we will have a senior walk in here a couple weeks from graduation just be like what is this place. Where am I? This is the Wildcat Leadership Center? And they haven't found us yet. And we do as much as we can to get in front of them and tell them about all these opportunities that exist but a couple slip through the cracks. And that's how you can help us. Because when you get that phone call that says “Hey Chico is not really what I expected it to be”. That is your great opportunity to say “Hey have you visited the Wildcat Leadership Center, have you met your R.A, have you visited that young handsome young man in the Wildcat Leadership Center to help you get involved”. So a lot of opportunities exist for them.
Joel Ramirez: What may happen if my student doesn’t become involved? You know we have all seen this phase from very young. The first one being is you know I talked about boredom. It likely will sound as “Hey there is not much to do here in Chico”. Look for those red flags and start asking questions. Start asking questions of them like “Hey what are you doing with your free time. You know have you met you know your neighbors, have you gone and introduced yourself to anybody? I hear there’s a lot of events on campus, have you checked any of those out?” To try to get them away from that boredom will be really important. And we will be doing the same.

I talked about that senior, those missed opportunities are so important. We want to make sure that your student was academics absolutely make sure that they are being successful on that. But like I just mentioned they may be missing opportunities outside of the classroom. You know within every one of your students majors, degrees that they’re headed into they’re going to have 3, 5 different student organizations that they can join. And the great thing about those is that the professors are usually the advisors to those student organizations. And they just see those clubs as a learning opportunity outside of the classroom where they can teach them really what anything that they would like. Anything that the students would like. It’s a two-way road. And it's a great opportunity for them to become involved.

The third one is that homesickness. It ties into boredom, it ties into the what we talked about earlier about those phone calls. My main goal in everything that I do is to make sure that your student finds their community here. Chico has a great sense of community. We have a great campus, a great university, an even greater town where they can visit the park, great cycling, great running community, so many
different opportunities. I hit so, I talked so often about that 80 academic career organizations that we have here Chico State. But you know if they like fishing, if they like gaming, it doesn't always have to be those academic career student organizations. They can find hobbies here at Chico State and perhaps those hobbies are something that already existed in high school or you know college is a great time for them to see what else is out there. Explore what else they can become involved in.

And I will finish up with risky behavior. The thing about Chico State is we have this reputation. But what I will share is you know if I go back home and I'm looking for risky behavior I can find it. And if I go back to your community's I'm sure I can, if I'm looking for it I can find it there. And I'm sure I can find it at every other university here at Chico, at United States. My job, Art's job, anybody here at the Wildcat Leadership Center our main goal is to make sure that your student is headed towards a positive outlet, that positive future. And that goes back to how I describe myself as a connection is I'm going make sure that if they say “Hey you know I really enjoy interior design, that's something that I've always been passionate about”. That I get them connected with a student organization in interior design. If they say “Hey I played football in high school but there hasn't been too much for me, there's no football team here at Chico State”. Then we find other opportunities whether it be rugby, lacrosse so many other sports that are out there that exist.
Joel Ramirez: So what opportunities exist for your student to be involved here at Chico State? There are so many of them. And if I quantify all of these is that there's over 220 student organizations. There's about 12 to 15 intramurals that exist per semester and those are just Chico State students playing against other Chico State students here on campus. There's no practice, that's just me getting a group of friends and saying “Hey, Tuesday nights would you love to play flag football out on the stadium here against other students”. There are so many volunteering opportunities that happen between semesters. We have a cross-cultural leadership center for any students that just, how important is it for them. I talked about expanding their horizons and finding different opportunities. College is a great time to see whether it be study abroad or spending time here at Chico State to find other cultures and you know be able to talk about that once they go into the looking for a career.

19 competitive clubs that exist. Anything from baseball, rugby, wakeboard, waterski some of those sports are competing at division I level. The thing that I always loved to share is we are not beating UCLA or Stanford in basketball but we are beating them in wakeboard, waterski. We’re beating them in lacrosse, we’re beating them in rugby, you know golf. We have some very successful competitive clubs that exist here. And this is just a shutout to where I started. I started out in intramurals, I told that story as I started blowing my whistle and calling fouls and that's where I really found my place here at Chico State. And strangely enough that that's a student position that is within our department. So not only have I not left Chico State, but I never really left the department. So within all of these I would say there's over 400 opportunities for your student to become involved. There's something here for everyone. And if we don't
have that specific student organization for your student, we're always making new student organizations, we're always making. Each semester that number of student organizations seems to grow. We don't have fencing, I've had students come and say “Hey can I start a fencing club”, absolutely. But we don't have too many horse riding or anything, those type of student organizations. But we can always start. And it's really easy. And your student just comes to me and says “Hey I love to start that student organization”. And that's our first interaction usually that we have.

To wrap it up before I hand it over to Art is if I asked you, you asked me, if I asked your student to think back to high school. And thinking back to high school what your most memorable experience was. What do you most remember? I imagined it is probably not the time you were listening to a lecture, taking notes vigorously, or taking a test. That is not usually the memories that we have. The memories that we have are usually outside of the classroom, on the field, volunteering, with friends. So why don't we use that same model here at Chico State and make sure your student gets involved too. Alright we will have some time for questions but for now I'll hand it over to Art.
Art Cox: Thank you Joel. So if you can't tell there is some passionate people on campus. Have you ran into some passionate excited people? So hopefully you have a good feeling about your student coming here. I want to get that...

Audience: [inaudible]

Art Cox: Yes, you do. Thank you. I'm not as proficient at this as Joel is so bear with me. Let’s get this thought of the room. Some people may have mentioned this today but I kind of start off with this because it is the reality of this, of the situation. How many folks from Southern Cal? And then the Bay Area? Alright, let’s just call the Sacramento Valley all the way up to Redding from Stockton all the way up. Okay nice evenly split. A lot of people from Southern Cal, a lot of people from the Bay Area. So let's just say you're at work you're talking with your coworkers and you get to tell them where your students going to school. What's the first words that come out there mouth?

Audience Members: Party school!

Art Cox: Party school right. Okay so let’s start with that. San Diego State, they don’t party very much right? No. Santa Barbara? No party there either.

Audience Member: Let’s talk about USC.

Art Cox: USC. So I mean let's face it. I mean we have the reputation and I think that's kind of where I like to start with students when I work with them. I try to get them to
understand you know you can’t do a lot about what you can’t control. So I just try to get them in this mindset. Focus on what you can affect, right. So let’s just say they had a bad semester their freshman year. That happens to some students. So their GPA is what it is. So let’s focus on what we can affect. We can’t go back and redo that year but we can do some things to make a difference about how the outcome of their degree and their time here at Chico State is going to happen. So as a career advisor we get these kids to think differently about themselves and about what they’re doing here. And you know Cal Poly, my daughter just finished her first year at Cal Poly, god bless her. I tried to get her to stay here but she wanted to leave, the heat is what she wanted to leave. But their motto is, “Learned By Doing”. Good for them. I think ours is get involved, get a job. And at the end don’t we kind of want them to get a job, career, some sort of thing like that. Yes, yes indeed. Yes. Okay so that’s kind of what we do at the Career Center. We help them on this path, right. Some students have different paths to get there.
Art Cox: Like Joel he had a student appointed job on campus. Student employment, internships, career positions. We help them plan and get ready for those things okay. Some students do it in different ways. We also help them get involved and understand the major, the career choice, and some students go to grad school which is great. But along the way they’re making decisions and they’re trying to understand how, where am I going to go from here. What’s the next step? And sometimes their major, they picked the wrong one. My dad really wanted me to be an accountant because they make a lot of money but I hate accounting. So they come in and they talk to us about that. One of the things we do really well is we get to know our students that come to see us at the Career Center. And we can’t help market them. Really I feel like we are the marketing department. We can’t help market them if we don’t know get to know them. So we really try to get to know them and get to understand who they are and then we can help craft their marketing strategy. Resume, kind of a marketing piece. Isn't? Those of you that have hired you all said. Isn't kind of brochure on them? So teaching them how to describe their skills and express their skills, it’s a little tricky at first once but once start getting them into and understanding that. Yeah just because you haven’t worked in a while and maybe your last job was a, maybe you’re a lifeguard when you were in high school for the last two years. So your junior and senior year of high school you’re a lifeguard. A lot of times they will diminish that and they will say “Yeah I was just a lifeguard I don’t really have a lot of skills but I’m trying to get an internship in my major”. And I say “Okay let’s go back to the lifeguard job. You're only in charge of saving people’s lives. No big deal, right?”, “Well yeah, if you put it that way that's pretty important”. “And didn’t you have to take a CPR test, and didn't you have to have responsibilities, didn't you have to show up on time, did you have to train others?” “Oh yeah I trained lots of people”.

 Student Life and Leadership with the Career Center

Pathways to Success
And so then they start thinking about okay these are transferable skills I can express in my resume. And we start explaining to them how they can market themselves. And the next piece of the puzzle comes whether they market themselves for a student employment job, like getting a job as a ref. Or getting a job downtown at Jamba Juice. Or taking the next step in getting a job in an internship for example.

Internships are great. A lot of you come from the Southern Cal, Bay Area. There's a lot of opportunities for them to go home and work an internship. But they have to be savvy and crafty about how they do it and about how they go after that. And they can't come in here, two weeks, come into the Career Center two weeks before the end of the school year and expect to get their resume up to speed and get an internship. Because people are hiring sometimes six months before the summer starts for a summer internship. So if we can get students to understand that they have to start thinking about their future early, at least come talk to us about it. And come and talk about things that they like and enjoy. I mean I've had lots of mechanical engineers come in as a sophomore and they're saying “I've been applying since December and summers coming it's now April and I still don't have an opportunity in my field”. And they're worried about it. And I'm saying “Don't worry, how about get something that's close to your field. How about instead of looking for mechanical internships, why don't we look at some machine shops? And let's just be, maybe you can be just an apprentice in a machine shop instead of a mechanical engineering intern per se”. Depending on their experience they're not going to get one right away as a sophomore. So we try to get them to think a little bit differently, expand the horizon but learn to market themselves. Fair enough?
And I talk a lot about resumes because resumes is kind of the key point of where everything starts. So I didn't tell you about myself. I'm old, I feel old sometimes but these kids make me feel younger than I ever have been before. You know I graduated 1987 from Chico State with a degree in business option in marketing. And I got a chance to, I got my first job here at Chico State at the Career Center. I worked at this trucking company, its largest trucking company of the United States. Some of you may remember them called Roadway Express. At the time they were the largest. They bought Viking Freight, and they were huge, big and I learned how to be a manager in that job. And I got that job right here at the Career Center, I mean excuse me at the career fair which the Career Center puts on. And I never thought in a million years oh yeah my aspiration is to get a business and go to work for a trucking company. Awesome, right? But I did use the Career Center and they explained to me hey the skills you're going to learn there, you're going to be able to take those anywhere. And I said well I kind of like sales. The guy told me you should check that job out with Roadway, they'll start you off as a supervisor but if you're good you can get an option to maybe promote into sales. Sure enough two and a half years later I got three promotions, dispatcher, assisted dock supervisor, and the next thing I know I applied for the sales job and got it. Company car, company expense account, the whole 9 yards. I got to learn how to, I was in Sacramento and the big [inaudible] and I was calling on all kind companies from Stockton all the way up to Redding at that time. And that crafted my life. Three years out of college I knew what I wanted to do. And I never thought that was going to be the case. And it wouldn't have mattered, just so happens I was a marketing major and I did go into sales but how many of you go a degree that you're not really exactly using it specifically? You're in some other field. Okay so I try to let students know, yes the major you pick is very important but don't
let it define you. There are so many other things that you can do with your skill set as long as you're getting involved in campus and doing some other things. Even if you're delivering pizzas, maybe, some of us had to work. I had to work. I worked in an auto parts store. Those management skills I used at that auto parts store helped me get that job at roadway which helped me become a great manager there, a good manager decent I guess. And I got promoted to the sales job. All these pieces of the puzzle lead you there that's why we really, really encourage these students to get involved.

I had this one student she comes in she's just saying “I'm just not doing well in my classes. I'm not having a great time here. I'm a sophomore”. You can tell she came from a very well off place I mean by the time I saw her watch and the Coach bag and the Gucci watch. And I could see that she didn't have to work, she didn't really have to do much, she even told me that. And I said “You need to go out and do something on your own. Let me guess you never had a job”, she says no. So I said “The Pita Pit just opened this was four years ago I think, the Pita Pit downtown. I said I know they are hiring”, she goes, “I like that place, they're good, I like the food.” I said “Go there, let's work on your resume, let's get”. I taught her what to say, go in there, Chico is still a small town. You can walk in with your resume dressed nice, shake their hand and see what you can see. Lucky enough the supervisor was there. Sure enough, I mean two days later she came back. You would have thought she found a million dollars. She was so excited. To teach somebody how to go about doing that and then the next step. And she said, “But it seems weird if I get a job I'm going to have less time for school”, it's like no you're going to have less time to put things off. Now you're going to have to, you're going to learn how to manage your time. And now that your time is
limited you're not going to wait till the last minute to do your schoolwork you're going to do it early because you're going to have to work tonight or this afternoon. She goes, “Yeah that is exactly what is happening right now and I like it”. So I mean the person comes from a well off family, diversity goes both ways. Just because you come from a well off family doesn't mean things are easy. And you know if you're first generation you got challenges there too but we work with everybody to say the same exact thing. We're trying to let students know that the skills they develop here no matter what they are, are marketable. And there is transferable skills in everything we do.

Okay I spent a long time on this but I'm going to leave you with this one thing on the resume. If somebody tells me “Hey, I used to, all I did was run the cash register at the sandwich shop and I made sandwiches once in a while”. It's like okay great so handle cash and credit card transactions. They may say that in there bullet point yeah, right in there resume. So to an employer that tells me they can run a cash register. So if they are trying to get a job downtown at the hardware store, sounds good. But we need to teach them how to make things transferable and market their skills to another level if they're going for a maybe a higher-level internship or career style position right or the next level. So we just tell them. We teach them how to market that, “Hey how about trusted to handle cash and credit card transactions. Did that business owner trust you with their money?”, “Yeah”. “Did you take money from him? Did you embezzle from them?”, “No”. Then you can put that in your resume and then all of a sudden it's a different aspect. Your transfer ably making things, you're getting that vision. So the rest of the story is
Art Cox: all the involvement. There is the career fair, looked just like that when I was going and when I got my first job opportunity. Who can tell me who
Art Cox: this, there's a company doing a presentation in our Career Center. This was six months. Can you see the picture in there? Can you look real close? It's really hard to see, it's too, this screen isn't big enough. There's a hello there in the picture. And they were allowing me to take the picture. But that font is their very unique font. Apple. Apple has discovered us. Computer science for now. But you know it is encouraging to see companies like that come to Chico State. Now we aren't right down the street in San Jose State or anything like that but Google has been here recently.
Art Cox: We have events like the etiquette dinner. 250 seats here. We charge the students 10 bucks. You have got to have some skin in the game to get them to go. But they get to learn a lot different things about how to handle themselves at a professional dinner. These things are, there is a waiting list for this event. We get employer’s companies to sponsor the other half of the money so it's about a $45 dinner, we just charge the students 10 bucks.
Art Cox: Take a ways. Visit the Career Center early. I used to say if they can find you when they're a freshman, that's good. If they even know where the Career Center is as a freshman that's fine. I don't say that anymore, the market is to competitive now. They have got to come into the Career Center and get to know their advisor. We have seven advisors that do all aspects of, one specializes in teachers and liberal arts. I do engineering and business mostly in sales related business. So come in and at least just meet their advisor and talk about what their aspirations. Get involved. We just beat that to death but it's the truth, it's the character, it's the culture of Chico State to get involved. It will lead towards internships. Work experience whether they're delivering pizzas, working at the front desk of any of these offices here. There's jobs out there to be had. I got some flyers out there that will tell you every website on campus that your student can apply to, to look for jobs. Whether they have work-study or they have experience or no experience they can come to the Career Center and we will teach them how to apply to those jobs. And we are open all through the summer. Leadership positions. Getting involved in clubs. I don't care what club, obviously if they are a finance major maybe get involved in the finance clubs makes sense right. The engineering clubs, whatever. Whatever interest them get involved and then work their way up to a leadership position. That is the goal and that's what companies are looking for. GPA is not the first thing they're always looking for, it helps. But if you have, if there GPA is not as strong as they like it to be they got all these other things in there. It makes a huge difference. Positive track record of success
Art Cox: of course. These people have literally volunteered for us. They just come in and volunteer. We get them involved in setting up the career fair and then we show them how to market themselves on their resume on the experience they gained by doing this kind of work. Plus they need employers because they are helping the employer’s load of the buses.
Art Cox: This person. She’s from Oroville by the way. She got 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 job offers for this summer for internship. She couldn't decide between all of them really. But she went with Google. The reason is Google not only paid her a stipend for living expenses, they gave her the stipend and provide her an apartment which I didn't understand. They paid her to live plus they are paying her also to be a computer science intern for them.
Art Cox: She's very successful as you can see. Students go everywhere. We've got a lot of students. The thing about Chico State is weird. We do so many great things. There's a lot of great things. We've got a lot of great things, we're just not good at bragging about it. So you see us in a lot of cool companies. That the picture we took at workday, workday loves Chico grads. They are here all the time for all kinds of different disciplines. So can you guys say yes or no about you feel good about your student coming to Chico State. Not just because what I said, because of hopefully there’s a culture and a vibe you picked up on here. We're all very proud of this place. But we know if your student comes here they're going to be very marketable when they leave here. That's all I got. Yes!

Audience Member: Do all the internships run through the Career Center or another department?

Art Cox: Both. That's a great question. It depends on the major and it depends on what is going on. Sometimes professors will get wind of an internship and if we got them trained right they will funnel them through us and they will be part of the Jobcat database. On the flyer I am going to give you there's the Jobcat database's where all the jobs will be filtered through to. Sometimes companies will reach out to us or to a professor or somebody else on campus. We always try to encourage them to get that on the database so everybody can see it. Legally, ethically that's the way it should be. And that's why the Jobcat database is such an important piece of this puzzle. And I'm sorry I didn't point it out. I think it's actually right at the end there.
Art Cox: That's the link to go to our website which will take you to Jobcat database which is on that flyer. There's a flyer that tells you everything else that we do on there. Any other questions? Yes.

Audience Member: I noticed the young lady had 7 job offers, I'm guessing she had a high GPA.

Art Cox: 3.4

Audience Member: Oh really?

Art Cox: That's high for computer science here at Chico State. Chico State is a brutal computer science program.

Audience Member: I'm told that employers aren't supposed to ask or don't ask what kind of GPA they had in college. Is that true?

Art Cox: No not at all, they ask all the time. They'll say, the company I worked for when I was recruiting and hiring I would say “What's your GPA, what's your cumulative, what are you going to end up with?” And then I would say “Okay great send me a copy of your transcripts so I can verify what you just said”. Not that I didn't believe them but sometimes people extrapolate a little bit. And the products we were selling you couldn't extrapolate because if I just said “Oh we are going to sell you a hundred thousand dollar piece. Oh, you know, round it up, a million dollars whatever”. You had to be precise so we were looking for people that were very
precise. No GPA is a big piece but it doesn't have to be everything. If the student realizes that although it's, there is a balance on all of it.

Thanks so much for coming.

Audience Applause