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## Kelly Petrowski and Linda Tianze Zhang

IWU Council for Women  
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2017 Council for IWU Womens Summit: Kelly Petrowski and Linda Zhang

Kelly Petrowski: Linda? Okay. Linda, I'm Kelly. And you're a Political Science major?

Linda Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: That's great.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: Should we go through the questions...or

Zhang: Sure.

Petrowski: Are you involved in a lot of stuff on campus?

Zhang: Um... I used to in my sophomore year.

Petrowski: Yeah?

Zhang: I was a Multifaith Ambassador in the Chapel-

Petrowski: - oh, cool!

Zhang: -for facilitating like inter-religious dialogues on campus with Elyse.

Petrowski: Okay.

Zhang: And... I also used to be the board of the greek... the greek life.

Petrowski: Okay. Are you in a sorority?

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: Which one?

Zhang: Part of Kappa Delta.

Petrowski: Okay, cool. I wasn't in a sorority but I had a lot of friends who were Kappa Deltas.

Zhang: Oh, cool!

Petrowski: Yeah, there's a couple... they might be in the room or at least, around this weekend. I was told Kappa Delta is here so...

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: Cool...um...

Zhang: And also, I'm part of Alpha Phi Omega-

Petrowski: Oh, okay!

Zhang: -because I was (1:08??) a lot of stuff in my sophomore year and then I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder so I just stopped and just like focused on my academics.

Petrowski: Yeah. Okay. That's very -

Zhang: Yeah...

Petrowski: -sometimes it's good to just realize you need to focus on certain things.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: Yeah. I was just talking about that with someone – how it's... that's a good skill to have to know when you have too many things going on and you should try to balance everything, so... cool!

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: Um... do you live on campus?

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: Yeah?

Zhang: I used to live in Gulick Hall...

Petrowski: Okay.

Zhang: ...and then I moved to Dolan – oh, no – to Kappa Delta house and then to Dolan.

Petrowski: Oh, okay. I lived in Dolan.

Zhang: Oh, cool.

Petrowski: Yeah. I lived in Dolan and then I lived in Dodds.

Zhang: Okay, that's my future plan for senior year.

Petrowski: Oh, is it? That's cool.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: Very cool. Um... should we do the questions?

Zhang: Sure.

Petrowski: Okay. Describe one of your favorite things about the town where you grew up. And where did you grow up?

Zhang: I'm international student from China.

Petrowski: Okay.

Zhang: Um... Oh, my favorite things about the town – oh, so my town is surrounded by mountains...

Petrowski: Wow!

Zhang: ...So we go hiking every weekend with my parents, so that's my favorite thing.

Petrowski: That's nice.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: Do you get to go – there's not really anywhere to hike here, right?

Zhang: Like, two hours away there are like national parks, I've heard.

Petrowski: Yeah. Have you gone there?

Zhang: No, that's my plan...[chuckles]...

Petrowski: Oh, yeah, you should definitely do that. I feel like we used to walk through the – there's like a forest reserve with like woods and stuff nearby, right?

Zhang: I think so. Sugarcreek.

Petrowski: Yeah, I think so.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: I remember going there a little bit...um...cool. Do you want to ask me a question? We don't have to do in order-

Zhang: Oh!

Petrowski: -just pick any-

Zhang: We don't have to, right?

Petrowski: I don't think so. I think we can just do whichever ones we want.

Zhang: How has your life been different than what you imagined? [chuckles]

Petrowski: Oh!

Zhang: That's an interesting question.

Petrowski: Yeah, that's a really interesting question...um... I think that I... I don't know. I think I always imagined lots of different things for myself. I'm kind of indecisive so I think about I can do this or I can do that so I'm always kind of surprised to where my – I'm surprised where my life takes me but then I'm also not – you know, I'm open to new things, so--

Zhang: Do you know if you want to have a Master of Public Health when you are a undergraduate?

Petrowski: I didn't. No. So when I was – when I first started at Wesleyan I was a Biology major and I thought I wanted to go to medical school. And then, you know, as I was doing that more, I did some internships and I thought, ah, maybe I don't want to go to medical school.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: I ended up doing the Peace Corps.

Zhang: Oh!!! I know that program. Did you go somewhere else?

Petrowski: I went to Malawi.

Zhang: Oh my god! It's so far away.

Petrowski: Yeah, in south eastern Africa. And I loved it! And I was teaching a lot of like, science and... HIV prevention and life skills and help with things like that and that's when I decided I wanted to do public health. So I came back and did a Masters in Public Health.

Zhang: Oh, my god! How long have you been there?

Petrowski: In Malawi?

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: I was there for three years.

Zhang: That's a long time.

Petrowski: Yeah. It's like one of those life-changing experiences. So I didn't expect to do that but now that I look back, I'm not surprised that I did something so cool.

Zhang: Oh, my god! Do you have a lot of friends there?

Petrowski: Yeah. I have a lot of other Peace Corps volunteer friends that I still stay in touch with, who were in Malawi at the same time... and then I'm Facebook friends with a lot of my students from when I was a teacher there. So...

Zhang: Oh, my...god...

Petrowski: ...Yeah so they are like always on Facebook, just like sending me messages like,

*Madam! Madam!* Cause that's what, you know, I was a teacher – their teacher-

Zhang: Yeah

Petrowski: - so that's really cool that with Facebook you can be in touch with people so easily.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: So... mm-hmm..

Zhang: It's very, very ... inspiring ...[giggles]...

Petrowski: It's – it's a nice-

Zhang: I can – I can never imagine myself in African country like doing ...

Petrowski: -Yeah, but I mean, you came from another country to come here too, from China to America, that's...

Zhang: That's different. For – for, like developed country and third-world countries.

Petrowski: That's true. It is different.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: But I – but you – you probably experienced some of the same things like I meant – when I was there I liked missed my family, my friends and stuff like that. So, um... do you get to go home and see your family at all?

Zhang: Like, every – during winter break or summer break.

Petrowski: Oh, that's nice.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: That's good.

Zhang: Mm-hmm...

Petrowski: Cause that's what was hard about being in Malawi for me – not the developing country – that was easy.

Zhang: I see.

Petrowski: But I missed home – yeah...[both laugh]... So, mm-hmm...

Zhang: Oh, I see.

Petrowski: And then now I work in... clinical research. I work at Northwestern hospital. And I do cancer prevention research. So different from what I thought but kind of similar, I guess.

Zhang: Yeah. But you like it?

Petrowski: Yeah. I love it.

Zhang: That's cool.

Petrowski: Mm-hmm... let's see. Who has been the most important woman in your life? Tell me about her.

Zhang: Um...[laughs]... oh, my grandmother. So my grandmother raises me up because my – my parents were busy with work when I was little... and she is like the leader of the whole family.

Petrowski: Yeah?

Zhang: I don't know why but that's feeling like she is the eldest and we are – we – we used to be a very poor family, like my - I mean the big family we have, my uncle, my aunt, my dad, like she has three kids and... and my grandfather is busy with his work too so she raised three kids up and... we used to be very poor and she is like, she manages all the financial stuff and helped coordinate other events in my family... like so she seems like very powerful woman in my life...

Petrowski: Yeah...

Zhang: ...and when I came to Wesleyan, Elyse, like the Chaplain Elyse became like the person who influenced me the most.

Petrowski: That's great.

Zhang: Yeah. She's my boss of work and she just – she went to Cairo after she graduated from her graduate school. Like she has been there for three years too, I think, just for volunteering work.

Petrowski: Oh, really?

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: That's great.



Zhang: Mm-hmm... and she is – she is just this inspiring woman like my grandmother.

Petrowski: That's great.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: Yeah. That's amazing. Your grandma sounds awesome...[both laugh]... Elyse sounds awesome too.

Zhang: Yeah... Mm... what are you proudest of?

Petrowski: I am – what am I proudest of ... I think I am proudest of my relationships with people. I try to be a supportive friend and daughter and partner and sister and I think that that's something I really value – family and friends and so I'm proud that I make an effort to just be supportive to everyone that I love and ... and like that.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: So, I mean I'm also proud of my Master's degree and graduating from Illinois Wesleyan - those stuff but I think my relationships is what's most important to me.

Zhang: Yeah. That's awesome.

Petrowski: Let's see. What do you hope your future holds?

Zhang: ...[laughs]... I don't know.

Petrowski: That's okay.

Zhang: Okay, there's a lot of question marks about my future...[Petrowski laughs]... as a Political Science major...

Petrowski: Yeah.

Zhang: ...because I want to – okay, there are two path I wanna go. One is Master of Public Policy or like, to get a (9:34??) degree for law. I don't know where – I might go into either one.

Petrowski: Yeah...

Zhang: But... I hope... I hope... I have a stable job and like, I can contribute to my family, my whole family.

Petrowski: Yeah, right. That's important.

Zhang: For house, not being very busy with my work, like be a good mother or something.

Petrowski: Yeah, so you can balance both things. That's important.

Zhang: Yeah. There's just a lot to think about in the future.

Petrowski: Yeah.

Zhang: And I don't know... yeah.

Petrowski: But you don't have to decide right now.

Zhang: I don't have to do. There's too much of it.

Petrowski: Yeah.

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: Have you done any, like, internships or anything to kinda, maybe something like that would help?

Zhang: I'm going to D.C. for my summer. I'm just trying to apply to tons of internships there just for public policy and just to figure out whether I like that or not.

Petrowski: Cool. Yeah. I think that's great. I think like with doing the Peace Corps, that's – having an experience I feel like really tells you what you wanted to versus like learning about it on paper-

Zhang: Yeah.

Petrowski: -you know, like actually doing something and working into job, I think that really helps you decide, "*Oh, yeah, I like that*" or no I don't like that.

Zhang: Yeah, it's hard to tell.

Petrowski: Mm-hmm... Yeah.

Linda: It's a big question.

Petrowski: It is a big question. [pause]

Linda: What is a serious obstacle you have had to overcome?

Petrowski: Umm...hmm... that's a big question too. What is a serious obstacle you had to overcome... Mmm...I'm trying to think of something. I feel like I'm very fortunate that I haven't had anything - two major - um...last year, I was diagnosed with stage 1 thyroid cancer...

Linda: Oh!!!

Petrowski: ...So I had to have treatment for that. But again, I was very fortunate-

Linda: Because stage 1

Petrowski: - Exactly.

Linda: Oh, yeah!

Petrowski: Yeah... so I just had to have a surgery and that was it. But still, that was like a very tough time.

Linda: Yeah... there is lot of pressure.

Petrowski: There's a lot of pressure and there is a lot of... a lot of like, a lot of weight that comes with that...

Linda: yeah

Petrowski: ...you know, the diagnosis, even though it is very easily treatable but I think that was an obstacle that I had overcome and I think I overcame that with my friends and family, so...

Linda: Yeah, like, support is very crucial.

Petrowski: Yeah. I think so. I think that knowing you can't do anything just by yourself, you have to have support.

Linda: Yeah. Yeah. I was like, I have a very serious stage of bipolar but I was on campus last semester and so I – so I just really feel like friends are very important to life.

Petrowski: Yeah. Absolutely, that's great. Because yeah, you can't do anything by yourself and it's better to do it together with someone.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: cause - and everybody has their own issues too, you know, everyone has an obstacle to overcome.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Thanks for sharing that with me.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: That's nice...[laughs]... this is nice.

Linda: Yeah...

Petrowski: Let's see...um...there are so many good questions...um... for your great-grandchildren listening to this years from now, is there any wisdom you'd want to pass on to them? What would you want them to know?

Linda: Okay, interesting... okay, my wisdom is just to always to have a clear mind about what you are doing. But this may mean, but this is how I am, how I live my life but I don't know how other people because some people like to do crazy stuff like just to have exciting – exciting moments without really thinking through whether they should do it-

Petrowski: Yeah

Linda: - but for me, it's just, especially in our (14:02??) is just to have a very clear mind about what you're doing and to weigh on the benefits and loss of making decisions like what you're

going to do in the future and how it is gonna impact you in the short future and I think that's very important.

Petrowski: Yeah. That's great. I think that's very – and you need to be clear in mind both like at the present time and also for your future.

Linda: Yeah...

Petrowski: Yeah. I think you're right. I just realized we've been doing this but we didn't say our names.

Linda: Oh!

Petrowski: I think we're supposed to say – I think, right?

Linda: Do we have to? So...

Petrowski: Okay, so my name is Kelly Petrowski and I graduated in 2008.

Linda: My name is Linda Zhang and I'm a junior in – currently a junior in Wesleyan...[laughs]...

Petrowski: Okay. I think they need that. I don't know.

Linda: Okay.

Petrowski: I heard everyone else doing it so...[laughs]

Linda: Okay...

Petrowski: Um...let's see. Are you going to the rest of the events this weekend?

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: That's good.

Linda: How long – so you are – you are from – you're working in Northwestern so you have to travel?

Petrowski: Yeah. I work in Chicago.

Linda: In Chicago, yeah.

Petrowski: Mm-hmm...so I actually drove down – I rode with some friends. Some other class of 2008 grads. We came this morning and then we're gonna go back Saturday night.

Linda: Oh, cool!

Petrowski: Yeah.

Linda: I would be – I will be at most of the events tomorrow, too.

Petrowski: Okay, that's good. Me too. Did you come last year?

Linda: The year before...

Petrowski: The year before? Okay.

Linda: ...in my freshman year.

Petrowski: Great.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Cool. Make sure you bring lots of friends. We have lots of good stuff planned...[laughs]

Linda: Yeah... cool.

Petrowski: Should we do more questions?

Linda: Mmm...sure.

Petrowski: Maybe we'll do like one or two more?

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Okay... is it my turn? Or your turn?

Linda: I think it is your turn.

Petrowski: Okay.

Linda: Oh, my turn. Sorry.

Petrowski: It's your turn?

Linda: Yeah. Like last question is you asking me for your great grandchildren.

Petrowski: Oh, that's right. That's right. That's right. Okay.

Linda: Okay.

Petrowski: Mmm...

Linda: What are the most important lessons you have learned in life?

Petrowski: Um... I think... the two most important lessons I have learnt is, one, to be grateful and appreciative of what you have, you know, because there's I think, no matter what goes wrong, there's always someone who's worse off than you.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: So I think it's important to remember that.

Linda: Mm-hmm...

Petrowski: And two, kind of like I said before, I think I've learned that other people and their support are the most important things, you know...

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: ...when you could have ...no money, no – you could have nothing but if you have a friends or family or someone who can help you, then you're pretty good...[both laugh]... I think.

Linda: Yeah...[continues laughing]...that's so true.

Petrowski: Yeah...

Linda: I saw (17:19) like someone supporting us, "*Life is good*," like...

Petrowski: Yeah, exactly. And it can always get better.

Linda: There is a way to continue on...

Petrowski: Yeah. And that could be a friend, a family member or ... professor or someone you work with, like, as long as you have someone, I think, you know...

Linda: Mm-hmm...

Petrowski: Um... What are you proudest of?

Linda: Oh! For me, I'm proud of my adventurous... spirit because I like to travel to different countries...

Petrowski: Yeah.

Linda: I studied abroad since 16. I went to Singapore for high school for four years and then I came to America for grad – for undergrad.

Petrowski: Wow!

Linda: Yeah, I just – when I was (18:03??) I just wanna go to different places in the world...

Petrowski: Yeah.

Linda: ...it's like I can be independent.

Petrowski: That's great.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: What do you think inspired you to want to study abroad and to go different places?

Linda: Mmm...

Petrowski: Or did you just always wanted to do that or did you...?

Linda: No. when I was little, my parents were – because we are a very big travel family, we just go to different places in like, oh, china maybe... I can go to places other than China. So that is kind of starting point.

Petrowski: Yeah. That's great. Do you think... do you think about going to grad school? Well, you said grad school or law school.



Linda: Yeah. Grad school or law school.

Petrowski: Would you do that in the United States or would you go to like European country, you know, keep going to different places?... [both giggle]

Linda: We'll see how it goes.

Petrowski: Yeah?

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: That's great.

Linda: Mm-hmm...

Petrowski: I think travelling is really important.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: It's good to get to know different people and different cultures and different ways of life.

Linda: Yeah. The experiences are very different in different places.

Petrowski: Yeah... Mm-hmm... Wow, even in high school – that's brave.

Linda: Yeah... Oh, my god. Singapore is like very academic focus...

Petrowski: Is it?

Linda: ...so we spent a lot of time studying just like reading the notes and not – it's like pre-college, something like that.

Petrowski: Oh, I see. And did you have as many opportunities for like clubs and extra-curricular activities and stuff like that?

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Yeah? That's good.

Linda: I went to Netherland... for like, for the Model UN conference.

Petrowski: Cool!

Linda: Yeah, so we went to Netherland for a conference.

Petrowski: That's amazing!

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Wow.

Linda: And we went to United Kingdom for a geography trip...

Petrowski: Wow!

Linda: ...so it's like I like my high school a lot.

Petrowski: Ah... I'm trying to think... in my high school we went to Washington D.C.

though...[both laugh]...

Linda: But still trips...

Petrowski: Trips are important, yeah.

Linda: So who has been the most important woman in your life?

Petrowski: Um... I think I've had a lot of important women in my life but I think my mom is the most important woman in my life...because she's always... she has always been a hard worker, you know, she works full-time. She has raised three kids. She has always made sure that we have everything that we need and that we're okay, you know. She calls me all the time. She calls my grandma. She calls everybody all the time just to check on us and make sure we're okay.

Linda: Okay.

Petrowski: And so I think that's really important. And she is very strong woman and I hope that I can be just as strong a woman as she is and support people the way that she does.

Linda: Yeah...

Petrowski: Mm-hmm... kind of like your grandma taking care of everybody.

Linda: Yes...so true...[both laugh]...

Petrowski: Mm-hmm... let's see. For new incoming students at Illinois Wesleyan, what would you want to say to them?

Linda: Okay. So there are lots of opportunities to explore in Wesleyan and just don't be afraid to try them out if you're interested in them, because like during – even during your semester or during even during the break times, like spring break, fall break, winter break, summer break, there were different programs too, so just like look out for all those opportunities to take advantage of them.

Petrowski: Yeah. That's really good advice. You should probably be ... what is it called, the titan orientation leader.

Linda: Yeah. I have been. I have been. I have done that.

Petrowski: Have you done that? Okay. That's good.

Linda: It's a lot of fun.

Petrowski: ...[giggles]... I was gonna say, that's good advice.

Linda: (22:12-22:13??)

Petrowski: Yeah. That's great. Have you done... I think when I was here, senior year I did the alternative spring break.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Do you guys have that still?

Linda: Yeah. We still have it.

Petrowski: That's cool. Have you done that?

Linda: I've been there once.

Petrowski: Where did you guy go?

Linda: Kentucky. Somewhere close to Lexington.

Petrowski: Okay. What did you do while you were there?

Linda: Like, just help the poor to rebuild their houses.

Petrowski: Oh, that's nice. We did the same thing. It was right after, Hurricane Katrina...

Linda: Oh, yeah!

Petrowski: ... and so we went to new – 'cause it was 2007... 2006 maybe, and so we went to New Orleans and we helped – we didn't rebuild houses but we were like painting and doing that kind of stuff – helping people and like tearing down old houses and stuff like that.

Linda: It is a lot of physical work.

Petrowski: It is a lot of physical work.

Linda: but like I would keep telling myself, oh there is enough brain work like in school so we got to do some physical work here.

Petrowski: Yeah. That's true. That's true.

Linda: Yeah. Okay.

[pause]

Petrowski: Let's see. We've done a lot of these, ha?

Linda: Hmm...

Petrowski: Are there any funny stories from your life that you wanna tell me about? Or maybe a funny Wesleyan story? It's kind of a hard one.

Linda: Yeah. It's a hard one.

Petrowski: I know. Then another one maybe. Let's see...

Linda: Oh, there's a lot of fun time from Kappa Delta.

Petrowski: Oh, Kappa Delta? That's cool. You lived in the house? Or no?

Linda: Yeah. I used to live in the house.

Petrowski: Yeah. I wasn't really into sorority so I don't really know but I heard that they are very fun.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: That's cool. When I was here, I did a lot – I mostly did Student Senate. I was a Student Senate president-

Linda: Oh! Cool.

Petrowski: -so I – yeah, so I had a lot of fun doing student senate and...

Linda: There is a lot of logistics and administrative work.

Petrowski: There – yeah, there's a lot of work, but still it was fun. I had a lot of fun in Hansen ...[Zhang laughs]...cause they had like an office in Hansen, you know.

Linda: Yeah, I know. I was – I was part of Student Senate.

Petrowski: Oh, were you?

Linda: Yeah, I was.

Petrowski: Yeah. So that was really fun. It was fun to be in college but to have an organization that you are doing like really big things with, you know, and they had an office and there was lots of administrative work but it was also really fun.

Linda: Yeah. Yeah. The president play a big role.

Petrowski: Yeah. There's a lot to do. But I met a lot of really great friends at Wesleyan too.

Actually, some of my very best friends, they were on my freshman year floor in Dolan hall.

Dolan used to be a freshman dorm.

Linda: Yeah. It's still – it is still a freshman dorm.

Petrowski: Still a freshman? Okay. So actually, two of them are here, Abby and Jess and we drove down here together but we were all on Dolan 4 – fourth floor of Dolan freshman year.

Linda: Okay. I'm in fourth right now.

Petrowski: Oh, are you?

Linda: Yeah

Petrowski: That's fun. But like, I think you make a lot of good friendships at Illinois Wesleyan too.

Linda: Yeah, friendships.

Petrowski: And... I think especially when I was Student Senate President, I became really good friends with Darcy Greder-

Linda: oh, Darcy! I know. I know her.

Petrowski: -do you know her? Yeah? I think she's the best.

Linda: Sometimes she email like everyone who wants to help her out for graduation ceremony, and I always respond to her, like Darcy, I would do it, and the other pamphlets and everything.

Petrowski: Yeah, she's great. And she's great about getting everyone involved on campus.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: I think, so...

Linda: Yeah. She is a very good person to talk to.

Petrowski: Yeah. I actually have a lot of really good – I have a lot of really good and funny memories of sitting in Darcy's office...

Zhang: Oh, yeah.

Petrowski: ...and like talking – first we talk about business or something with student senate but then we just laugh and -

Linda: Talk about life!

Petrowski: -yeah, talk about life. She is a good person to talk about life with. So... so I recommend going to her office and talking to her about that.

Linda: Yeah. I already talked to her a lot, like Darcy have these life lessons...

Petrowski: Oh, yeah. She is good at that.

Linda: No, it's not a big deal.

Petrowski: She is good at ... what do you call it... diffusing the situation, like being like, it's okay...

Linda: Yeah...

Petrowski: Like, let's talk about it.

Linda: Yeah. Let's not worry, yeah.

Petrowski: Yeah. That's awesome. What else... is there anything else you wanna talk about? Or any questions not on the sheet?

Linda: This is an interesting question: When in your life have you felt most alone?

Petrowski: Oh, gosh!

Zhang: It's like...

Petrowski: That's a hard one.

Linda: Mm-hmm...

Petrowski: I don't think I've ever... I don't know. I don't think I felt alone but I think when I was in Peace Corps, when I lived in Malawi, I think there were some times when I just missed my family and friends. But then I made friends there who I could then, you know, talk to them-

Linda: Are they others like colleagues during Peace Corps?

Petrowski: - Yeah and also-

Linda: Local friends?

Petrowski: Local friends, yeah.

Linda: Do they speak English?

Petrowski: Yeah.

Linda: Oh. That's good.

Petrowski: Well, some of them spoke English. And then I also learned their language. They speak Chichewa, that's what they call...[Zhang laughs]... so

Linda: ...[laughs]...So you can speak Chichewa.

Petrowski: Yeah, well, I used to be really good and now I'm just kind of ...[laughs]... I'm okay.

Linda: Cool.

Petrowski: But I think that probably just when you get to a new country and you're all by yourself and you miss your family, that can make you feel kind of alone but then you have to realize there are so many other people around to help.

Linda: So when you are enrolled in Peace Corps, you have to go to another country for at least 3 years?

Petrowski: Mm-hmm... at least 2 years.

Linda: Okay.

Petrowski: And I did an extra three – an extra year.

Linda: Okay. That's interesting.

Petrowski: Mm-hmm. Did you feel alone when you first came to the US?

Linda: Sometimes... but most of the times like there are easy – easy – easy to reach out in Wesleyan.

Petrowski: Yeah. Exactly. It's a very supportive place, so...



Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Mm-hmm... What do you hope your future holds? Did we already do it?

Linda: We have done that one but you can do that. Do you want to do it?

Petrowski: Okay, I'll do that. I hope that my future holds lots of positive memories, happiness, good health. I'm actually I'm getting married this year...

Linda: [gasps] when?

Petrowski: ...so that's exciting – in November...

Linda: That's exciting.

Petrowski: Mm-hmm... so I hope that I have a good marriage and I hope that my job goes well and I have a good family and – cause that's what's important to me.

Linda: Where did you meet your...fiancé?

Petrowski: I actually – I met him...

Linda: Here?

Petrowski: No. not here. I met him when I was in grad school, so I was doing my Masters in public health and then I was working as a waitress at a restaurant of high school -

Linda: Oh, interesting!

Petrowski: - So I met him there -

Linda: Where did you – did you get it at Amory?

Petrowski: No, at UIC. University of Illinois at Chicago.

Linda: Oh... so he lives in Chicago.

Petrowski: Yeah... and then I worked at a sports bar and restaurant as a waitress and he was there and he came in because his cousin, she also worked with me.

Linda: Oh, cool! Interesting.

Petrowski: So that's how we met.

Linda: That's sweet.

Petrowski: So, yeah... I just hope my future holds good life and I hope I raise good kids who... who are also very optimistic and happy and make good opportunities for themselves and take advantage of good opportunities.

Linda: How many kids do you want?

Petrowski: I think 3.

Linda: 3? 3 is a lot.

Petrowski: I know.

Linda: 2 – 2 is like... enough for me...[laughs]...

Petrowski: That's what you want us to?

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Do you have brothers and sisters?

Linda: No..

Petrowski: No?

Linda: Yeah. There is only like the policy, the two-child policy opens last year I think .

Petrowski: oh...yeah.

Linda: Yeah... just... But for my gen... my generation is the only one-child generation.

Petrowski: Wow...yeah.

Linda: I think so.

Petrowski: That's kinda crazy, ha?

Linda: My... yeah, yeah. Like people born in 1993, 1994.

Petrowski: Yeah. Do you have cousins?

Linda: I have cousins.

Petrowski: That's good. I feel like cousins can be like brothers and sisters too.

Linda: It's like we have.. like my parents' generation have multiple siblings and my... I'm gonna have more than one kids, so it's like they're joking about the economic pressure we'll have, because we have more than one child and our generation have more elderly to raise...

Petrowski: Oh!

Linda: ...to support.

Petrowski: Yeah, that's true. Interesting. Very interesting.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Um... yeah I have one brother and one sister, so... I'm the oldest...

Linda: Oh! Cool.

Petrowski: ...of three.

Linda: That's a lot of pressure.

Petrowski: Mm-hmm. To be oldest?

Linda: Yeah. I think it's a lot of pressure because like, you have – you are always told to be a role model.

Petrowski: That's true.

Linda: You can't do that. You have to live.

Petrowski: That's true. I think it's a lot of pressure to be the youngest too.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: I think cause especially for my sister I feel like, all – my brother – I always did something then my brother did the same thing then my sister had to do the same...

Linda: Oh, I see.

Petrowski: I think they can both be pressure.

Linda: Mm-hmm. That's true. It's like you cannot be left out. You have to keep – keep on the same space.

Petrowski: Yeah. It's true, like if – if – if I feel like I got straight As, then my brother was like, I've got to get straight As and then my sister was like, I've got to get straight As...

Linda: (32:35-32:37??)

Petrowski: Yeah, I guess it's true. That makes me a good role model. I guess I could have been like a bad student. Then maybe they'd all be bad students. I don't know.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: What else? I think we did most of them.

Linda: Yeah... This is interesting question.

Petrowski: Which one?

Linda: The third one: What do (33:04-33:05??) during high school years or growing up years when started to feel like you could be allowed and this as well (not sure. 33:14) your most challenging experiences during your high school times?

Petrowski: Oh!

Linda: Oh!

Petrowski: Hmm... I think... that is an interesting one. Do you have any answer for that one?

Linda: Yeah!

Petrowski: Okay.

Linda: Like, I – my Model United Nations club in my high school influence me a lot. It's like, that's one of the reasons I chose political science as my major here and just... is very kind of – the people I met there inspired me to be someone important because, like it's like student senate,

like you have – you need to have your own voice to be a influential person too... in the committee sessions if you want to compete, so...

Petrowski: So that's kinda let you ... yeah, you've used your own voice and shaped who you are.

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Did you go to the luncheon today?

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: Did you like the speaker?

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: I did too. I thought she was really good.

Linda: Mm-hmm.

Petrowski: She said a lot of good things about using your voice and I thought she was really great.

Linda: Mm-hmm. She is super positive. She seems to be...

Petrowski: So positive. That's great. I think those are really great. So...

Linda: But there is lot of like role models like her like in Illinois Wesleyan – lot of super positive women in my sorority.

Petrowski: Oh, yeah. Who's your favorite professor?

Linda: Here?

Petrowski: Yeah.

Linda: They are all in social science department.

Petrowski: Okay.

Linda: Like do you know Professor Simeone?

Petrowski: Aa-han... I never had him in class but I knew him from student senate, from doing committees and stuff, but yeah

Linda: Oh!

Petrowski: I know who he is. Yeah.

Linda: Yeah. Professor Weis, like my – Michael Weis.

Petrowski: Oh, yeah. I know – yep – I know that name. I never had them in class but why are they your favorite?

Linda: They're – all professors – Michael Weis is funny. They shape – he makes a lot of jokes.

Petrowski: Oh really?

Linda: Yeah.

Petrowski: That's great.

Linda: Who are your favorite professors?

Petrowski: My favorite professor was Dr. Day. He was a biology professor...

Linda: Oh!

Petrowski: ...but he, actually he passed away a few years ago.

Linda: Oh, I see. That's sad.

Petrowski: Yeah, but he... he was a plant and fungal diversity ... like professor and then he taught microbiology too and he was just like the nicest guy. And he also like, I think for a lot of people, Biology was a hard major and he was just very nice about reaching out to students and helping them with their work and answering questions...

Linda: Mm-hmm...

Petrowski: ...and also, he was a Peace Corps volunteer.

Linda: Oh, yeah... to which country?

Petrowski: Nigeria.

Linda: Oh, my god.

Petrowski: In like 1969 or something like that. He was one of the first peace corps volunteer.

Linda: So cool.

Petrowski: Maybe it was '64. I don't know what it was.

Linda: Was your decision to go to Peace Corps influenced by his?

Petrowski: Well, not really because I didn't even know that he was a Peace Corps volunteer 'cause he never said anything and then I told him that I was thinking about doing it. I might even have told – I think I told him I was applying and he was like-

Linda: So you applied during your senior year?

Petrowski: Mm-hmm...

Linda: Oh...

Petrowski: - and he was like, oh I was a peace corps volunteer and he met me for coffee and told me all about his experience and it was like 40 years ago for him, you know, and he just told me all about it and even when I was there in Malawi, I had a blog where I wrote what was going on and post pictures and he would always comment my blog and he would send me emails and he was a really good professor.

Linda: Yeah. Sounds like... oh, so cool.

Petrowski: Yeah. He passed away a few years ago. But they actually they had a memorial thing for him during homecoming I think a couple years ago so I went to that. It was nice.

Linda: So he must be really old when he teach you...

Petrowski: He was yeah he was an older professor. I think he had been here a long time. Yeah. But he was my favorite...[both giggle]...

Linda: So do you get paid when you are being a volunteer for Peace Corps?

Petrowski: Um... no. they give you... a living allowance so it's – it's an amount of money that's like would make you live very comfortably there. So I got paid \$120 a month which made me like very comfortable, 'cause I lived in a village, you know.

Linda: Oh, yeah...

Petrowski: I didn't have running water, electricity...

Linda: Got you.

Petrowski: So yeah, \$120 was like a lot of money, so... mm-hmm... but they do it based on where you live, so if you live in like, they have some in like eastern european countries like...I can't think of anything... Kazakhstan or something like that, you know, or something like South America, they pay you a little bit more.

Linda: Oh...

Petrowski: Cause the cost of living is more.

Linda: Interesting.

Petrowski: mm-hmm...

Linda: Those people are marble.

Petrowski: Yeah. It's fun. I mean, it's great experience so... mm-hmm...

Linda: mm-hmm...

Petrowski: Well, thank you so much for talking with me

Linda: yeah me too

Petrowski: It was really nice to meet you

Linda: Yeah me too

Petrowski: Yeah.



Linda: Interesting.