

MCC Campus Connections Podcast - Episode 10: Monica Loayza

Podcast Transcript

Geovanny Mayorga 0:08

All right, everyone, welcome once again to another episode of Midwestern Career College Campus Connections. We are recording as usual at our downtown location at 203 North LaSalle. On a beautiful new summer day, finally getting warm out here. As always, you can find us on your favorite streaming site. And you can follow us or contact us at podcast@mcccollege.edu and we'll look forward to hearing from you. As always, our guests are great. And today I have the pleasure of welcoming Monica Loayza. How are you, Monica?

Monica Loayza 0:47

Hi. I'm doing great.

Geovanny Mayorga 0:49

Welcome to the podcast. It's fantastic to have you. I remember you were the first person I met when I was being interviewed and then eventually hired at Midwestern Career College. So you're the first face I remember seeing because at the time you were working as an administrative assistant at our Wacker location. That's correct. And now, years later, now you're the Career Services Coordinator. Correct?

Monica Loayza 1:19

Yeah, that's right.

Geovanny Mayorga 1:21

How's that going?

Monica Loayza 1:21

Great. I mean, thank you for the invitation. I'm happy to be here. It's been great. I mean, it's been three years working with Midwestern Career College. And it's been a great transition since I started. And then now that I get to work more, you know, focused with students and continue helping them getting a job and coaching them for those next career goals. Happy to be part of that impact in their lives.

Geovanny Mayorga 1:54

Yeah, I think you found yourself a little bit swimming on your own because the person you were working with who was the director of Career Services eventually moved on. How was that after moving from one location, one department, moving to another department, and then finding yourself by yourself?

Monica Loayza 2:16

Yeah, definitely brought a lot of challenges, but at the same time growth. And I have nothing to say but thank you to everyone who always trained me here and prepared me to connect with our community, the students and the college itself. I think big opportunities come with big challenges. So definitely, I had to assume part of those. And it was necessary, I think, to be fully submerged in that department since I started, actually, you know, part-time with them, supporting the department. But then I fully transitioned into a Career Services coordinator in 2022. So it's been great growing into the department and just seeing the evolution of our students in different campuses. So yeah, I'm grateful for that.

Geovanny Mayorga 3:03

Yeah, and you're definitely very well qualified for the position as we will speak throughout the podcast. Talk a little bit about what Career Services does for not only our current students but our alumni.

Monica Loayza 3:18

Of course. Well, currently, the Career Services Department will support our students with all their skills and resume building in finding that job, you know, towards the end of their program. They have to have that opportunity. They have to face that network and start working. So my job is to train them and give them all the resources and tools for them to face that part of their lives. We can also meet with them early on to discuss those career goals and, you know, map out their trajectory to get that job at the end. During that process, we offer also workshops,

you know, search tools and provide them mock job interviews. It's a variety of resources for them to utilize and, you know, become self-confident and secure about the program skills they acquire here. And at the same time, leverage that network that is so important nowadays. So the main focus is that and to sustain that job over time as well. So we help them to build their professional references, their LinkedIn profiles. We have LinkedIn headshots, we have career fairs, employer visits. And at the same time, we create this employer revenue and connection partnership among the healthcare and business partners here in Chicago and other states, which brings growth and a high name for our graduates. I recall having good comments about our grads from different facilities, and they always come to us to request more of our alumni to fill those positions. And the big motivation, you know, it's to help people in healthcare, and then just project that career for them.

Geovanny Mayorga 5:13

Yeah, I don't think a lot of students understand the importance of not only the education that you're getting, but being prepared for a job interview. A lot of students think, "Oh, once I graduate, I'll just get a job," right. But there are steps you need to take. You need to be prepared. And I found that at smaller institutions, you can get that help. Maybe because it's a smaller institution, you're a little bit more aware of what resources are available to you, then if you're at a larger institution where information just kind of gets lost, and students actually have to seek it out.

Monica Loayza 5:55

That's correct. And I think that the evolution through generations for, you know, searching for a job has evolved positively. But I think the main point for them is to be self-confident and then trust their abilities. Academically, we provide good skills, you know, soft skills. Each program works really hard in the curricula to give them those tools. But at the end of the day, with experience I have, you know, interviewing people throughout my whole career, I've noticed that their self-confidence is a big role that plays in your job interviews, as well as your performance during your job. So I always recommend them to find their strengths, you know, their motivation, their passion in life, because at the end of the day, that's going to reflect in your career. And it's going to speak highly about the person you are. When people choose their motivation, their passion, I think, and I

see it - you put the effort naturally, and it's a genuine connection that at the end of the day, the employers like that. They're gonna find you a person who really is engaged with the job, but at the same time, who's passionate about it. I cannot stress enough to my students and in general, people I've recruited, that that connection, that first rapport that you establish with the interviewer makes a huge difference among other candidates. You can bring a lot of experience in the field, and skill, software and everything. But if you don't have that interaction, one on one, it's pretty hard to become that attractive candidate they can fulfill that position with.

Geovanny Mayorga 7:38

Yeah, one of the things that's important for students to understand when they are applying for employment is that you need to know who your employer is. All right, you need to research who that employer is, because eventually, they're going to ask you, "What do you know about us?" Employers don't want people just applying because it's a job, right? They want to understand why you want to work for them, right. And some of the things that we do, that you have done, is brought in employers to speak with students. And then we did a career fair, which is also very successful, where students can get to know who the employers are. Correct.

Monica Loayza 8:22

And it's part of the networking, I believe, when we, you know, make them do their research of the company, they can bring that in their interview. So that will show they're really interested in that position. And you can make questions during your interview that demonstrates more interest in that position. Why is that so important? Employers want to see if you're a sustainable candidate over time, because, you know, turnover and looking for talent requires time and money, and companies want to make sure that it's worth the investment. So you want to be part of that revenue, that part of, you know, creating an opportunity to work. So I believe definitely, when they see one on one with employers, they know they're real. They know they're looking for people with talent. And they also - everyone remarks the human connection that they're looking for - that person who is going to be eager to be trained, to learn, to accommodate with the policy of the company. Based on the research you've done in the interview, you can imagine it and you also see if it's a good match for you. Granted, not all employers are a great match for people and vice versa. So you have to find that good match and

be part of that company and see also your next career goals, right, your professional development, and the growth you're going to have as a person as well. All of that part of that professionalism that we talk about in our workshops is part of that impact that you do in your interview as well.

Geovanny Mayorga 9:59

And that has shown pretty much in - as you mentioned before - that some of the employers seek out our students. And that's part of the preparation that they get coming to Midwestern Career College, some of the preparation that you go through with them. And it's important for them to understand that they have an opportunity if they come here. What normally is the percentage of students that get jobs coming out of once they get their certificate or their degree?

Monica Loayza 10:33

Well, that's a great question. We do our best for reaching our benchmarks as required, but we over - we exceed those benchmarks. So I would say we have over 70 and 80% of grads that are currently working in their fields. My job is to make sure that they are actually working in the field. And at the same time, from all the class who graduate, though, 70% minimum needs to be working, but we reach around 80, 90, 100%, especially our electronic diagnostic program. That program brings 100% of the grads placed in the field. Granted also that we look for people that are actively searching and updating their resumes. And you know, that's part of the job for them. But definitely over 70% we get people hired.

Geovanny Mayorga 11:28

That's wonderful. And like I said, lots of resources available for our students, not only for them to seek out, but we actually are proactive in bringing those resources to them, which again, makes a difference when you're at a smaller institution than if you were at a larger institution where you're just a number a lot of times, right. Now, obviously, it wasn't easy for you to get to where you're at because you essentially started as an international student. Yeah. So where are you originally from?

Monica Loayza 11:58

Peru. Correct. Yes, I was born in the second biggest city in Peru. The name is Arequipa. It's a beautiful city. It's surrounded by mountains. We are located in the south of Peru and the Andes chain crosses all over the city, that department. And

I'm going to say yes, we're very proud of our land. We love our food, like every other Peruvian, but I think people from my city, we recognize our volcanoes and, you know, the traditions behind it. So we all have, I believe, this fiery spirit to conquer our goals, and then just, you know, make things happen. And absolutely miss home sometimes.

Geovanny Mayorga 12:43

Oh, absolutely. For sure. What was it like growing up in Peru in the middle of mountain ranges?

Monica Loayza 12:52

You know, it's interesting how you start valuing that once you—

Geovanny Mayorga 12:56

You're no longer there.

Monica Loayza 12:59

Because once you're there, probably you take for granted certain activities that you wish you would have done. For instance, we have the volcanoes that you can climb them, but I've never done it. So as soon as I get the chance to visit again, I will definitely want to do it. But overall, it's a traditional city, a traditional country, and I'm grateful to my parents, to my education, everyone who brought that value and, you know, helped me to be the person I am today. So it was great growing up there. I have all my - you know, my childhood, from when I was a teenager and everything - they're just playing in great moments. I cannot stress enough how great it was growing up there. And of course, the food. I always emphasize - Peruvians are very, we're very proud of our food. And I think we also bring the sense of community and family through our food because, you know, we are traditional people. And we like to welcome everyone. And we like that warmth in, you know - that I think it's a high characteristic among the Hispanic community, I would say.

Geovanny Mayorga 14:15

Yeah, I remember when I moved down to Colorado, and I was seeing the West. You have the Rocky Mountains, and it was just like a completely different world. I mean, obviously I grew up in Chicago, and right here, the mountains are the skyscrapers. But, you know, when you're looking at the mountains, obviously I

also grew up in Guatemala where they have volcanoes, right. That part doesn't really compare to seeing high rises because it's not the same beauty.

Monica Loayza 14:47

It's not the same. And fortunately, the weather is cold in my city. Okay, maybe not as cold as Chicago, but definitely, I can, you know, it builds a different sense but also at the same time, it's unfamiliar.

Geovanny Mayorga 15:02

Is it above sea level? Altitude?

Monica Loayza 15:05

Yes, we are above 12,000 feet above.

Geovanny Mayorga 15:09

Really? Yes. It's pretty high.

Monica Loayza 15:11

It's pretty similar to Denver then. Similar. Yep. Yep.

Geovanny Mayorga 15:14

I remember having that conversation. So I've never been to Denver, but I'm pretty sure it's a high - it's a dry heat. And you know, the cold can penetrate your bones too when it's like, and it's nice in the mountain. So you're right, the highlands are like beautiful to watch.

Geovanny Mayorga 15:31

So how was that decision to say, "I want to study internationally, I want to try something else internationally"? How do you make that decision?

Monica Loayza 15:42

So well, back in the day, my first experience was going to France as an exchange student in a program that my high school offered. And I was 16 at the time, so I was pretty young, going outside my comfort zone. Yeah. So I just had a chance to study there for a semester in the summer - for us, winter for them. And I just realized how much I like to be, you know, discovering new cultures, and definitely traveling. And I just thought, "Well, there's more than my little city, actually, to discover."

And then one of my passions is also learning languages. So at the time, I knew already English, but French was a big part of that moment. And then years passed, but I've always had in mind that I wanted to live abroad. It was something that you know, you connect with your inner self, and then you just say, "Okay, this is one of my dreams. And I don't know how to make it happen, but I'm going to make it happen." So I only knew Europe at that moment. And then years later, I was always curious to come to the US.

You know, in that moment, I always thought, "Oh, it's a great country for - a lot of things happen here to discover, and shopping," and, you know, things that were really curious. But I'd never gotten to really understand or be fully submerged in the culture. Even though I have family here too, you would normally talk with them and hear the stories of their life here. But then I said, "Okay," - I was working in a mining company at that moment. And I was working with people - basically, I was bilingual there to, you know, English, some French and Spanish. So I said, "I really like to work in an environment where I can use my languages. And it makes me happy. And I'm always challenged in that regard."

So when I was done with that job, I decided to come to the US for a break, and then learn English, you know, maybe become more fluent in it. And the school I decided to come to was located in Chicago. That was in 2016. At that point, I didn't know anything about Chicago. I just knew it's a big city, jazz, known for arts. But I came with no expectations. And when I came in, I first arrived, I'm like, "Wow, this city is amazing. It has it all." I did not expect to see the lake that big that looks like an ocean, to be honest. And I've always wanted to live near the water. And then the people so friendly. And then definitely I was enjoying that little adventure. I only was here for a short time in that moment.

But the city conquered my heart so bad that I really wanted to come back. So I said, "I have to be here." Something about the city that's calling me that - you know, when you feel that you want to be there, I think you just have to go for it. And that's the same with the jobs too. If you really have that feeling and you really see yourself growing, you have to be part of it. There's no way to look back and then say, "Why didn't I do it?" So that was a fire in me. Four years later, at that moment, I was already a student here. So before my student visa was over, I said, "Well, I'm going to make my dream again come true. And then I'm just going to enroll in another program and then just come back to the US."

And so I did start doing some research. I said, "Well, maybe I should do English as well for another period," because at that moment I did not know anything about associate programs or further education in the US. Until I came to Chicago again and met one of the counselors at Midwestern Career College. And I knew Midwestern offers the ESL programs for English. And he said, "Well, your English is pretty good. Maybe you want to consider an Associate Program." And he explained very detailed the breakdown of the program, and I decided to join the business program and marketing program at that moment. In Peru, I started thinking about starting business before psychology, and then - this is funny, but years later, I did the psychology, but now I'm doing business too.

And I said, "Yeah, I mean, why not? It looks like a perfect fit." This was January 2020. A very hard year for everyone, for sure. And I was so excited. I had the chance to enroll right away. My date, you know, I passed my exams, everything. So it was the first time to accomplish not only coming back to Chicago, it was also accomplish a degree from the US. As you know, if you have a degree in the US, it's a high standard, like a high standing in your resume for any country. And if you have the work experience in the US as well. So I said, "Wow, I'm actually starting already to map out what it can be a great dream for me."

And that's why Midwestern comes in a very important role, because they not only provide me the knowledge of, you know, the program, and the academic role as a business person, they also gave me the great chance to work with them. And yeah, it was the perfect fit. I was completely ready to be trained from zero because I think when you move somewhere else, you have to come with that mindset that you probably not going to start with your profession. But you have to be open to all the opportunities you have.

And that's why I'm so grateful with this whole experience. I have nothing worse but thanks to everyone here. And every person that has been part of my life in this journey. So I definitely had the big shot, you know, you look for it, and you take it. And yeah, you have to come and you have to pursue those dreams.

Did I have struggles? Of course, like any other student, international students may relate with this. I think every day struggle, every day is a take of, you know, from language barrier, you have to adapt into the culture. And this is the thing that I like most about when I move out of my comfort zone - you get to know yourself better,

and discover passions that you didn't know you have, skills that you didn't know you have, and overcoming those challenges.

They might have also, you know, helped your character and built your personality. So yeah, it's been a great journey so far. And all what I've learned in the past, you know, my background as a psychologist, recruiter, HR person, and training people, I'm using it now with my students.

Geovanny Mayorga 23:10

You mentioned that you needed to start from zero, which I think is common and a little heartbreaking, because like I said, you have a lot of experience in Peru. Yes. Because you finished your degree in psychology. Correct. And then went on to work for international companies from Peru, right?

Monica Loayza 23:29

Exactly. I think every opportunity in life, it's a good learning for you. And this is what I remark to the future grads - to not expect to have the perfect job at the beginning. It's just a matter of learning and just being ready there to be trained. Because you don't know what life can take you or where, you know, you end up going. I did not expect to be living in Chicago, and having a great time of my life and working for an American company, which I've had in the past.

And I've always identified with that life, with that work culture. I really like it and it was a good fit for me. Yeah, that's why I stress enough to my students, "Make sure it's a good fit for you." And the people I worked with in the past were so nice to me and opened the doors to me all the time. So I came with that mindset and knowing that here, of course, there's people that will give you that opportunity.

And then you have to be grateful for it. Yeah. So I'm grateful for all the people that I've met in Midwestern Career College and they helped me to become and then just be in the position that I am right now.

Geovanny Mayorga 24:38

Yeah. I mentioned in the past that I like psychology. Yeah. Oh, yeah. How did you decide that psychology was something that you wanted to do? Obviously studying in college, right. And then how you used it once you graduated in psychology?

Monica Loayza 24:53

Why? I remember being in high school. It was my first class of psychology when I was 15. Probably the teacher made it sound so great. And that's when I hit - "I want to be a psychologist." I definitely had other options too. But I don't know, it was something in me that I like to hear people and like help them. And when I started my studies in psychology, I chose - "Yeah, this is for me. I enjoy my classes."

It was a hard training for sure. I had to graduate. My university is one of the most, you know, top of the south of Peru. And it's really demanding. And, you know, you have to be on top of the academics. I was a good student too, you know, all my life. So I'm grateful for having those skills. But as you mentioned, I think that's the passion that moved me to pursue and continue the career. In psychology, you have the opportunity to help so many people in different fields. I personally did not choose the education at all.

It was my last option to be honest. I started as an HR person, human resources. But as you mentioned, it is that connection with each other where you get to help them but they also give you feedback, and you also grow. Being a psychologist, you need to be a humble person too. And recognize that the most powerful word and tool you have is your word. We can impact so much with words. We can destroy a person or we can lift them up. So we have that opportunity. That person opens an internal world, right. A

nd we are blessed to connect with that person. We're blessed to guide them. And it's a big responsibility as well, of course. Yeah. So nowadays, with my students, I feel the same, that great responsibility that I have. The opportunity to let them know and tell them what to do with their jobs, with their future careers, and that's my responsibility to make them succeed. For sure. So it's a big responsibility. Yeah.

Geovanny Mayorga 27:03

In here in the US, everybody is - part of when you go to major university - some of the requirements are that you take various subjects. One of those subjects is psychology, right? I remember taking my first psychology class, I think I was at Sonoma University. And I had this instructor that I just did not like. I liked the topic of psychology, the psychology subject wasn't the issue. It was the instructor who was the issue. And the professor kept referencing a sitcom, which was, it's called Seinfeld. I don't know if you heard of it. Yeah. And Seinfeld just happens to be one

of my favorite sitcoms, okay. And I absolutely hated that he was referencing the show. And I stopped going to the class because I just could not take it.

I don't think - I think the professor knew that I didn't like him, right. And I passed the class, but I didn't pass - I just passed it. But it wasn't after I left, I think I was in - I was already in my master's program, where I realized the importance of psychology. As you mentioned, in psychology, you can tear someone down or you can bring them up. Yep. And because I studied business, in my master's program, and I'm huge on management and leadership.

That's when I started to get into psychology, because it's all about when you're managing people, it's all about psychology. And if you don't understand what that is, or how to use that towards your advantage as a manager. That's why there's a lot of people that say you don't leave companies, you leave bad bosses or bad managers. That's exactly the reason. The reason why - now you decided as part of your program, you were going to do a study on breast cancer and how that impacts women, correct?

Monica Loayza 29:14

Yeah, you're right, actually. In Peru to be licensed in psychology, you need to do a thesis of investigation. And you need to present that in front of a jury. And that's how you get your license. And let's say from, you know, to do the practice down there, yeah. I was curious. I've always had a special particular interest in the clinical field in psychology.

For those who are psychologists will know that the clinical is a very broad field where you get to explore different cases and, you know, there's a different spectrum of the mind and disorders that we can classify them. My particular interest was with patients with cancer, their struggle with breast cancer. And I remember that it took me most like a year to get the thesis and do the presentation and everything. And you mentioned something very important that you need to know the people and you can't throw them down or you just can lift them up.

I believe in psychology, no matter the field you are, that's your biggest challenge. Working with the breast cancer patients that I had the opportunity, I saw that, because I had to work with several - like 80-plus women, that was the sample of my thesis. Every single one of them remembered the doctor who was with them walking through the disease, and every single person in their environment who made an impact in their lives, for good or for bad. And granted, these are women

who were - this was a few years ago, those were fully mastectomy was a technique to, you know, deal with cancer. So as a feminine, those are a mutilation of your body. So the levels of self-esteem and image - corporal self-image, corporeal - it was so affected.

So that was the thesis about, and it turned out to be a great study. And at the same time, I saw how women overcome this disease. You know, cancer is a lethal disease. So, and you have to see the statistics is growing. And I cannot only wait for more people to be supportive of this field, because it's needed. We call it the field of psycho-oncology field. So you basically are trained to work with patients with cancer and with the family. Sometimes cancer, it's an interesting disease, it works a lot with the stress environment. And it's a fast reproduction of cells. When you just give love to that person, and this whole family support, the cells start to stop to reproduce.

There are studies behind it as well. So I would just say be aware and conscious of how much of stress will impact your life. And if it's worth it to, you know, high up those levels of anxiety or just take care of your routine, your food, your diet, exercise. Those are the factors that are going to diminish the options to have cancer. Yeah. So it was a great investigation job.

And, yeah, definitely you get to, you know, you get to be the scientist collecting the data, and then just helping the people. At the same time, my patients - you give them tools, how to overcome that situation, work with the meditations as well, get trained with the disease's impact on your body and your mind.

And psychology has this particular sense where you cannot prescribe, like a medicine, right? Because we're talking with your psyche, your mind, your thoughts, your emotions. They don't have medicine for that. So that's what the work creates - new connections in therapy. So you have to be a conscious person, responsible. Yeah, like it and care for your own wellbeing and the other person's wellbeing.

Geovanny Mayorga 33:35

Yeah, absolutely. Like you said, unfortunately, cancer is a terrible, terrible disease. Something that my family, as I mentioned to you, has a lot of, unfortunately, experience with, and definitely lots of love and support not only for everyone who has to have that battle because it's not an easy battle. You know, everybody

cope differently, and I think what the best thing you can do for someone is just be there for them, have that support.

One of the things that I do is just give people space, because only the people that are going through it know what they need. You can't assume or think that you know what they're going through. That's true. And yeah, the best thing you can do is just give them space and if they need you, they will come and just show that support for them. Like I said, unfortunately I've had, you know, the mother of my children, I have two cousins that have battled cancer, had lots of family friends who have battled cancer, my grandmother.

So unfortunately cancer has touched my family more than I think anybody else or any of us thought it would. But for sure. You know, my interest started because of that in psychology piqued even more, because as you talked about the levels of depression that comes with it. Yeah. Right. Stress and levels of depression. So that's something that I've always been interested in learning a lot about.

And obviously, because the field of psychology is wide ranging, I have a lot of interest in, you know, mob mentality as well, with all the protests going on and how that develops and gets out of hand pretty quickly. And from being in business and management a lot, industrial psychology is something that really interests me quite a bit. So there's a lot of topics.

Monica Loayza 35:30

Oh, yeah, there's a lot of topics. And if you are interested, I would just say pursue that dream. Yeah. It's never late to study, to be trained in those things that you're passionate and you are interested in. And yeah, industrial psychology and organizational psychology. It's pretty much what I started with, and you get to work with people as well. I mean, the impact you bring into companies and, you know, leverage their community in the work environment. It's huge. And you're still a human person. And it's related to stress levels as well. So absolutely, yeah. Yeah, they're all - it's we are a connection where we're connected with everything.

Geovanny Mayorga 36:14

Where are you at? Yeah, basically. Yeah. You talked a lot about your love to travel. Oh, yeah. Learn cultures, music. Oh, yes. What are some of your most amazing places you've traveled to?

Monica Loayza 36:32

Well, I've been a very avid traveler, a fair amount, I would say. My grandpa used to say, "From all my grandchildren, you are the most adventurous of all." I've been to Australia. I've been to several states here in the US - New York, Florida, California, Michigan, Wisconsin. I've been to France. And definitely have on my bucket list a couple other European destinations. And, you know, I've been to the Caribbean islands too. Nice, for a while. Um, so yeah, I love traveling. You're right. And music is one of my biggest passions as well. So hopefully, those next trips are going to happen in the next, I would say, next term or next middle term.

Geovanny Mayorga 37:31

Yeah. We'll take a little bit of music as well. Any concerts going on? So we talked a little bit about some new concerts coming up?

Monica Loayza 37:37

Oh, yes. Yes. I'm going to Summerfest in Wisconsin. I'm a fan of the Goo Goo Dolls. Oh. I'm going to Def Leppard and Metallica, they're coming to Chicago. Oh, nice. I have tickets for Pink. And I have tickets for JLo.

Geovanny Mayorga 37:53

Isn't that canceled?

Monica Loayza 37:54

I think so. I think I read something about it. So hopefully—

Geovanny Mayorga 37:58

That one's canceled.

Monica Loayza 38:00

Oh, wow.

Monica Loayza 38:02

Yeah. That's what I like about Chicago. There's so many concerts, festivals. Saturday. Last Saturday I was at an '80s festival - rock music from all these, you know, the '80s. Wow, I had a great time. That was in Old Town. And this is the time to go to the concerts and festivals. So yeah.

Geovanny Mayorga 38:21

Controversial time for us here in Chicago. Riot Fest has to move or decided to move their location.

Monica Loayza 38:29

I didn't know that. Yeah. That's too bad.

Geovanny Mayorga 38:31

Just announced yesterday. Oh. Were you going?

Monica Loayza 38:34

No, I wanted to go last year but I didn't.

Geovanny Mayorga 38:39

Yeah, I wanted to go last year, didn't end up going.

Monica Loayza 38:45

There's so much stuff to do.

Geovanny Mayorga 38:45

It is true. I mean, big fan of Chicago here. From sports to art museums. Yes. Blues. I mean, there's so much and so many activities to do. I cannot be happier living here.

Geovanny Mayorga 39:01

Yeah. And it's important, you know, for people - there are two different things. You know, there's a touristy side that I think as Chicagoans we still do, because there's so much to do. But there's real life as well, with traffic and the daily grind of whether you take traffic or public transportation, which also takes a long time. Right. What is your message as someone who went through the process of being an international student, having to get visa, you know, not working professionally in the US? What's your message to someone who wants to try that? They're looking at that.

Monica Loayza 39:36

I like that. I would definitely say to keep doing it. If you have that dream, if you see yourself living in the US and first of all, I would say do research. So you can understand what are the challenges you will face. Would be open-minded as well. Yeah. One of the things I like about that experience is that the more open you

come with your mind open and, you know, ready to experience everything, the better you're going to succeed. I'm not saying that you're not going to have struggles, you will. But I would say it's your tenacity, your patience and just getting things done little by little. If you struggle with the visa, just make sure you have good assessment and good information on what are the next steps for you, in whatever the home country you're coming from, and the rules there. Come here, always respect the people, the society, the rules, be highly adaptable into a new culture. Keep in mind, you're going to face culture barriers and language barriers, but that's part of the process. And do not be afraid to speak up if you have to, and be proud of the roots that you bring. Because at the end of the day, you are going to be like an ambassador of your own country. Right. Right. And you're going to have the opportunity to shine and at the same time to acquire a lot of new experiences that might be so rich and unique for people that did not have that chance. Right? So just do it. And then don't - don't be afraid. If you have to struggle with things, you just keep going. Do not stop. That will be my best advice. Yeah.

Geovanny Mayorga 41:30

Great advice. So as we finish up a wonderful conversation, how can our students reach you? Where can they find you?

Monica Loayza 41:39

Of course. So they can reach out to me at careerservices@mccollege.edu. My extension would be 312-236-9000, extension 114. And they can always see me in the office at LaSalle campus, Evergreen Park and Naperville. And if they need any assistance with the resumes, mock job interviews, and discuss career goals, you can always book an appointment with me too. And then we'll have a one-on-one training.

Geovanny Mayorga 42:12

And students should take advantage of that, as we talked about.

Monica Loayza 42:16

Oh yes.

Geovanny Mayorga 42:17

Wonderful resource.

Monica Loayza 42:18

For sure. And stay tuned because we always launch on our social media a lot of reels of tips on how to get a job interview, how to prepare for one, and how to keep your high performance at work.

Geovanny Mayorga 42:31

And they can find it on YouTube correct, or on our LinkedIn page.

Monica Loayza 42:35

It's on our platforms - LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and yes, YouTube.

Geovanny Mayorga 42:41

Yeah. So wonderful. It's been great to have you and great conversation. Hope our listeners got to learn who you are, what you do. And like I said, you're a wonderful resource with lots of knowledge. And I think we're very happy to have you in the current role. So want to remind our listeners to follow us on different streaming sites, whatever you like. YouTube, obviously is where we have our videos. And our audio files are on Spotify, YouTube - I'm sorry - Amazon Music and Apple Podcasts. So contact us at podcast@mccollege.edu. And we look forward to talking to you next time. Thank you.

Monica Loayza 43:27

Thank you. Enjoy and take care. Take care. Bye.

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