

Patrice Fuller Oral History

Recorded October 11, 2024, at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon, during Homecoming / Reunion.

Interviewer: Jenny Johnson-Riley ("JJR"), Pacific University Class of 1998.

This transcription was made through AI with manual corrections, clarifications, and editing of some repetitions and filler words, March 2025.

[JJR] 0:02

It's October 11, 2024 and we're at Pacific University Homecoming. This is Jenny Johnson Riley, and I am going to be interviewing Patrice Fuller about her time at Pacific. So Patrice, can you start off by just saying what school [you were in], what you studied, and what years you were here?

[Fuller] 0:24

Yes. So I came to the Forest Grove campus as an undergrad from 2012 to 2016 and I studied Psychology with a concentration in Neuroscience.

[JJR] 0:37

All right, in our pre-interview, you were telling me a little bit about your work on the ACE board. You want to tell me a little more about that?

[Fuller] 0:44

So I was the cultural chair from -- I want to say 2014 to 2016 -- don't quote me on that. My main role was pretty much to support the different cultural events / social events that would be happening on campus for our students. And quite a few things that we end up doing is partnering with other social clubs that were here; specifically the cultural clubs that were here, which was the Hispanic Heritage Association, and then also the Black Student Union. And so we would try to plan whatever event that would help support them in any way.

[Fuller]

So I remember the Black Student Union was doing the Soul Food Dinner at the time; it wasn't specifically during Homecoming week, but it usually happens in Black History Month, I do remember that. And so we would help support when it comes to providing food for the event; we usually had a documentary that we were going to show, or just a movie that was about the social justice topics that was happening within that Black community at the time. When I was there, the recent things that were happening was the Trayvon Martin and Mike Brown shootings that happened. We wanted to bring awareness about how police brutality is still very rampant within our country, and that even though we bring awareness to it, there's still a lot of backlash coming from it when we do bring the awareness to the forefront.

[Fuller]

And so we would do those type of events, like we would do movie screenings. We would just have, really, just small discussions, especially within our general meetings. We would obviously talk about business and stuff like that, but then we will also go into, like, "what's the recent events that's been happening within our community?" and "how can we bring awareness on our campus?" and "how can we be able to support whoever has been affected with it?" That was one of my roles, to help support them on that piece.

[Fuller]

Then with the Hispanic Heritage Association, I know they have done a couple of events, especially during the Hispanic Heritage Month. I believe that starts on September 27 through the second week of October. So they would do an event [for that], and then also for, I want to say (I'm gonna butcher the name!), but the "Day of the Dead": they would do a celebration for the "Day of the Dead." [Laughs] I was gonna say it in Spanish, but that wouldn't be great. So: being able to support them, we made sure you're leading that piece, but we're here to back you up in financial or whatever volunteer ways that we can. It was really interesting to attend all these different cultural events, because I learned about other peoples' cultures, as well as their learning about mine.

[Fuller]

Being able to connect in certain ways, especially with the issues that was going on in society, and how to be able to

support each other during that time. So it really was building ally-ship, or, to me, "accomplice." I know I talked with one of a past alum yesterday about that term.

[Fuller]

It was good, I did enjoy the ACE Board a lot. It has built my skill set, especially when it came to event planning. And it actually helped me later on within my career, for a bit, doing different events for my job. Being able to go to the different opportunities that they did provide. When we had open mic, it was nice for me to learn more about the tech side and how to set up speakers and mics and stuff. It was difficult to figure out, but I made it work. So I was able to be a part of the tech crew, mostly with the breakdown, because I was like, "you don't want me to set it up, you just want me to break it down, so I'll help you organize it that way."

[Fuller]

Then also being able to go to the different conferences that we were invited to, or we wanted to attend in the first place; the biggest one was the ones like a national conference that every college/university representative would go to, to see different college acts or entertainment that they can bring to campus. Some were magicians, some were musicians, some were comedians. We had a couple of comedians, for sure, that came to campus. Some were poets. We had a few slam poets that came to our campus a couple of times. I do remember one of them being Kane Smego -- fond memories!

[Laughs]

[Fuller]

To me that was eye opening, because I had never been to slam poetry before, and so to pretty much learn from him, what it was about and listening to some of the artwork that he made, I was like, "Okay, this is something that I can kind of get used to, or just appreciate more," and knowing how much emotion and experience comes when they put into their work.

[Fuller]

Plus, it was also building our cultural board -- not cultural board -- our ACE board chairs, too. That was a time for us to really bond, because it was, I want to say it was like a week long? It could have been shorter than that, maybe four days? But it was still a time that we were off campus, get to learn more about each other out of our college spaces and seeing what they're really like. And we did build friendships over time, for sure, and Pete [Erschen] was always there. I do remember Pete being there, either him or Steve. Steve Klein -- I think he's retired now.

[JJR] 6:35

Steve Klein, I actually remember from my time here, and who was Pete? Do you remember his last name?

[Fuller] 6:39

Starts with an E. I could never pronounce it correctly. I felt bad for that. I want to say "Erschen", but don't quote me. I know he's still around here, so, sorry, Pete! [Laughs]

[Fuller]

Yeah, they were the life of the party, I'ma be honest with you. And then when we had-- oh, this is kind of like a side tangent -- because Pete and Martha [Calus-McLain] end up... and a few other faculty people -- Oh, that's what it was: Pete, Martha, Stephanie and Beverly, I want to say, was the faculty/staff members that ended up starting the social justice retreat.

[JJR] 7:28

Was that Martha Rampton?

[Fuller] 7:37

No. Martha McLain, she was a part of our group on starting that because of everything that was happening during that time. Because I want to say they started this in 2014? Either 2014 or 2015, so it was right after the police brutality that'd been going rampant, and they were like, "There's a lot of social justice things that are going on that's affecting our students. What can we do to start training maybe some leaders that's on campus to help push that initiative of bringing awareness?"

[Another person enters; the two speakers begin talking to the newcomer and turn off the recording.]