

DS – Dan Smith, Interviewer

LA – Lukas Anderson, subject

DS: Oral interview at 11:44, September 2, 2009. I'm here with

LA: Lukas Anderson

DS: Who is a student at NMU. I'm going to ask his some questions about his experience at NMU. Lukas, what year are you in?

LA: I'm a senior, in my fourth year.

DS: Fourth year? So you graduated high school in..

LA:2006

DS: And what is your major here at NMU?

LA: I have two majors, a major in philosophy and a major in writing. And I have a minor in International Studies.

DS: Ok, so you've been a full time student since you started here?

LA: Yes I have.

DS: And have you found Northern an intriguing school regarding your field of study?

LA: I certainly have, although the department for philosophy is kind of small, the English department is very big and I've always had enthusiastic professors. I also find that one thing I've run into is academic advisors, it can kind of be interesting sometimes. Like, The people who can be involved in specific departments aren't necessary that helpful just because they've got a lot of students to manage. But Carolyn Morris is one good example, she was just my standard, undeclared advisor, but I actually go back to her every semester before I sign up for classes, she's always been really helpful.

DS: Just helpful in giving you direction, even though she isn't a professor specific to your major?

LA: Yeah, I think the big thing is since she is for undeclared majors, typically, she knows the system really well, how class selection works, and how requirements are set for different programs, and then since they come out with slightly different programs every year since they're always adjusting it, things can get pretty complicated and confusing. And with so many classes to manage and three different departments she's always kind of been a big help in getting those thoughts organized. And everytime I remember signing off for class I remember I'd be a little nervous about what I'd picked, not really sure that I'd selected the right classes to fulfill what I need to fulfill here, but she was always really reassuring and helpful and made sure I was on the right course.

DS: And your experience with the English department, you said it was pretty large and well developed.

LA: Yeah, I've gotten a lot of different professors there with expertise in a lot of different areas, there's professors with every department and so many of them with interests in specific areas. I mean, you get to view a lot of different areas. I know one of the classes I had to take was intro to professional writing, and basically what we did in that class was each group would study a different area of professional writing. We'd talk about journalism or fiction writing. We had different grad students from the poetry department come in and talk about what grad school was like for them in that department. A professor from the journalism department, Jim Collins, who had survived for decades off of strictly freelance journalism came in with a lot of information about writing for magazines and doing career letters and stuff like that. That class was very useful for finding areas where you could find employment in the writing field, and seeing exactly what those areas are like, so I always thought that was really good class to have.

DS: Ok, now I was going to ask with two majors and a minor, it seems like you might have a lot of different options of what you're going to go into, and just as far as a career goes do you have any idea what your focus is going to be once your done with school?

LA: I have a lot of ideas, I guess. Like you say, I do have a lot of options and different directions I could go, and that's half the fun. To be honest, at this point I don't really know where at this point. I've thought about what a lot of those options are. Journalism is definitely one, and the journalism classes I've taken as well as the little experience I've had writing for the North wind has been an advantage kind of learning about what that sort of career might be like. At the same time, with my experience in the philosophy department I've studied basically the humanities so much, lot of history classes, culture classes and such. I've taken most of the basic foundations of humanities, sociology, and psychology. I'm taking a cognition class right now which is actually a psychology class, but I'm substituting it for a philosophy class, because it has implications in that department as well. But yeah, my options are really open. Having philosophy in there as a background has really helped as well, with the look I take when it comes to writing. So I think following multiple programs has its advantages. At the same time, I suppose it also has certain drawbacks. When I sign up for classes in a semester, I always have certain classes all across the board – like I'll be in a philosophy class, dealing with the history of modern philosophy for example, and then I'll have a fiction writing class, which aren't directly connected with each other. Sometimes my studies are pretty spread out, but then in the long run taking those classes helps me look at the others in a different way.

DS: Are there a lot of other fields in English besides journalism that a lot of English writing majors go in to?

LA: One of my first areas of interest when I first got into writing was fiction, and a lot of classes that I've taken through the writing department were different fiction composition classes, and that's something that I'm very interested in. At the same time, with the market as it is today, the written word has changed a lot. I have a visual performing arts requirement, just a basic liberal studies requirement, and the class I picked to cover that was intro to film. There were a lot of students in that class from the English department, and that class was really interesting because it gave me a really different perspective on fiction that I think was more applicable to modern times, and I met a lot of different

people through that class too that are talking about going to film school after graduating from NMU and stuff. That's one idea that I've given a lot of thought to, is applying what I've used in my fiction composition class to different, more modern scopes like film, stuff like that. So there's a lot out there, and at the same time there are still those people pursuing those mediums that aren't necessarily as popular, like the poetry students that came to visit my intro to professional writing class. Those guys are going out to be professional poets, which isn't something one would really think of as a career path in the modern day. There are definitely so many things to do. My roommate and I have really talked about it, Mark Vassallo, that one of the major advantages to my major and field of study is that anywhere in the world where business is being conducted one of the major processes there is communication, one of the main ways to communicate is through writing and vocabulary. Mastering vocabulary then through the English department will give me the means to apply myself to the wide array of jobs that are out there, it's just a matter of who wants to hire these days.

DS: Moving away from the academic side of things, how did you find coming to Northern as a school, doing activities, making friends, things like that.

LA: I love it. To be honest, I think that Marquette is at least half the reason that I'm even going to Northern Michigan University. A good example of that is when I first came up here to look at this school - I was up here for two days, and I spent the first day taking a campus tour, looking at the different classes and talking to different people for that. I spent the second day snowboarding, and that is probably part of what convinced me to come up here. I love being outdoors, and I don't know of anyone who goes to a school that offers anything like what we have here for outdoor activities. And people are very active in the dorms, I remember playing soccer and ultimate Frisbee and stuff like that with the groups outside the dorms. And you mentioned social life, so again we come to the dorms. I mean, I've met everyone I know now there. I'm really glad I lived there while I did, and when I got out I was ready to just because I was at that stage. I don't think I've had any trouble making friends up here, I think I've had the chance to meet a lot of people and then finding good friends that are worth keeping close. I certainly haven't had any issues in that area. I mean, when I go home I always have stories to tell my friends about sweet stuff that I've done up here, just going camping or hiking or mountain biking, or you know I love playing in the snow. So all those months that we have tons and tons of snow up here we have lots to do just playing around outside

DS: Do you feel like the school facilitates these activities that you like to do. Are there clubs, programs, and stuff or do you just organize them on your own?

LA: Oh absolutely. I tend to do stuff on my own, or just a couple of friends most of the time, just because I've always been like that. I grew up as an only child, and I've managed my time more than anything. But even so, I took a backpacking class this summer. I got a chance to sort of study stuff that I already kind of knew, but also to develop expertise in certain areas, and gain more experience for doing stuff like that. I'm in a judo class right now, which is another good example. There are a lot of opportunities to get involved with stuff like that, even just through the Health Promotion Department, on top of the other extracurriculars they offer. One of the coolest things about the way they do that is just with the way the tuition program works. Like with judo, I took the class because there was room in the class, I had space

in my schedule, and it was free. I was taking sixteen credits at the time, and with block payment it fit right in, the flat rate and everything. And I know a lot of kids who are doing similar things. I know kids who are scuba certified through the same type of programs. I know kids who have taken mountain biking classes so yeah, its definitely encouraged. Another good example I think is the rock climbing program at the PEIF or just the PEIF itself. I go to the PEIF probably four to five times a week during the school year, and I have taken the belay training that they offer there for rock climbing too. There's definitely something for everybody

DS: So considering the educational, academic, social, sort of everything we've just discussed about NMU, if you were talking to a high school senior right now, just graduated, considering NMU as a school, looking at other places too, what would you tell them to sort of sell them NMU.

LA: Well, I would tell them that NMU is the perfect place for people who are looking for something different. That's strictly speaking from my perspective. I mean, I went too an extremely large and sort of academically aggressive high school in the suburbs right near the twin cities of Minnesota. With that background, for me this was something really different than the college experience most of my friends back home are getting. A lot of those kids are still in the cities, and they're hanging out with a lot of the same kids , and they're doing a lot of the same stuff in their everyday lives. And me, I've found a lot of new areas of interest and different activities for myself. And I have also found out a lot about myself by going here. So yeah, I think that's the main thing. If you liked high school, and want college to be just as new and exciting as high school, I think that NMU is the perfect place to go.

DS: All right well thanks Luke I think that will wrap it up for us today.