

## **Translation of discussion between Dr David Sweeting and students Anaina and Zayed**

D: Okay well, I'm David Sweeting, I'm a professor here at Bristol University at the School of Policy Studies and I have here two Masters students Anaina and Zayed.

A: I'm Anaina, nice to meet you and I'm studying the Masters of Nutrition Physical Activity and Public Health.

D: Very well, and Zayed.

Z: Hello, I'm Zayed and I'm studying the programme of Masters of Public Policy here at Bristol University.

D: Very good, ahh and we are here to talk about your experiences of being students here and all that so first, why did you choose your programmes?

Z: Because in Venezuela there are not a lot of universities that have the programme of Policy Studies, there's a great lack of them and I was looking for a university in England and Bristol seemed to offer the most complete programme.

D: Yes yes, specifically the masters in Public Policy?

Z: Yes, specifically yes. Comparing to others it seemed to me that the programme offered by Bristol was the most complete one and the one who better adapted to what I was looking for.

D: Okay, and Anaina?

A: Me, I looked through the international ranking of universities. I was interested in England and my... I studied Food Engineering and I was a little bit more interested in health so Nutrition, Physical Activity and Public Health seemed to cover comprehensively all those topics and I wanted to dive in to see what it was about. I loved the city, I loved the University, I talked to some professors and that was the best decision.

D: Wow, very good...excellent, I'm glad...ahhh and ...you mmmh... the admission application, how was it? Too difficult? Too easy? How much time did it take you?

A: No, it was a very easy process eh...through internet, everything is on-line and the person in charge, the department in charge of admissions at the University of Bristol is very efficient, very very efficient. That was one of the reasons that also drove me to make this choice.

D: Very well.

A: Yes, for me the application was also very easy, through the internet, almost immediate, you complete the application on-line and they answer you almost immediately, they send you...well if you are eligible, the conditional offer when you send all your documents... if you are Mexican be aware that you need to have your undergraduate degree, and that's different from a certification letter with grades, the undergraduate degree it's important, I wasn't expecting that but okay, I had it and that was it.

D: Yes...

A: I sent it like that...

D: And did international office make it easy or...?

Z: International office was really helpful when arriving, ehh...in my case they gave us a tour through the university campus before starting classes which helped me to get familiarized with the environment and also opening a bank account, also they told us about all the requirements, they were really really helpful, in my case they were a great help.

D: Very good, very good... and...ehmm...things like visa applications and all that? Difficult? More difficult?

A: Well, the best advice is to plan ahead.

D: Yes.

Z: Yes.

A: In advance, ehmm...look over everything that is needed, the fund because you need to have a bank account with your name or your parents, look through all the requirements with enough time so you arrive on time, scholarship applications are necessary but .... yes, it's a hassle but worth it!

D: Haha

Z: Yes, a tedious process and a process that requires a lot of anticipation, a lot a lot of anticipation because of all the requirements.

D: Okay, so it has to be planned with...

Z: (*interrupting*) ...yes it has to be planned.

D: Hahaha

Z: ... a lot of anticipation is needed!

A: Check that the dates fit with the period in which you'll have the scholarship, the authorization, and the bank letter...well...dates!

D: Okay...very well. And how much information did you look for at the university? Was it through the web site? Was it okay? You have said that in the...in the...how's it said...ehmm the....

A: (interrupting)...rankings?

D: Rankings yes, yes. What ... ehmm...help me out...

A: ...which level...hahahaha

*ALL LAUGH*

A: Which number from the ranking?

D: No, no ...

Z: How many universities....did we look at on the internet for....?

D: Eh yes yes, that sort of things...yes...

Z: Eh...a lot of them, in my case I looked according to the programme eh...initially. Which universities of England were specialized in Public Policy and then I started dismissing them by ... between North and South, I prefer South because of the weather.

*ALL LAUGH*

Z: Less cold, eh...then the ranking of the universities was also important, I also made a research about it and they were like 25 universities that I looked for, more or less....through internet.

A: Yes, yes, it was also an extensive search and I think maybe ten because nutrition and physical activity with public policy... it's not an usual combination, it is very well tailored to people interested in that field in particular so ...at the end also the weather ....

*ALL LAUGH*

A: .the city...ehmm...yes.

D: okay, very well, and ehmm... how is it to study here? What do you think about being a student here?

Z: Ahmm I like it a lot, ehmm... the University is very very good, there's a big support from academics ehmm...they are always aware of the students, not only in the academic sense but also in a personal level, which is very much appreciated when you are new in a foreign university, eh... the programme for me is very well designed, the city is very nice, very very nice and... it's a university with a lot of technological resources and ehmm...and the resources from the library are impressive and how the way the library works, it makes your life as a student easy....really because everything is automatized and the great amount of bibliography you can find is impressive, really it's really really impressive.

D: And you Anaina?

A: The electronic and printed resources enable you .... how do they say? Without all the tools is difficult to make a critical analysis, well I think we have spare resources available... that helps a lot, also the disposition of the academics is unbelievable, I mean you can really have a good personal or intellectual conversation with them, there's good guidance from their part and ....I don't know, I have really liked that...eh...and it's very flexible and there's, for example, people coming from London because the classes are only one day per week so they make possible that people from other parts of England can attend and keep their part-time jobs and still come so I think that the diversity of the programme... of the people attending to the programme, gives the programme an exceptional value, and ... and that all that with the academic excellence of the University...and the challenges, it's very demanding as well.

D: And do you have a ... a preferred unit or module? A part of the course...

A&Z: A subject?

Z: I liked a lot the one of urbanisation....

D: Yes?

Z: Yes, cities...yes.

D: Hahaha excellent.

Z: Yes because it deals with the differences between cities, how do they work in developing countries and in developed countries. Eh....it's always good to see how different we all are, and how we can help according to our role of executors of public policies or the ones responsible of public policies, how we can help to eliminate or decrease all the gaps that exist for having a better urban planning, at least in...in my country.

D: Okay, and Anaina.

A: Well, all the units are being built on a base so none of them are disconnected from the others, you start building and enlarging your knowledge so...I couldn't say I just have one favourite because I would have to discard all the ground knowledge other units gave me... but regarding to something more practical I think Determinants of Behaviour... I think they are key in public policies and in nutrition or physical activity.

D: Okay and would you use the things you have learned here if you go back to Mexico or Venezuela?

A: Definitely, yes...they are pragmatic tools for immediate use, they teach you a deep critical thinking, to get rid of useless stuff and be efficient instead, I think now all countries are headed to efficient and immediate policies because there are changes that are coming in a really fast way, the prevalence of certain diseases ..... chronic diseases...

Z: Yes well, it was one of the reasons I came to study, to have a wider knowledge and a critical thinking of how to execute public policies in Venezuela, that is one of the lacks of the government and that has to be addressed and improved.

D: Okay so...Bristol, what do you think about Bristol? The city and England, do you like living here?

*ALL LAUGH*

A: The weather is difficult, the weather...there are days in which you say "well, it's still raining". Now we have had a few weeks of sun and that's very cool. I like the city, there is always something to do culturally speaking...music, art...for a student is like a dream city, it's easy to commute by walk, you don't need a car, you can take the bus, you can have nice walks...cycle, it's an amazing city!

Z: Yes, I love it, a very quiet and safe city, it has a lot of parks, it has a green lifestyle which is very important, the weather is not that bad...

*ALL LAUGH*

Z: ...compared to other areas, it has one of the best weathers of England haha, so the city is very enjoyable, it offers a lot of opportunities, I like it a lot.

D: And is there a lot of people that can speak Spanish? Is there a community of Hispanic speakers?

A: Yes, Hispanic speakers...well yes, there is a...I have found a lot of people that speak Spanish ....

D: Yes, more people from Spain than...

A: Yes, mostly Spanish people... more than Latin Americans.. ehh..specially working around the city, but I know that there is also a lot of Latin communities, there's a great amount of Spanish students at the University, you can tell! And also in student accommodations there're also, one of my flatmates is Spanish by the way, ehh...yes, if you look you'll find.

D: And ehmm...the food here...is there food that you...

A: ...that we miss?

D: Yes

A&Z: Speaking indifferently, yes yes, tortillas, green salsa...bring green tomatoes!

*ALL LAUGH*

Z: Yeah well eh hh...Venezuelan food that you cannot find eh hh...harepas, cachapas, pequenos, yeah I miss it but okay there are also options here to eat healthy eh hh quite healthy so that makes up for it, a lot of vegetables, fruits...

A: There's more of what you would think of.

Z: Yes, so you can find the balance...

A: There's coriander!

D: And ah...a place to go out at night?

A: Well yeah, pubs...there are everywhere!!!

Z: Pubs...there are plenty haha

A: But if you like dancing there's a place with Cuban music, there's a disco inside a boat which is great fun, well yeah...there are karaokes I think, pubs...yeah well there are plenty options to go out at night.

D: Okay so thank you very much for this, would you like to say something else?

A&Z: Come to Bristol!

*ALL LAUGH*

D: Very good! And with this we conclude. Thank you very much.