##### [00:00:02.250] - Brian Shelton

I'm Brian Shelton and you are listening to Harper Talks, a coproduction of Harper College Alumni Relations and Harper Radio. One of the best parts about hosting this program is meeting and speaking with our amazing Harper alumni, and we often focus on those who have been given the prestigious Distinguished Alumni Award. For this episode, we reached out to some recent graduates who are still in the early stages of their careers. First, you'll hear from Alex Aleksandrov, who graduated from the nursing program in 2020. Next, you'll hear from Arman Rahman, who graduated in 2016 and works as a television news reporter in Madison, Wisconsin. And finally, we'll hear from Nick Wenzel, a graduate of the graphic Arts technology program and now works for Zoom. Joining me first from Miami, Florida, is Alex Aleksandrov. She was so kind to join me on Zoom after finishing her shift.

##### [00:00:54.650] - Brian Shelton

Hi, Alex. How are you doing today?

##### [00:00:57.010] - Alex Aleksandrov

I'm good. How are you?

##### [00:00:58.550] - Brian Shelton

I am wonderful. Thanks for being on Harper talks. Thanks for taking some time out of your day. I know that you're very busy, and I appreciate you joining us.

##### [00:01:06.820] - Alex Aleksandrov

Thank you so much for having me.

##### [00:01:08.380] - Brian Shelton

So I was looking you graduated in May of 2020. That had to be a very interesting time to be graduating from college.

##### [00:01:15.620] - Alex Aleksandrov

It definitely was. It was more challenging than it was interesting. It was a lot of uncertainty, but we made it.

##### [00:01:24.890] - Brian Shelton

That's great. How did you finish nursing school during a pandemic? How did that work?

##### [00:01:29.300] - Alex Aleksandrov

It actually, for my cohort, it worked great because it cut short just a couple of weeks of our capstone or Practicum. So I was able to finish all of my classes, everything in person, which I'm so grateful for, because I can't imagine how students after the cohorts, after us, were learning how to be nurses by watching videos or having Zoom meetings. So I'm actually very grateful for the way I was able to finish the program.

##### [00:02:01.340] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, it must have been an interesting time. That's for sure. So you came to Harper College in 2017. How did you decide on Harper? How did you get there?

##### [00:02:10.250] - Alex Aleksandrov

So I was an international student, and as an international student, when I first came, I attended Harold Washington down in downtown Chicago. So after that, I was traveling an hour back and forth each day. So I just wanted to find a local college. And through people in the community, I heard about Harper. I researched their nursing program. They told me that it's a well established, well known nurses have great education. So I figured this is the place where I'll be.

##### [00:02:44.880] - Brian Shelton

That's great. You were also a Hope scholar. While you're at Harper, can you tell us about that?

##### [00:02:50.150] - Alex Aleksandrov

The Hope Scholarship and being a Hope Scholar was a life changing experience. As I already mentioned, I did come as an international student, so my semesters were very expensive. There were times that I had to pay 7000, $8,000 per semester in order to maintain my status. So, as you can imagine, that's a lot of money that I have to work and save to be able to complete my education. And then, luckily, I was able to get this HOPE scholarship, which gave me an opportunity to continue not only finish my associates, but also go into and finish my bachelor's right after I graduated from Harper. Also, it allowed me to meet so many incredible people that are giving so much to the community and influencing so many different people's lives.

##### [00:03:41.320] - Brian Shelton

That's absolutely fantastic. Yeah. I don't think people realize that community college students who are international students pay a higher rate of tuition than those who are from the area. So yeah, it's a significant difference.

##### [00:03:51.720] - Alex Aleksandrov

Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely.

##### [00:03:54.650] - Brian Shelton

Where did you finish your degree? Where did you finish your bachelor's?

##### [00:03:57.860] - Alex Aleksandrov

I finished my bachelor's with Purdue Northwest University.

##### [00:04:01.550] - Brian Shelton

Okay, great. And you felt that Harper really prepared you for that?

##### [00:04:05.440] - Alex Aleksandrov

Absolutely. Harper prepared me for the role of nursing and up to this day, as I've been in the role of a nurse, and I started working in medical intensive care units fresh off of school. There has been many people that have just pointed out how prepared I was for the role of the nurse. And not only that, but let alone be prepared to start in intensive care units, because usually nursing school does not teach us how to be an ICU Nurse. They prepare us for knowing the bare minimums. But Harper's program went above and beyond in that aspect and prepared us so I could not be more grateful for the education that I received through Harper.

##### [00:04:51.950] - Brian Shelton

That's great. Yeah. The nursing program at Harper is widely known as being one of the best. So that's great news to hear that that's really working out for you and good training.

##### [00:05:00.350] - Alex Aleksandrov

Absolutely.

##### [00:05:01.550] - Brian Shelton

While you're at Harper, what were you involved with besides nursing? I know that nursing is a very narrow focus. You've got to really concentrate concentrate on what you're doing. But did you do anything else while you were there?

##### [00:05:10.580] - Alex Aleksandrov

Yeah, in fact, I was the president of the student nurses association, and I was also a peer tutor in the nursing skills lab. So I definitely stayed busy within the field of nursing, which allowed me to learn more and expand my skills and allowed me to be able to pass along the things that I knew to other students. I've always thought that if I know something, if I've learned a concept, if I can teach you that concept, that means I really know it well. So I was able to do that through the nursing skills lab. And as I said, I was the president of the Harper student nurses association, where we were finding topics that nursing students want to expand on beyond the nursing classes.

##### [00:06:00.150] - Brian Shelton

That's really great. That's fantastic. So what are you doing now?

##### [00:06:04.870] - Alex Aleksandrov

Right now, I transitioned to outpatient nursing. I did intensive care nursing, I did medical, and then I transitioned to cardiothoracic for about a year, and then now, finally, I transitioned to outpatient nursing. I just was looking for that more of balance between work and home life and personal life, so I transitioned into outpatient. I currently work with heart failure patients and ventricular assist device patients in an outpatient clinic, and I'm very happy with that position.

##### [00:06:43.960] - Brian Shelton

Yeah. Do you find that work rewarding?

##### [00:06:45.670] - Alex Aleksandrov

I absolutely do. That's one of the reasons excuse me. Why I went to nursing, because nursing is so diverse and there's so many ways that you can make a difference, and making a difference in people's lives was one of the reasons why I chose nursing as a profession. And the second part was just like, you can do so much. You can go from doing telehealth to working in an office to working in a hospital to working for an insurance company, so you can just do so much.

##### [00:07:14.300] - Brian Shelton

That's wonderful. What advice might you have for somebody who is thinking about coming to Harper for nursing school or deciding where it is that they want to go? What would you say to them?

##### [00:07:24.210] - Alex Aleksandrov

I would tell them, Go ahead and do it. Your money will be well invested in your future because Harper really, as I said, it prepares you. It prepares you for your future position. And the teachers at Harper not only are there to teach you, but they're there for emotional support. They're there in any aspect of the two years that you're there. I still keep in touch with some of the professors and some of the teachers at Harper through social media. So social media is great about that, but there's no other place like Harper. You can find a great community. You can find great people. You can find many opportunities that can help you with your education, such as the Hope Scholarship. That is not many people are aware of that, but yeah, if people are thinking about Harper, then I definitely would encourage them to pursue a career there.

##### [00:08:21.040] - Brian Shelton

That's fantastic. Alex, thank you so much for joining us on Harper Talks, and I really want to wish you the best of luck as you continue in your career. And thanks for always thinking about Harper. I appreciate that.

##### [00:08:31.780] - Alex Aleksandrov

Absolutely. Thank you so much for your time.

##### [00:08:34.500] - Brian Shelton

Thank you.

##### [00:08:35.560] - Brian Shelton

Next up is Arman Rahman. I was fortunate to not only have Armand in my classes, but I also traveled with him for speech and debate tournaments. Arman does nights on TV news and got up early in Madison, Wisconsin, to chat on Zoom.

##### [00:08:49.650] - Brian Shelton

Hi, Arman. How are you doing?

##### [00:08:51.450] - Arman Rahman

Good, Brian. How are you today?

##### [00:08:52.910] - Brian Shelton

I am absolutely fantastic. It's a chilly day in Illinois when we're recording this, but you're up in Madison. How's it there?

##### [00:08:59.680] - Arman Rahman

Yeah, we were supposed to get, like, a huge snow dump, and nothing really happened today, thankfully.

##### [00:09:06.190] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, I guess that's a good thing after all. Yeah. Hey, so I remember you as a student. I had you in a couple of classes and worked with you on the Speech and Debate Team at Harper College. And I know that you left in 2016. Tell us a little bit about what you were doing while you were at Harper.

##### [00:09:23.630] - Arman Rahman

Yeah, so I started at Harper going for acting, and then I kind of thought, well, I should probably make some money after college. No, it wasn't really for me. So I switched over to broadcast journalism kind of late. You kind of helped me with that, I remember, but, yeah, so I was kind of just getting the college credits I needed. It was an affordable way for me to go to a four year university. So I was there for two years. And yeah, I did a lot with the speech and Debate team, like you said, and then moved on to DePaul.

##### [00:09:53.130] - Brian Shelton

Okay, so you grew up in the region around Harper.

##### [00:09:56.810] - Arman Rahman

Correct. I have to grow up 15 minutes away from Harper.

##### [00:09:59.480] - Brian Shelton

Okay, and so you decided to go to Harper because of cost. Is that really what the deciding factor was?

##### [00:10:04.930] - Arman Rahman

Yeah, at first. I mean, obviously, I think I was actually closer to Oakton Community College, but I'd heard from friends and just family members that had kind of taken classes at Harper how different it was as a community college than the rest. So that obviously it seemed like the sort of direct way to go.

##### [00:10:23.930] - Brian Shelton

Okay, so tell me about the speech and debate team. I know that you were heavily involved with that, but tell our listeners about that.

##### [00:10:30.090] - Arman Rahman

Yeah, it's not as it sounded. There was a lot of sort of more acting events, kind of artsy kind of presentation, but it was all very much sort of confined into a public speaking kind of mode of delivery. So I did a lot of the more acting, kind of dramatic type of we call them events, which are just kind of types of speeches. But I also composed just straight up just three point speeches and then did a lot of what we call impromptu, which directly translated to my career. I mean, I do that on live shots every night. I go out there and with whatever information I have, I have to compose one to two minute little live hit before tossing back to the anchors. And that's exactly what we did at Harper in Speech. But, yeah, no, I did that. And then I won a couple of national awards. My second year, we had Nationals in California, and I got gold for sort of a comedic speech, called speech to entertain, and then two bronze awards for two acting events of mine. So..

##### [00:11:35.790] - Brian Shelton

That's fantastic. So you're saying that public speaking helps your career?

##### [00:11:40.980] - Arman Rahman

I know. Shocking, isn't it? (laughs)

##### [00:11:44.430] - Brian Shelton

This is a conversation we have with students all the time because it's the one class they don't want to take. Right. The whole thing, the two things that people are most afraid of in the world are death and public speaking. But public speaking ranks higher than death.

##### [00:11:56.790] - Arman Rahman

I've heard that from a lot of my peers when I took speech classes.

##### [00:12:00.710] - Brian Shelton

Very strange thing. So you were heavily involved with that. And I know you took some audio and video production classes while you were at the school. How does that help prepare you when you left in 2016 to go to DePaul?

##### [00:12:14.020] - Arman Rahman

Yeah, it definitely helps in not making video editing software like Adobe Premiere a completely different animal. We kind of worked with Adobe audition in your class with a lot of, like, audio production. And then I think we dabbled a bit in video, but not too much at Harper, but mostly the audio, which really helped me. And then also, I know, part of our class you had us do like, I think it was like an hour long radio program on WHCM. And so that was really my first kind of jump into deep water with being on air. But, yeah, so those really help me. Then at DePaul, it kind of switched focuses to more of the Adobe Premiere, more of the video aspect of it, and the writing of the journalism.

##### [00:12:55.410] - Brian Shelton

Did you feel like your overall education at Harper prepared you to transfer?

##### [00:13:01.690] - Arman Rahman

Definitely. Yeah. I think it helped to not sort of look for a lot of those very specific broadcast journalism classes, because I think I would have lost out in a lot of the fundamentals of public speaking and just how to sound natural when presenting and then also, like, the networking aspect of it that I got with the speech team.

##### [00:13:25.170] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, that's fantastic. So what are you doing now? I know what you're doing, but tell everybody what you're doing right now.

##### [00:13:32.200] - Arman Rahman

Right now, I'm what's called a multimedia journalist or MMJ reporter at the CBS affiliate in Madison called News Three now. And so what I do is I'm supposed to pitch a story every day to be what's called a package around a minute 30, a minute 40 recorded news story with different interviews and broll shots laid in with an audio track of my own in there. And most days, I gather the interviews, shoot the interviews, write the story, edit the story, and present it on air.

##### [00:14:05.250] - Brian Shelton

So one person operation.

##### [00:14:07.240] - Arman Rahman

You have one man band, as we call it.

##### [00:14:10.350] - Brian Shelton

And I know that when you were at the station previously, you also did some anchoring as well.

##### [00:14:16.360] - Arman Rahman

Yes, in my last station, I was the weekend anchor and producer. We were very small. It was Duluth, Minnesota. So not a huge TV market. But yeah. So I would produce the run down for the shows Friday and Saturday and then obviously anchor that from the desk. And then also during the week I reported here, I kind of do a little more fill in anchoring because they have a little bit bigger staff than we had.

##### [00:14:43.690] - Brian Shelton

But do you like anchoring?

##### [00:14:45.360] - Arman Rahman

I do. I don't think I want to be it's funny, we have amazing anchors here, but I mean, that's their entire job as they come in. They'll read the news, they'll read their scripts, read them on air, and then go home. I don't think I could do that for a career. I really do like still getting out there, getting my hands dirty and reporting and working with the camera, the technical editing aspect of it. So I kind of want to do both, right? Eventually, yeah.

##### [00:15:10.180] - Brian Shelton

It would be nice to be able to stay out in the field, but also be at the desk. What are you doing in the community now? Anything going on there?

##### [00:15:17.640] - Arman Rahman

Well, yeah, I just moved to Madison in June, so I'm still kind of getting my feet wet with knowing kind of what's out there. But I do help out with a faith based kind of youth group that includes youth of all different religions. We're not focused on that, but yeah. And through that, we do a lot of community service. We do a lot of outreach, homework help, kind of helping that along. Another thing that honestly, Harper kind of helped me out with because on the speech team, we did a lot of service. You go to feed my starving children, and regularly we go to the coaches for help with their homework and stuff like that. So it definitely didn't feel like it was too much of an alien thing to do.

##### [00:15:57.250] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, that's fantastic. That's great that you're able to get involved with that. And Madison is a fun town. I mean, you've got to enjoy all that Madison has to offer, obviously.

##### [00:16:05.100] - Arman Rahman

Yeah. I don't drink, so I can't enjoy everything, but there's still a lot of cool, neat little places. I remember last week we went to an arcade bar, like really vintage arcade bar after work, and that was awesome. I mean, I'm talking like the original 80s Mario with the checkered shirt before he got all overalls and plaid. But yeah, there's a lot of really nice places around here. I'm definitely enjoying not being in the cold of Duluth. This is a little more close to, like, Chicago kind of climate, which is what I grew up with, so definitely thankful for that. Duluth is like six month long winters where you get like, the air hurts your face, and I don't like being.

##### [00:16:48.210] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, the air hurting your face is no fun. Madison is also a great cycling city. Have we gotten you out on a bicycle yet?

##### [00:16:54.810] - Arman Rahman

We have not, no. I know you are increasing cycling, so I figured you'd ask that. Yeah, I haven't owned a bike, Brian, since I think I was in high school.

##### [00:17:06.790] - Brian Shelton

Well, somebody in Madison is going to lay. I thought that you got issued one when you moved to Madison. I thought it was part of the government plan.

##### [00:17:14.730] - Arman Rahman

I think I missed that law.

##### [00:17:18.410] - Brian Shelton

That's great. So I know that you came to Harper because cost was a motivating factor, as it is for a lot of our students, and then you went on to DePaul, but what advice might you have for current students at Harper College?

##### [00:17:32.030] - Arman Rahman

Yeah, I think... It sounds funny because I do love my career. I wouldn't trade it. I wouldn't say I regret anything, but I do think I could have explored a bit more when I was at Harper. It was kind of like the tail end of my time there where I was hearing from people, for example, one of my friends who did a track for speech pathology and then transferred, obviously, after that for that field. And I remember hearing about it literally. I think it was, like, almost the second half of my second year, and I was like, oh, that's really interesting. I wouldn't have minded going into that. And my parents would have liked that too, because it's more in the medical field and not they definitely took a while to get over, but yeah. So I guess my advice would be don't be afraid to explore anything that's outside of your comfort zone when you're there, because it's really an environment that fosters that exploration and fosters getting to know what you fit into that you might not have thought you fit into before.

##### [00:18:35.400] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, absolutely. There's so many different opportunities at Harper, and I meet students all the time who they'll kind of in kind of a shy and joking way say well I still haven't figured out what I want to do yet, and I only have one semester left, and I'm like, that's okay. You should be figuring out what you want to do here, spend two years or more here figuring that out instead of going and making a very costly mistake someplace else, which is what I did when I went to school. So it can be a very expensive proposal to think you know what you want to do and then find out you're wrong. Right?

##### [00:19:11.330] - Arman Rahman

Yeah, that's very true. There's no timetable. That's something I learned at Harper. I mean, I met people who were there, and I was in my early 20s, but I met people, students who were, like, in their 30s and 40s and that kind of taught me that there's no rush to anything.

##### [00:19:26.390] - Brian Shelton

No rush. Take your time with it. Well, Armando is so great for you to be able to join us today, and I appreciate you getting up early. I know you work the night shift at the station and everything, and I appreciate you getting up early to talk to us and wish you all the best of luck, and hope to see you soon.

##### [00:19:40.940] - Arman Rahman

Yeah, thanks, man. I hope to be back soon as well.

##### [00:19:43.230] - Brian Shelton

Finally, on this episode, we have Nick Wenzel, who not only joined me on Zoom, but he works there. Nick lives in Denver, Colorado.

##### [00:19:51.460] - Brian Shelton

Nick, how are you doing today? Thanks for joining me. I appreciate it.

##### [00:19:54.030] - Nick Wenzel

Hi, thank you. I'm doing good. I hope you're doing well.

##### [00:19:57.360] - Brian Shelton

That's great. That's great. Well, I appreciate you being here today, taking time out of your day. I know that you're very busy. Tell me, when did you come to Harper College? Around 2014 or so.

##### [00:20:08.720] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah, it was around 2014. I graduated high school 2013 and then just took a gap year to save up some money. Had to get some finances in order, things like that, but also figure out what I want to do.

##### [00:20:21.830] - Brian Shelton

What did you do during that gap year? I think more people should do that personally. What did you do?

##### [00:20:25.500] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah, so I got a job at the local Walmart. My mom had been working there for a long time, and so hardware and then produce working over there. And in my free time, I was just kind of learning photography. I enjoyed making videos in high school with friends via YouTube channel and things like that, but everyone kind of went away and did their own thing. So I used that time to just learn a different use for my camera, I guess.

##### [00:20:52.910] - Brian Shelton

That's cool. That's really great. When you came to Harper, you were in the graphic arts technology program. You did that from 2014 to 2017. What was that program like for you? How did that work out?

##### [00:21:02.970] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah, so the graphic arts program, I would call it tangential to graphic design in that it focuses a little bit more on the sort of trade side of graphic arts. So that might be printing, it might be working in package design and things like that. But it's also an incredibly useful skill set to learn if you want to be a graphic designer, which is kind of the road I was going down. So, yeah, I did the associates there, as well as took some additional classes just to get some transfer credits for going to a four year university.

##### [00:21:41.930] - Brian Shelton

That's really cool. While you were at Harper, didn't you work in the marketing department? I remember you lugging a camera around and stuff. What did you do for them?

##### [00:21:49.110] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah, that's kind of an interesting thing that just kind of happened on accident. So I mentioned I took that year off of school, and so when I went to college, I just hit the ground running, and I didn't really know anybody. All my friends had kind of moved on and things. And so I still brought my camera around, the one that I was learning and playing with at home. And I bumped into two people who were in the student lounge, two students, and I saw they had cameras. And so I was like, hey, I also have a camera. And they said, oh, cool. We just got this job at the marketing department where the first ever interns doing photo work for the school, you should go apply. And so my dad works in a warehouse, and they had a printer. That was really nice. So they printed me these little business cards, and I made a little website with my photos on it. And I went to the marketing department and I said, hey, my name is Nick. I know how to make photos and videos. Met Kevin, and I would love to be a part of that.

##### [00:22:53.510] - Nick Wenzel

And they said, Sorry, we're full. And so I hung around with those other student photographers for a while, and I would just kind of like, shadow them while they did their job because they were my friends, too. They ended up being my friends. And then one day, Jessica at the time, she reached out and she was like, hey, you said you did video. We could use a student who could do video with us. And so that was my introduction to the marketing department and the internship there. And then once I finished my associates degree, I started working part time, doing the same sort of photo video work for the school. So that was like photographing events, portraits of students for marketing materials, basically anything involving photographic content, video content for the college, I would kind of support and help out.

##### [00:23:39.560] - Brian Shelton

That's really awesome. So you came to campus, you met some people, you networked, and that led to a job. That's great. That's what we want to see happen.

##### [00:23:46.790] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah. And I would argue and I've told everybody in marketing this, I've told the people I met there, I would argue that moment, that job, that internship, whatever you want to call it, is kind of the catalyst and the reason I have the job I have now. The things I've gotten to do directly stem from that one experience.

##### [00:24:07.230] - Brian Shelton

That's really great. When you left Harper, you went to Columbia. Did you feel like you were adequately prepared for that when you went?

##### [00:24:15.320] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah. So I ended up going to Columbia College. Downtown in Chicago. I was a commuter student there as well, so I spent a ton of time commuting to school. I was used to that, but it was way longer than going to Harper. As far as coursework goes, I would say that I had the skill set I needed, for sure. I would say there were some things that I needed to catch up on, but there were other things that I was way ahead on. And that's just kind of how I put this. It's kind of just a symptom of or a consequence of the associates being just a slightly different concentration from straight graphic design. And so I kind of skipped some of the theoretical creative stuff in favor of more technical stuff, but the technical stuff made me able to execute the creative stuff way quicker once I got it. So I'm glad I did it the way I did. It wasn't a one to one translation, but I think it was a unique and really helpful combination for me.

##### [00:25:19.400] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, that's great. What did you do after Columbia.

##### [00:25:22.140] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah. So the last semester of my four year degree, I was contacted by somebody who was working at the Blue Cross blue Shield Association in Chicago. They were on Michigan Avenue in this big old office, and they saw that I had uploaded my resume on this job board through Columbia, and I just did that in preparation of, like, once I graduate, it'll be ready to go, and I can start looking for jobs. But they found me. I got a part time contract job. It was, like, 30 hours a week working, doing, like, design work for them. And then I was interviewing my last few weeks of college. Blue Cross Blue Shield found out and didn't like that, so they offered me a job immediately. I graduated on a Sunday, and I went full time employee that Monday following.

##### [00:26:22.020] - Brian Shelton

Well, that's pretty amazing. I mean, you can't beat that, right?

##### [00:26:25.230] - Nick Wenzel

I mean, everything is just so lucky for me. I think. Lucky from the moment that I walked into the Harper marketing department, lucky from that moment of folks finding me, all that stuff.

##### [00:26:35.390] - Brian Shelton

I just think that's awesome. That's great. That's so good to hear. That's really great. You are now working you're in Colorado now, right? In Denver. And you're working for Zoom. And of course, we're doing this conversation over Zoom. So what are you doing for Zoom now? What's the job entail?

##### [00:26:53.530] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah. So I'm on a small but nimble team of brand designers, and so we design anything to do with the marketing of Zoom. So we would pretty much just stop short of designing the thing that we're using right now. But anytime people are talking about Zoom, anytime we're out here talking about Zoom, that could be digital advertising in airports, I've done stuff that showed up at Times Square. Piccadilly Circus in the UK is this massive, massive screen, and I did an ad on there I specifically do like, I'm mentioning a lot of advertising, but also lots of documentation, web graphics. I'm kind of all over the place. If it's designed and it's visual, I probably do it to some capacity.

##### [00:27:45.690] - Brian Shelton

That's really cool. It must be fun. I guess maybe you didn't get to see did you get to see the big graphic in Piccadilly Square or in Times Square? Did you get to see anything?

##### [00:27:53.670] - Nick Wenzel

I didn't get to personally go, but I do have some really cool videos that folks have sent me. I do get to see them in real life, and especially when it's those things, I'm just, like, begging people for photos. Please, I want to see what that's like.

##### [00:28:09.870] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, that's really cool. So you work for Zoom. Do you work remotely?

##### [00:28:13.380] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah. Great perk about Zoom is that they kind of took charge of the whole work from home situation during the pandemic, and as an employee, we got to choose. There was no enforcement of any particular work style. So while I live ten. Minutes from the Denver office that they have. There is no need for me to go in. I primarily work remote. I've been to the office just a handful of times, and it's entirely our choice. So as long as you're doing good work, it's all good.

##### [00:28:48.140] - Brian Shelton

That's fantastic. It's the future, man. It's the future.

##### [00:28:52.410] - Nick Wenzel

That's right.

##### [00:28:54.010] - Brian Shelton

So you have done very well for yourself coming to Harper, getting your internship working, transferring, working your way up through the process. Now you're at Zoom, a huge company that pretty much everyone has interacted with in the last three years in some way or another. So I always like to ask when we're doing these shows, what advice might you have for someone who's thinking about coming to Harper, or maybe someone who's at Harper right now? What advice would you give them?

##### [00:29:20.290] - Nick Wenzel

Oh, man, I could probably write a book about it, if I'm honest. But I would say, don't discount what you have access to at Harper. The faculty and staff I was able to meet and work alongside and just get to know they care immensely about the students that are there. So really get to know the folks that you're in classes with, both students, professors, and staff, but also just tell them what you're about. Be honest about where you're trying to be and who you're trying to be. And for the most part, folks will jump in and try to help out if they can. In the same way that I got lucky with that marketing internship, it was really just me saying, hey, I'd love to be a part of this and sort of putting myself out there. And there are so many opportunities at Harper to do that for anything you might want to do. So it can be hard not to be shy with that kind of stuff. Or I think a lot of times, especially at a community college, it might be your first couple of years of school, you might go, oh, I'm not ready for that.

##### [00:30:40.650] - Nick Wenzel

But I think just putting it out there and saying, I'd love to learn from you, I'd love to be a part of something, I'd love to help you out, it goes a really long way. And that's the stuff I've benefited from the most, is just putting myself out there. Even if it felt like it was a stretch, or even if it felt like it was going to be hard, it's worth it.

##### [00:31:03.860] - Brian Shelton

That's great advice and advice that I give my students all the time. I run the campus radio station at the school, and I'll meet people, and they're like, Well, I want to go into mass communication. And I'm like, Why aren't you working at the campus radio station? And they look at you with this puzzled look on their face, and I'm like, all media experience matters, my friend. Come on, let's get over there and do some work.

##### [00:31:23.290] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah. And if I could maybe bridge off that for just a moment. The stuff I was doing at the marketing department wasn't necessarily what I was studying, but it was something I was passionate about. That extra experience that was like, additive to my degree is the thing that my future employer noticed.

##### [00:31:40.950] - Brian Shelton

Right.

##### [00:31:41.760] - Nick Wenzel

And then that's the thing that then catapulted me even farther and it was all just on accident.

##### [00:31:49.170] - Brian Shelton

Yeah. That's something to talk about, too, is that your degree is great and we're really glad that you get the degree, but most employers are looking for what you can actually do. If you leave school with experience related to what it is that you want to do, you're more likely to get hired, in my experience, anyway.

##### [00:32:09.430] - Nick Wenzel

Yeah

##### [00:32:09.790] - Brian Shelton

Well, I want to thank you so much for taking the time, Nick, to talk to us today, and I look forward to seeing you in the future. I'm sure we'll see you in the future at a distinguished alumni reception or something. You'll be one of those. So it'll be a good time.

##### [00:32:22.880] - Nick Wenzel

I hope so. I think that'd be cool. And thank you for having me. This is a great time.

##### [00:32:26.850] - Brian Shelton

Appreciate it.

##### [00:32:27.630] - Brian Shelton

Alex Aleksandrov, Arman Rahman and Nick Wenzel are all graduates of Harper College and they are out in the world doing great things. Harper talks is a coproduction of Harper College Alumni Relations and Harper Radio. Our show is produced by Shannon Hynes, who had to work really hard to set this one up. The show is edited by me, Brian Shelton. Our online producer is Erica Berger, and our theme music is by Aidan Cashman. I'm Brian Shelton. Thanks for listening.