

Dear Future Friars Oral History Interview

Interview Subject: Amie Mbye
Interviewer: Nahyr Morales Lugo
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Transcript:

Nahyr Morales Lugo 0:00

Hello, this is an interview for Dear Future Friars, Providence College's project to interview alumni and document their experience. Today is February 26th, 2024, and it is 10:48 AM. My name is Nahyr Morales Lugo and I'll be conducting the interview today. And just to start off with some basic questions, can you please state your full name and graduation year?

Amie Mbye 0:29

My name is Amie Mbye, and I am part of Class of 2018.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 0:33

All right. And where are you from and where do you currently live?

Amie Mbye 0:38

I am from Pawtucket, RI, and I also currently live in Pawtucket, RI.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 0:44

And what do you study at Providence College, major and minor?

Amie Mbye 0:49

Well, I studied Global Studies and Economics as my two majors, and then my minors are Latin American Studies and Spanish.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 0:57

Ooh, I love that. I'm actually a Global Studies minor, which just got implemented. So yeah, we'll have something to relate on. So, my first question about your PC experience is why did you choose to come to Providence College?

Amie Mbye 1:12

The reason I chose to come to Providence College is actually because of my Upper Bound advisor. So, I was looking at schools. He was like PC is a great place to be, you should apply. I didn't really, wasn't very familiar with PC even though I am from Rhode Island. So, he's like just apply, you never know. And honestly it ended up being the most financially accessible for me to come here and it was actually the only school I toured as well. Once I got on campus I was like wow, this place is beautiful. I can definitely imagine myself being here and when my financial aid packet I received that, I was like, it's the most accessible for me and I ended up coming here and loving my experience here.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 2:00

My second question is what did being a POC college student mean to you?

Amie Mbye 2:07

For me, it meant sticking out, but it also was a source of pride for me because you get to share like parts of yourself that people like really didn't know about. Sharing things like your culture and perspective, especially in the classroom or even when you're in student orgs, I think it's very valuable to have someone who comes up from a very different background than you and sharing those experiences. It enriches your student experience.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 2:38

Definitely. I can relate to that. I think that as POC, we kind of give a different perspective that I feel like some students at PC might not have had in like their previous like education or just like where they come from. So, definitely that. All right. And just going off of that. In what ways did this identity influence your everyday life during your college years and continue to influence you now?

Amie Mbye 3:07

One thing I, I like to use the word pride because, especially my freshman year, it was you try not to be too different from everyone else because you're adjusting and it's also a culture shock. You're like, how much of myself can I be in this space? And once you find people who support you in your corner and like genuinely care for you and who and like what you bring to the table, that's when you try. That's when you actually start to become your true authentic self. And I try to carry that with me in my professional life too, and not kind of diluting who I am just because of the environment I am in and just being proud that I come from such rich history too, and that my experience and perspectives matter in any space that I walk into.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 3:58

Yes, I love that. And just some, just to get to know kind of what you did during your time here. What sports, organizations, clubs were you involved in on campus?

Amie Mbye 4:14

So what did? I did Afro-Am. I was part of NAACP. I did Woman Empowered. I was in Horizons, Friar Foundations, and BMSA.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 4:28

Very involved.

Amie Mbye 4:30

Yes, over involved.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 4:33

I think that those are like the best spaces though, just to like find your people.

Amie Mbye 4:38

Yes, I agree 1000% with that. I feel like without these clubs and orgs, I wouldn't have found my people here. And yeah, it's just, that's one thing I encourage anyone and everyone to do. Just join a club. You never know, you might meet the most amazing people and they become your lifelong friends.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 5:00

I know that sometimes it might get a little overwhelming just to become so involved in everything. But the friendships and just the bonds that you make are just unforgettable. And they're just great.

Amie Mbye 5:15

Yeah, I 1000% agree with that.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 5:16

Alright. And going off of that, what made you want to become involved? We kind of touched on that, but if you want to elaborate. And then so if you had any like exec roles or just being like a member of the organizations, what did the roles in these organizations mean to you?

Amie Mbye 5:34

Yeah, I feel like being involved for me. Well, the reason why I became involved mainly because I was low-key forced to, but I would say highly encouraged. And I luckily, I knew some upperclassmen before I got here, and they told me to like be involved in clubs and orgs on campus. So, I tried it out my freshman year and I'm like, I just, I just kept on going and started joining more clubs and getting involved and I realized how it helped me find the community at PC because there are times where you do feel alone and feel like you're going through everything by yourself. But by joining these clubs and meeting people, I did not feel that way.

And for most of the clubs and orgs I was in, I was just a member. BMSA, I was the secretary for BMSA. So that was the only organization that I was on the exec board for it because I was shy, and I was scared that I didn't have the capability to like lead. So that changed when I was going into my senior year when someone was like, you have to do this. I know you could do it, but I'm like, oh, I don't know. Am I really the right person to be leading people? But they really like, again, you have people who push you to, who see your potential and push you to be your potential. And that part like was really valuable for me. And I'm so glad to this day that they pushed me to become one of the exec members on the BMSA.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 7:11

I love that story. And what were the resources that PC offered these clubs or orgs? And did you feel that your group was supported? Why or why not?

Amie Mbye 7:26

Definitely I would say staff support was it was hard, especially I'm thinking specifically for BMSA, staff support was hard just because we had a new advisor every year. So, it was hard to have that consistency and financially too, sometimes we felt like if we weren't given enough or what we thought we deserved for to run some of our programming because BMSA is such a huge umbrella organization and we have so many clubs and orgs under what under us. So, there were times we were really frustrated about the whole budget process. We were like why are y'all cutting our budget or not giving us what you gave us last year and so, so forth. There are probably a plethora of reasons as to why some of the money was cut, but we just, that was a big challenge for us.

But we'd find ways to work around that, and I felt like for even though our advisors, even if we had them for one year, I thought they were very supportive of us. There are people who are in our corner who wanted to see us succeed, which I really enjoyed a lot. So, a lot of these clubs and orgs that I was part of, the advisor to them, there are people who actually

cared about the work and some of the things that we were doing in these clubs and orgs. So, I really felt supported by the staff.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 8:53

And were there any organizations, sports, or clubs that you wish you were, oh, that you wish you would have been a part of, and you were not a part of during your time here?

Amie Mbye 9:08

I guess Student Congress. It was one of the clubs and orgs. I'm like, I wouldn't say like kind of intimidated by it a little bit just because it just felt super formal. And that's not how like my style is. But I think it would have been a really great experience to have been on Student Congress and see how some of these processes work. Because as part of an exec board on a club, like sometimes you don't see the inner workings of what things happen, what kinds of things happen behind the scenes. And I think if I was on Student Congress, I would have had like a bigger perspective on that, into seeing how some of these processes are in place and how, like, they can work with us and against us as well.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 9:57

Definitely big kudos to the Student Congress. They lead so many of the things for like, our years.

Amie Mbye 10:03

Yeah, exactly.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 10:07

And next question is how did the professional connections and personal bonds that you formed at PC affect your time here and do you keep in contact with any of them?

Amie Mbye 10:19

For me, I would, the two words that come into mind are they help me persevere and be resilient in an environment where it can be really hard to be a person of color. And some of the staff members and faculty too have been like that I've met here have been amazing and really supportive. Although I haven't kept in contact with a lot of faculty and staff members, but there are two or three folks that I actually still keep in contact with. And now that I'm back working here at PC. I go to them and just chat with them to see again, like kind of like strengthening those connections and also like here, get insights from them in how I can be successful in my role.

And friends. I feel a good number of my friends currently are from PC, so I still keep in contact with at least five people from PC consistently. And those bonds are bonds that I'm going to have forever. Like I've met my people at PC and I'm so forever grateful for that.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 11:27

I love that. I wanted to ask you about kind of, I didn't know where to like fit it into my questions, but I know you are back at PC and you're working as an advisor.

Amie Mbye 11:39

Yes correct yes.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 11:41

Could you talk maybe like, of course, if you're open to talking about it like kind of how you made your way back here and you know yeah just something like how you made your way back here. You know how do you feel about it? You know.

Amie Mbye 11:52

Yeah, so after PC, I went. I didn't know what I was going to do, so I was like, hey, let's apply to grad school. If we don't get in, we'll go get a full-time job. So, I ended up getting into grad school. So, I went to George Mason University and did my masters in Global Affairs.

So, after that I actually intended in staying in the DC area, but I came back to be with my family, and I started working at Crossroads Rhode Island as an Administrative Assistant. So I worked with the president there. And then I went on to work at another nonprofit called the Refugee Dream Coordinator there. And then I came here. And I knew I always wanted to go back into higher ed, but one thing I wanted to experience was working at a nonprofit because I feel like sometimes, we can live in such a bubble in higher ed. I so I wanted to expose myself to community, work on the groundwork because I feel like it's really important to have that perspective before going back into higher ed. And now I'm in this position as an Academic Advisor for the School of Nursing Health Sciences.

I think that perspective is really important because we're having folks, especially nurses, who will eventually be working with people from all kinds of backgrounds. You know, you want to put yourself out there to get to know their culture, some of the things that they bring and check your biases. Like there are people who come from different countries that have a different way that they practice medicine and respecting that instead of just saying like, well, you're in America, this is how we do things. Instead, like actually working in collaboration with the person that you're serving, your patient, I think it's so crucial to have that community experience and maybe in community, connected to the community, I can offer, I can help bridge those connections for our school.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 13:58

Oh my gosh, I like how you went on to like, you know, you had a very clear like plan of what you wanted to do that you wanted to work with nonprofit and you wanted to come back to higher ed to get both, both perspectives that kind of reminded me of like my majors or like how or how I think about it. I do policy and sociology and global stuff very like separate things. But I've always told myself like, I always want to have like that humane side of like politics. So, I feel like it's the same with like medicine.

Amie Mbye 14:30

I think it's so important. And even, I'm thinking back to your question about how it feels to be back on campus. My first day here, I was walking around and I'm like, this is so weird. Like I used to just sit here and do homework from like this time to midnight. And it's very interesting walking on the campus as a staff member and not a student. And of course, it brings back all sorts of memories - all good ones and all the not-so-great ones. But and also now being for me, the greatest honor is just being in a position where I can help students be successful and make sure that they are crossing that stage in May, in four years ideally.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 15:21

I love that. And kind of shifting gears, my next question is who or what had the biggest impact on you while in school?

Amie Mbye 15:34

Biggest impact, hands down, I always tell people that is Friar Foundations. So, I'm not sure if you're familiar with the Friar Foundations program, but it's a pre-college program here at PC. So, before the first semester of our freshman year, we come on campus, live here. We, it's all free.

We take classes for about 5 weeks and then what's really nice about the program is that you get connected with faculty and staff already and you basically have a group of friends already before you get to campus. Additionally, you have mentors already on campus.

I'm a huge advocate for this program. This program has really just set my foot right on this campus and that gave me a really good start. It essentially gave me a leg up, which is really nice. And it also helped me better prepare to handle topics like Civ. So, we would do things like that and practice writing and just making sure we were ready to tackle on college-level curriculum because all of us come from different schools but different kinds of resources. So, this program really helps like level that playing field a lot better. And there's so many different kinds of people that are also in the program, which is really nice. It's very diverse. So, I, I love this program and I actually became a mentor for two years for the program as well. I just love it. It has been the single most impactful thing that I've done here at PC.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 17:13

That sounds like such a great program. I think, I think I had heard of it. And how many credits? I think it's 6 credits.

Amie Mbye 17:21

Yes. They give you 6 credits. Yeah.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 17:24

That's so cool. Like, you come in, you already have credits. You already have friends, you have mentors. It's the perfect.

Amie Mbye 17:29

Yeah.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 17:30

And how long and like before you come into, like, your semester is it?

Amie Mbye 17:35

Yeah. So, I believe we started at the end of or the first week of July.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 17:42

Oh, OK.

Amie Mbye 17:44

Somewhere around there. So, like you have, well, you have a little bit of buffer between then because usually graduation is like mid-June or something, typically it falls. So, you have a little bit of summertime before then. After you have probably a couple more weeks. I originally did not want to do the program because it was like, hey, my one of my Upper Bound advisors actually told me about the program. He said you got to do this. PC never does programs. We were part of the first class of Friar Foundations.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 18:13

Oh!

Amie Mbye 18:14

So yeah. So, he was like, PC never usually do something like this is an amazing opportunity and I'm like, but I want to enjoy my summer. Why start school? So, he convinced me enough that I was like, OK, I'll, I'll sign up. I ended up signing up for the program and doing it. And I literally, during grad school sent him a thank you message for encouraging me to do the program and just for everything that he helped me get to PC, helped me get into Friar Foundations. So, I like, I thanked him for that because it, invaluable experience. Like I can't even, it's hard for me to describe in words how impactful that program is for me.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 18:55

Yeah. I mean, you, with the nerves that you have already going into college.

Amie Mbye 18:56

Yes.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 19:04

To have that like to get that off your chest and be more prepared, that's such a wonderful program.

Amie Mbye 19:06

And, yeah.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 19:11

Thank you for sharing that. This question is kind of the most different out of all the questions that I'm going to ask you. But were there any important political events during your time at PC? And were you involved in any protest or any other forms of activism?

Amie Mbye 19:29

Yes. So, the, I believe it was 2015, there are a bunch of student protests on campus that resulted actually in Moore Hall being formed. And then, so what came out was a group of students. I wasn't part of that group of students, who gathered and wrote a set of demands for the school. I can't remember what all the things that are, that were on it, but one of them I remember was like having a more diverse Civ curriculum and more accountability for people when it comes to like racist events on campus or any kind of bias on campus. And. Also having like a multicultural student like center, and now that we have that, that was in Moore. So, I participated in the protest that we would have on campus. And yeah, it was definitely a hard time because we even had like, faculty basically calling like students of color as like, we just

want to make noise, just to make noise and weren't quite hearing what we were saying about the injustices that were happening on campus. So, I did participate in those protests.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 20:43

Yeah. I love hearing stories like this because I just realized like kind of all we were talking about in the beginning of the interview that we could relate a little bit more since we are like closer in age. But I think the nice thing about it, too, is that I always get to think, like my interviewees, because I always see you guys as, like, pioneers of what our generation now has. Like, we get to enjoy Moore Hall. But, you know, it's so good to know, like the history of it. So yeah, thank for, you know, being a part of that protest that, you know, advocating for all of us. Yeah.

Amie Mbye 21:24

It's very interesting when they decide, like, once we had Moore Hall, it somehow became like people calling it like the black student union. And we were like, no, that is not what that is. And people were really like asking us like, if it's only for students of color. And it, it made me sad because I felt like people are missing the message as to why that center exists. It's for. And then we would tell people, no, it's a space for everybody to use.

But it was really hard to like change that perspective of Moore, which I, I now seeing it, it makes me very happy to see like there are classes going on in there, people are having meetings in there, people are going there just to hang out. And that's the kind of space, like it's clearly a space of intention, but it's, the intention is never to exclude anyone. It's a place for all of us from all different kinds of backgrounds to get together and share, like us as people, our perspectives and our culture. So, I like, I really like the direction in which that Moore is going. Moore Hall has taken shape because even when I was on campus, we, there weren't a lot of people in there. It was like very empty, but and most of us were still you like using Slavin. So it was, it's nice to see this shift that folks are really like highly utilizing that space. Makes me very happy.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 22:51

Yeah, it definitely has shifted. I've heard stories of like, sometimes even now, I think we still kind of deal with the, oh no, like you're, you are welcome to come here. But I think that implementing like classes and events and different things that everybody is going to be a part of, like they're just bound to be a part of. I think that everyone's getting more used to, like using that space as just like a chill spot.

I know that my sophomore year because, I was all online freshman year. So, my first year on campus, basically, I would go in there and I would see like so many diverse, like people, like it was just like a bunch of diversity, and I would use it just as like a hangout spot. And that was like my safe space. So again, like, that's why I'm like, oh, thank you so much, you know, for being a part of one of the people that got Moore Hall to, you know, be there because it, I think that that's how it is for a lot of like POC students. Like that's just like our chill spot or like our space that we all go to hang out together.

Amie Mbye 23:51

Yeah, it's really beautiful to see that. For me, when I was on campus, I would say for me it was the BMSA office. I was in there every day. Like if I was not in class, at work, or in my room, you will mostly or at Ray, you will mostly find me in the BMSA office. And it became a spot

where all, like it honestly wasn't just all POCs, but anyone who felt like they just wanted to like even like vent out something or just wanted to hang out or we wanted to watch TV together, like people would just gather there. And we had a lot of non-BMSA members in that office and we loved it. It was just like a really nice community. We would have discussions about like some of the maybe like a racist event happened on campus and we would have conversations around there from like silly things to like childhood memories. So, it was really nice to have that space to come together. And now there's an even bigger space on campus, Moore Hall, to have people come together like that. So, it's really beautiful to see.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 24:53

Very beautiful thing. Yes. So, oh actually we might have discussed on this, but if you want to elaborate so how did you experience at PC influence your current or former occupation? We kind of touched on it, but if you want to like say anything else on it.

Amie Mbye 25:09

Yeah so, I'll start with when I got to PC and what I majored in. So, I came into PC as a Computer Science major. Don't ask me why I declared it. I only declared it because I was told you can make lots of money with it. And then I quickly realized as I was in that class, it was not for me. I didn't like it. I wasn't getting the material no matter. I went to go like to all the study sessions. I went to office hours. And so, like it was material that just was, I've never been exposed to coding before prior to this class. It was very difficult for me, and I and I didn't feel supported in the major. And I quickly realized it's not something I want to do. I ended up with like a D in the class. I was like you know what, whatever.

So, I ended up asking one of my Friar Foundations mentors. I was telling them about this situation and they, I ended up becoming undeclared and they took me to the Major/Minor Fair. I was just talking to different majors, and I stumbled upon Global Studies, and they were talking to me about like what the major is and I'm like oh, that sounds really interesting. So, I was like, let me just take a class. Then my mentor was like, take a class in it and see like if you want to continue on with it.

And then Econ, I think I discovered Econ by accident. I went on to the table to ask what they do, and I was like, oh, that sounds interesting. Let me just take a class and see how it is. I ended up loving both of those majors and declaring them the semester after that. And I just, I don't know, it's for me, it was about discovering who I was. And it's nice to have again, people in your corner who really care about you to help you discover things about yourself that you just did not know. So, I don't think so. Can you repeat this question again?

Nahyr Morales Lugo 27:14

Yeah. The question is, how did you experience at PC influence your current or former occupation?

Amie Mbye 27:22

Yeah. So, from then I just, again, I fell in love with Global Studies. Global Studies required you to study abroad. And I just knew I wanted to work in a place where I helped people and I worked with people directly. I'd, corporate America, I knew hands down was not for me. So that's why I ended up going in the nonprofit route. And I knew I loved higher ed. I love helping students, especially as a mentor. It was really fun working with students and help them succeed. So, I knew I wanted to come back to hire and help students in that capacity. So, I felt

like PC, in my majors as Global Studies and Econ, exposed me to that, in addition to joining student orgs and clubs on campus.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 28:05

I love that. Everything just all came together, like the stars.

Amie Mbye 28:09

Yeah, yeah. And even, even though it sounds kind of like, quote, unquote perfect, I tell people like, it's really trial and error. Like, a lot of it. You don't need to know exactly what you want to do. Even now, like, I don't know what I want to be when I grow up. You know, I still think these things to myself. And it's OK to not know. Just try out different things and see. And I feel like the more you work, the more you realize like what's really valuable to you and what kinds of environments you want to be in. I, I'm a person who, I don't care about a job title. I care about what kind of work I'm doing. So, for me, as long as I'm like content in what I'm doing and I'm in a healthy environment, that's what matters the most for me.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 28:56

That's so, that's such great advice, especially for me that I'm a senior now. I'm starting to think of like what I want to do later on. And I think that we feel like a lot of pressure of like, what am I going to do next? Like what job am I going to go into? So that's really great advice.

Amie Mbye 29:13

Yeah. I, when someone talk to me, it's OK to not know and it get, I was able to breathe a sigh of, of relief because I feel like there's always this constant pressure to what are you doing next? What are you doing next? What are you doing next? Especially being a first-gen student. College was the goal. Like it was like college, college, college, college.

Now I'm done with college. What now? And no one talked to me about what's next after college. You know, of course I went to the career and like you of course get a job, but like it's like you lose a sense of self and trying in rediscover who you are as not a student. It's really hard and challenging, but it's also a fun space to be in and to rediscover who you are and figure out what's really important to you that's beyond school. So, yeah.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 30:04

I love, I love that little quote of like rediscovering who you are. And I'm definitely going to keep that in mind because I'm also a first-generation student. So, I think that often times I'm like, OK, I'm, I'm going to hit this milestone. But like, what do I do now? Like, I don't know who I am aside from being a student. So it's like, you literally read my mind when you said that.

Amie Mbye 30:31

Yeah.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 30:32

Alright. So, my next question is, do you believe that PC properly prepared you for life post-graduation? Why or why not? And in what ways?

Amie Mbye 30:46

Yes, I feel like as a, because of my experience as a person of color on this campus, I was prepared to handle the greater community or the greater world because PC unfortunately is

also a macrocosm of what the world looks like. So, I felt like even when I would deal with certain incidents on in like a war space, I knew how to handle it because I was like, I did this for like 4 years here. So, it's like knowing how to navigate those spaces is something that PC has really prepared me for. But also academically too, PC has prepared me for a lot of like things like a writing and all the rigor of the curriculum has prepared me to be successful in my professional life. So, I am definitely so grateful for my academic experience here at PC.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 31:41

Yeah. Can you share any successes, or any other successes you had while in college?

Amie Mbye 31:53

Any other successes? I would just say being a mentor was something I also did not think I could do, but I was challenged to do. So, I feel like that's a big success of mine, like being able to mentor students who felt really comfortable to come to me for anything that they needed. Even now, like I sometimes see one of my mentees from Horizons and I just like, just like shouting her out like, we, she will call me mentor, I will call her mentee. So, it's just really beautiful to still have that connection.

But for me, what's most important is like encouraging someone to be their true authentic self and like also not being scared to like say hey, I need help. I feel like as first-generation students, well, and also people student being a student of color on campus, it's really hard to like say, hey, I need help because we feel like we have to champion ourselves and we don't have to do that all the time. We can ask other people for help on campus. So, encouraging more students to seek out the help that that they need.

And I feel like Gen Z, in general is so much better at doing that and seeking that help. So, I just love that folks are moving towards that direction.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 33:15

And yeah, I think that we sometimes, and I don't know if you feel this way too, but we kind of feel the sense of like proving ourselves or like being worthy to like other people. Like, I also think that it's such a beautiful thing that we are standing up for ourselves more and being more like, no, I actually do need help, like, you know, to make sure that we are also hitting our goals and going back to kind of what you mentioned a little bit earlier in the interview, like having like an equal playing ground. Because if other people can help, why can't we, you know?

Amie Mbye 33:51

Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 33:57

My next question is what challenges did you face or overcome?

Amie Mbye 34:08

Racism. I feel like it's hard being different on this campus. And sometimes you do get questions because people are just curious about like, like my hair, like how do you get your hair to do that? And stuff like that is really interesting and, and I always, I try not to think that people come from like a malicious, have malicious intent when they are asking these questions because some people are genuinely really curious. Like they have probably never met anyone who was like me and just want to ask like a plethora of questions. And sometimes it does feel really bothersome because you're like, I feel like I have to explain myself in any like any and every space. But I would say definitely racism. Like there, of course people will say things

behind your back that they will never say in front of your face. But again, having a community who really like support you to get through that, it's important.

And also, I had people who challenged like how I got into PC and basically insinuated I got in because I was Black. And I'm like, you know, I was an honor student, like, you know, I did pretty well, was very involved in high school and just knowing, just reassuring myself that, hey, I earned a spot here. I wasn't just given it. It's something that's important too. And having other faculty, staff and students like, tell that to me as well. It's like, hey, you earned a spot. Like you work hard, you get good grades, like you're smart, and yeah, that's really important. So, those are the two main challenges. I personally would say, like I overcame here.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 35:57

Thank you for sharing that. All right. Oh, actually, I do have another question. OK. What do you wish you knew before you came to PC?

Amie Mbye 36:11

I would say how aware of my difference I would be. I came from schools that like a lot of people look like me so and I was also exposed to folks from other racial backgrounds as well. And it was, so it was a huge culture shock coming into a space where most people are not low income and don't look like me. So, it, I would say definitely being like learning how to navigate the space as a person of color would have been really helpful for me. And even though I did the Friar Foundations program, I still felt like I wasn't prepared once everybody was on campus. So that's one thing I wish I knew before I got into PC, how to navigate through PC's culture.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 37:11

Yeah. And going off of that question, what is something you wish to tell POC students that are trying to make their decision of whether they should enroll at PC?

Amie Mbye 37:26

Can you repeat that question one more time?

Nahyr Morales Lugo 37:28

Yeah. What is something you wish to tell POC students that are trying to make their decision of whether they should enroll at PC? So, like they applied, you know, they have like all their options laid out, like why, like why or why not? You know what I mean?

Amie Mbye 37:47

My most important thing is being realistic with the with students. But I, I tell people, if I had to do college all over again, I would choose PC in a heartbeat like I, I wouldn't even second guess my choice. I would still come here. Yes, PC was hard to be here as a person of color, but this, I gained so much more out of out of PC than I lost.

So, I always tell people what's most important for me is community and education. Like the education here is really good. The people I met are really great. It's all about finding people who really support you. And again, like the experiences here, some may be a little unique to PC, but for the most part, it's not. These are experiences that you experience in most parts of the world. So, it's so telling students that, yeah, this is the reality. You may have these experiences, you may not. Some people have direct experience with racism on campus as a person of color and others do not. So maybe indirectly so, but not directly. But it's just like the

reality of it. Like you will experience the this in other aspects of your life, but that should not be a big deterrent to not come here. And if it's also accessible for you financially, come here.

I think it's a great school to be at. Great spirit. That's one thing I like tell people I'm like PC, no one can combat our school spirit, no one can compare. I went to George Mason University, and I was like, whoa, y'all need to step up your spirit game here because PC is, those basketball games. Love it.

And our facilities here are really great and I feel like we have some really great faculty and staff that work here.

So, I would have more good things to say about PC than bad. But I definitely 100% agree showcasing the whole truth of what PC is. It's great in some ways and there are other ways that PC can definitely improve as an institution.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 40:07

Definitely agree. Is there anything that you think PC could have done better or differently in supporting you during your time here as a minority student?

Amie Mbye 40:21

I like to use the word accountability. I wish folks were held more accountable for some of their actions, especially when we want to talk about human dignity and really supporting people. I think it's important that people who go against or do harm to other folks, there should be some consequences for that. And I feel like some a lot of times there isn't any, which is really start, which is really hard because again, it, it impacts our morale and, and impacts our psyche space. So, it's, I wish there was more accountability and PC would do better when it comes to that, especially any form of hate and violence against anybody. It doesn't even matter what your background is. I feel like if there are more accountability policies in place to prevent people from where they're causing harm to other people with that and with a restorative justice lens, I think it's really important as well. I wish that there were more accountability policies in place for people who do harm to others on campus, whether it be emotional harm, physical harm, any kind of harm. I think that's important.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 41:43

Definitely. And the next question, what advice would you give current POC students, especially first-generation students about navigating life at PC or at college in general?

Amie Mbye 42:03

Community and resources. I feel like those two are huge, especially as first-generation students. We don't really have people in our family who we can like talk to about our college issues 'cause they just don't understand, right? I could go to my mom's, oh my goodness, complaining about this class and she would look at me like, OK, just try harder. Like, and it's like, OK, that's not helpful. But so being aware of the resources that you have access to on campus and having a community who really will help you through your lowest and low and celebrate with you through your highest of high. I think is really crucial to have here at PC and it will help you for the most part. Honestly, it helps people stay here and also that helps people like really be resilient and be more self-confident. I feel like honestly, I grew so much of my self-confidence here because of the people I have met and people who have validated my experiences and people who like saw my potential and made me act on my potential as well is really nice.

So, find your people and your resources. Utilize them. You are. I tell people you are paying for these resources, use them. Writing center. You need help writing your paper? Take yourself to the writing center. You need tutoring? Go get you a tutor. Go to your office hours. If there

are tutoring sessions, attend them like max. Use the resources on campus as much as you can because you are paying for them anyway. So, and there are some colleges and universities that I don't think they even offer free tutoring. So, I'm like we have it really good here. So, I would say just utilize those, those resources and having and, also get to know some faculty and staff on campus because they, they can be really intimidating. As a student, I felt like they, some of them can be very intimidating. But because I did Friar Foundations, I was a little more familiar with, like some of the faculty and staff on campus, but get to know them and some of them you can, you'll be able to tell exactly. Like you'll be able to tell if they're in your corner or not and if they're willing to like help you be successful here. And once you have someone like that too, it honestly makes your college experience better as well because they, they're doing the work, and they can help you really navigate through this college experience.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 44:34

Perfect. That was amazing advice. What is your wish for inclusivity at PC in years to come?

Amie Mbye 44:45

One thing I would really like to see is like some kind of diversity inclusion training included on, especially when I was being onboarded here on PC, at PC, I wish I saw that as like something that's mandatory for folks to do as the part of the onboarding process.

And again, accountability for any like harms that are done on campus. Because sometimes it's just like, I know one time we had an incident on campus where a student, like it was just really bad. They used the N-word and some it was like someone else posted the video or a photo of them that said like I'm like the N-word, whatever. And then we had a community session where we like talked about like why people have problems with it, blah, blah, blah, but nothing else happened. And it was just like that was, it was nice to come together in the community to do, have that conversation. And the student was very apologetic and, but I, but that was it. It was just like we had nothing came of that. And I'm not asking for the student to like be punished. But there should be some kind of like education process that comes with it, like why this is harmful to folks or something that really like educates people as to why what they did was wrong. So, I just wish there was something more to that effect in place. But of course, I think consequences are also can send a loud message to folks that this is not OK in our community and it's not something that PC approves of. But I'm hoping in the years to come, we are, and I think we are moving in the right direction. So, I'm, I'm hoping to see that.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 46:42

And my last question is, is there anything else you'd like to share? It could be about your experience, it could be about the interview, it could be about the project, it could be anything else that maybe you forgot to mention.

Amie Mbye 46:55

I just want to say thank you for doing this project. I think it's amazing and in a way like let's say 10 years from now watching this video, it will be interesting to see how some of the answers that I gave would have changed based on some of my experiences as well. But I think it will be useful as a useful resource for any incoming first years who are people of color, students of color, to share this with them. Because sometimes again, the experience can feel very isolating, you know, but hearing that, hey, this person, I watched this video about this person who went through something similar, and they turned out all right. So, it's just like you can still persevere in this environment

And I just want to say huge shout out to you all for doing this project. And I am so honored to be part of it. And yeah, in documenting this because I feel like what other way would we

document this, right? I don't, there's nothing else to document our voices and some of the experiences that we've been through. And it's also beautiful to see how different some of our experiences. We may share some similarities plus, but we're not a monolith. So, it's nice to hear different voices and hear their different experiences about how, yeah, their experience was at PC.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 48:25

Definitely.

Amie Mbye 48:26

So, thank you, yes.

Nahyr Morales Lugo 48:31

Thank you for being a part of this and sharing your story. I loved having you.

Amie Mbye 48:34

Thank you. It was so nice to meet you.