Drew Stanley Interview Transcript (Start at 1:27)

E: Could you please confirm your pronouns?

D: Yeah, my pronouns are she/her.

E: And where is home?

D: Las Vegas, Nevada.

E: Amazing. And what drew you to King’s originally?

D: I actually really didn’t even know King’s existed, I found it while touring Dal. My Dal tour guide was like, “there’s some other little school that kind of shares a lot of our facilities but I don’t actually know a lot about it.” My mom and I were like, “Well, we’re here, we might as well look at it,” so we did a tour same-day, and it kind of sealed the deal for me. I don’t remember my tour guide’s name but he was like “If you love to read, the program FYP is very well-established. You notice a difference.” And my mom was like, “That’s the coolest thing I’ve ever heard, you should do that.”

E: That’s wonderful. And was FYP a good experience for you?

D: FYP was the most incredible experience for me. I don’t actually know how successful I would have been in the rest of my degree—or like, *as* successful—without it. It was the coolest thing ever.

E: How do you feel like it contributed to your success throughout your degree?

D: At first, I think because originally I was only going to be a psychology major, so I was in FYP Science, and I kind of felt a little set back in my science degree. I was like, I should have taken these classes, I should have done these things instead. But then, as I picked up my HOST minor and my certificate in science leadership and communication, it really was just about taking time with the texts, and formulating ideas and working through theses and arguments. I think it just made me a much more considerate student. I find that a lot of scientists are like “fact, fact, just give me what you know and nothing else,” and FYP really forces you to sit and take time with the authors and their ideas and the text and the contextualization of those texts. It’s just a lot more considerate I think is the best way to put it.

E: Are you a psychology major HOST minor then?

D: Yes.

E: Exciting, oh my gosh.

D: I really like it.

E: So tell me about how you started taking courses in HOST? How did you find out about it?

D: Well, my FYP tutor was Dr. Stewart, he is kind of big in the HOST society in its own, but I remember meeting with him a few times because I was an American. He was like, “Let’s meet up and talk about Canadian curriculum a few times just to make sure you’re on the right track and on the same level and all that stuff.” Then, at the end of my first year he was like, “Are you planning on picking anything else up besides psychology?” and I was like, “No not really, I haven’t really thought about anything.” And he was like, “Well, it would look good on your grad school applications if you just had a bit more diversity, but also based on how you participate in class I do think you would like some of these things.” So he offered me a few classes. I actually started by taking one contemporary and one HOST class, and the HOST class was just the coolest thing I’ve ever done.

E: Do you remember what the class was?

D: I think it was biopolitics.

E: Wow, that sounds really interesting.

D: It was one of the hardest classes I think I’ve taken in my degree, it was really interesting and I was like, even if it’s not exactly this, just within the realm of these courses. I think Dr. Bennett’s now the director, or the interim director?

E: I think so. Actually sorry, Kyle Fraser is.

D: Oh, I knew that actually. He wrote my references. I did know that.

E: All good. He also is the person who recommended you. And Melanie Frappier recommended you.

D: I love both of them so much. I took all my classes with Dr. Fraser online because I went home, and then I took three of Dr. Frappier’s classes this year, she’s incredible.

E: I’ve only worked with her in this kind of context, but she seems to be such a thoughtful person, and really I can imagine it would be really enjoyable to take a class with her.

D: It was a big relief being in a few of her classes this year, she’s just so understanding of—I don’t know how else to put it—the student experience. She’d just be like, “Hey, I completely understand you have deadlines, and you have this and you have this.” I find King’s has more of those kind professors who can take the time with you to just talk it out or work something through because they have the small class sizes. They have the facilities for it, which is another thing I like about King’s.

E: I think it attracts people who want to engage that way, you know? Both students and faculty who don’t want 300 people for every single class.

D: That’s what I got a lot in my psych classes. Any other Dal course I took it was just like, “I’ll never remember your name at the end of the year because like, I just never spoke to you,” which is sad.

E: Speaking of your psychology studies, I take it then if you majored in psychology, then that’s what your thesis relates to?

D: I actually didn’t have a thesis.

E: Okay cool.

D: I would have loved to, I just didn’t end up doing it.

E: That totally makes sense. So was there a certain area or part of your studies in psychology that interested you the most?

D: Yeah, I would say I’m most interested in neuroplacisticy, so how the brain changes after injury. Its super cool. I guess, a secondary focus of mine would be traumatic brain injuries or TBI’s as they’re called. It’s basically like, if you get a very traumatic brain injury and something adjusts how the brain is working, the networks will move and readjust to make it possible in some capacity, if not the same capacity, through neural networks and stuff. It’s really cool.

E: Would that relate to the way they say you lose one sense and other senses compensate?

D: Yeah, it’s kind of like that.

E: So cool. So, what were some of the highlights of your studies in HOST? Be it professors or specific courses or projects you did.

D: Specific courses and professors, definitely HOST 4000 with Dr. Frappier which I took last semester. I originally wasn’t going to take it at all. One plus side of King’s courses is that your teachers pay a lot of attention and they really care, but they also expect a lot more from you which can sometimes be like, I don’t know if I really have the time to commit to this at this moment. So I was actually like, I only need two more classes to finish my HOST minor, maybe I’ll just take Intro HOST. And then all my friends were like, “Don’t be dumb, you’re so much better than that, don’t take a throwaway course just because you need to because you are more interesting and more interested.” And I was like, yeah you’re probably right. So my friend was in HOST 4000, and I transferred in two weeks late. I was like, hi, I’m kind of nervous to take this class because I don’t really know what’s expected. I think I’ve always struggled with confidence in academia. So anyways, that class was actually my most successful class in university ever. Like I did the best I had ever done, but that was because it was the coolest thing ever. The content, how the class was run, how Dr. Frappier teaches and deals with her students. It was also only five people I think, because it’s a very under-enrolled course for some reason. That, for sure was the coolest class ever.

E: Do you remember what it was called?

D: It was called “Science and Nature in the Modern Period.”

E: Amazing, okay.

D: I think with the HOST major and minor you need to take two of the core courses for the minor and three for the major. And then another one was probably the core HOST 2000 with Dr. Fraser which was “Beginnings of Wisdom”, super duper cool. I really liked that class.

E: I always come away from these conversations wishing I could be a student here.

D: Even when I graduate, if I could audit a whole school’s curriculum, it would probably be King’s. We just have the coolest course offerings ever. My friends are in Contemporary Studies and Early Modern Studies and I’m like “I can only take 120 credits?” I’d just take 120 credits of King’s electives because they’re so interesting.

E: That’s so great that you had such good experiences with those courses. So, what’s something you’ve learned while you’ve been at King’s that you think you’ll carry with you?

D: That’s a hard one because I feel like I have so many little ones. I feel like I’m about to sprew you word vomit. I definitely think King’s has taught me to take my time with the text, but like, also not to take it as is. There’s so much more between the lines that can be built on and that you can find if you’re looking in the right places. It shows so much more than what’s in the book. I think being forced to engage with the texts in FYP, and then in HOST courses where they’re like, “You can look for secondary sources outside of course material, but you don’t need to because what we’re asking from you is in here,” is I think really interesting and something you don’t get a lot in academics. It’s usually like “get as many sources as you can, and back up this and this and this.” It is very much like, everything you need can be right in front of you if you engage with it thoughtfully and meaningfully. I think that’s pretty cool.

E: That sounds like a very profound lesson.

D: I don’t know about profound, but I feel like it’s a good one. They gave me (?) a lot of time too, on paper. I’ve been going to the library and just shuffling.

E: Do you have any plans for next year or any thoughts on what to do?

D: I’m going to graduate school next year at Saint Andrew’s University, University of Saint Andrews. I’m getting a master’s in management. Hopefully it’s just a start to what I actually want to do but it’s a good foundation.

E: What do you actually want to do?

D: I want to work in museums. So, hopefully Saint Andrew’s also offers a master’s in museum and heritage studies, so the hope is that I can get the management degree, and then the museum studies degree, and then kind of be like “these are my skills. Please hire me.”

E: If you ever want to have a coffee or a chat, I did an art business degree at the Sotheby’s institute, and the art world is sort of my background before I came to King’s. And I lived in Scotland for a year and a half, I went to the Glasgow School of Art. So if you ever think you’re going to spend some time in Glasgow. I visited Saint Andrew’s once, very very briefly. It was so gorgeous I couldn’t believe how beautiful it was. Have you visited yet?

D: No.

E: You’ve got wonderful things in store for you. That’s going to be so exciting. But yeah, I don’t have experience myself working in museums but that sort of whole sector in terms of cultural institutions and the art world and so on, it’s a really interesting and exciting sector. I think the Victorian Albert just opened up in Scotland. Sorry I have to look this up because it’s going to drive me crazy.

D: I’m so excited. Also for some reason—well, not for some reason, all of my King’s friends are very well prepared to do their master’s programs, but I have one friend who’s going to Brighton to do her degree and another who’s going to Glasgow, I think the art school, but we’ll be all together. Loosely together but.

E: One of my former colleagues here in the office also went to Saint Andrews and she loved it. So, yeah. She was studying something very different, she did marine biology. So, it is V and A Dundee. So, there’s yet another exciting place to go check out. I think it only opened in the last few years. There’s also an organization, it’s the museum’s association in the UK, the British Museum Association, sign up for their newsletters. It’s a really interesting source of things that are going on in UK museums and things like that. If you’re curious about industry intelligence.

D: Thank you so, so much.

E: Also if you’re looking down the road at getting an internship, it’s a good source. It’s good to know about. Sorry to go down the rabbit hole, it’s an area that excites me. I’m so excited for you, you’ve got such cool things coming up. I guess the last thing I’ll ask you is, is there anything you’d like to say to your fellow graduates, a message for the class of 2022?

D: That’s really cute actually. I think I’m just so incredibly proud of all of us. I think of all the students who have kind of had their university interrupted. We had one of the most unique in the fact that we had that start, that foundation with all of each other, and then it was kind of rudely interrupted, and we’re all kind of coming back together a team, and just more fuller, more capable and adaptive people who I truly think King’s should be proud to be sending into the world because I think we’re a really incredible group of students.

E: I think that there is a huge amount of pride among the faculty and administration, seeing how strong students have been and just how beautifully you all have handled very challenging circumstances at times. I’m sure Bill will speak to that at Encaenia. Thank you so much for taking the time to do this.

D: Thank you.