

## **PodCAST with Julie Schumacher**

### **Kara Snyder**

Kara, hello and welcome to the podcast, a podcast produced by the College of Applied Science and Technology at Illinois State University. I'm your host, Kara Snyder, and I serve as the assistant dean of marketing communications and constituent relations for the College. Each episode, we're sitting down with an alum of the college, and today, we have a chance to talk to Julie Schumacher. Julie is an alum of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and currently serves as Professor in the Department of Family Consumer Sciences and the director of the didactic program in dietetics. Welcome and thank you for being here.

### **Julie Schumacher**

Thank you for having me.

### **Kara Snyder**

Well, let's start at the beginning. You came to ISU for your masters after finishing your undergraduate degree at South Dakota State University, what brought you to ISU?

### **Julie Schumacher**

As part of becoming a dietitian, we need to do an internship, and it has to be an accredited program. So I looked at programs all across the United States, because South Dakota did not have an internship, and I found that I was interested in an internship that also included a master's degree, of which Illinois State University has and has a program like that. Back then, our internship programs were computer matching, so we would apply to programs and rank them. Programs would rank their applicants. And as I was thinking about how I would rank the programs I was applying to. I did get an opportunity to visit Illinois State University growing up, we would from South Dakota make the drive to Illinois pretty regularly in the summers and holidays, as my mom was originally from Freeport, Illinois. So I came to Freeport my senior year of college, and my aunt drove me down to normal so I could visit with Dr Mardal Wilson, who was the director of the internship program. And I knew after that meeting and after being on campus that Illinois State University was my top choice for a dietetic internship. So once the computer matching results came about, I was very thrilled that I was matched here to the program at Illinois State.

### **Kara Snyder**

So it sounds like it was kind of a full circle moment for you, but also for your family. And that worked out really well, both from a career perspective, but also a family perspective. That's really special,

### **Julie Schumacher**

Absolutely now we just make the drive in reverse, visiting family in South Dakota, if

### **Kara Snyder**

I need you know ideas for car games or something, you're the first person I'm calling

### **Julie Schumacher**

I've got a really great car game called shotgun, with good trivia and just really it just is a time keeper of the drive. And my kids love playing it.

**Kara Snyder**

Hey, anything that makes those hours fly by, right? Yes. So once you were here, how did you get involved on campus or in the community? How did you familiarize yourself with ISU and Bloomington Normal

**Julie Schumacher**

As an undergrad student, I was always very involved on campus, so when I arrived here as a graduate student at Illinois State University, I knew I wanted to get involved, because I also knew that was a great way to meet people, to learn more about the community and just create those relationships on campus. I was fortunate that my graduate assistantship position was with nutrition mission on campus, and that office was housed in the Student Health Services Building, along with the wellness office on campus. And so as a graduate assistant, I manage the student workers who are undergrad nutrition students of making their work schedule and helping train them and such, and our mission in that office was to do three day diet recalls of any student on campus, and then meet one on one with them to talk about the foods that they're consuming, what they might be low in high end, things like that. So it gave me opportunity to work with the undergrad students how to counsel real life patients. So that was a really enriching GA position just so it allowed me the opportunity to work with so many on campus. I also had a GA position in the CAS Dean office. I got to work with Dr Deb Gentry, and that allowed me to really see a unique perspective of the college. I feel like sometimes we're so focused on our major or maybe the department, but it gave me that great perspective, and so I was able to help with different programming and such that the college was doing well.

**Kara Snyder**

And what I love about that is that both of those experiences provided you with that hands on applied opportunity that cast and ISU is really known for. So what I'm curious then is that you got this great experience. What made you realize during that time frame that you wanted to continue your educational journey instead of going back out into the workforce to become a dietitian? What made you want to spend your career in academia?

**Julie Schumacher**

Sometimes things just. Fall on your lap. And I am very grateful to Dr Mardell Wilson for believing in me. And when I graduated this graduate program in FCS, my program director, Dr Wilson, took a different position on campus with assessment, and they needed someone to quote, unquote, fill in for a year. And so I was asked to do that, and it was a non tenure track position, and working closely with Dr Wilson as she was still director of the internship. And during that time, I realized I loved what I was doing, and so I sought out the doctorate program in curriculum and instruction across campus, started those classes, and what turned into a one year position for me, then changed to a three year position, and by the time that those three years were done, I had earned my doctorate degree, and this became more of a permanent position for me, and I think With the curriculum and instruction aspect, along with the nutrition aspect that I had learned in my graduate studies here that those combined, I really have a great appreciation for the students in the classroom for understanding the curriculum and seeing the big picture of our majors when they come in that freshman year all the way through their graduate studies.

**Kara Snyder**

So I'm curious as you, you know, you came to campus as the master student, and you yourself, as you've said, have been a student, and you've held various roles in the department and on campus, what is a quality that you

admire in a leader? You know, you've worked with a bunch of different people, and I'm curious what qualities stand out to you?

**Julie Schumacher**

I think the leaders that I have worked with at Illinois State University all have huge responsibilities. They are very busy individuals, not just in their, you know, day to day job, but also I see them volunteering in the community. I see them, you know, with their families and so they have a lot to juggle. So I think time management is something that I really, you know, always seek to learn more about myself, but it's seeing how the leaders I have worked with manage their time. And some may call that multitasking, but you know, in the research I've done through teaching leadership and dietetics, one can really not master multitasking, and it's the ability to manage your time that really makes you successful. So seeing the people I work with, I know that they get so many emails, but they are still taking time to respond to those emails. And how do they do that? And so even just engaging in conversations with them about that time management I have learned so much from them.

**Kara Snyder**

Can you tell us a little bit more about multitasking and maybe the negatives of attempting to do it? You know, I know we'll have students listening that are trying to figure out how to juggle, you know, various responsibilities, everything from a course load to maybe a part time job, but also figuring out how to manage their time as they go into the workforce. I'd love if you would share with us some of what you've learned.

**Julie Schumacher**

Well, I think the term multitasking sometimes in the you know, for scrolling and such, it might seem as a positive thing, like you need to multitask more. Look at all that you can get done. But our brains really don't work that way, and we need to be focused in the work that we do. So it's much more productive to work on a task, maybe give yourself a time limit for that and then move on to the next item. So I know in the graduate class that I teach leadership and dietetics, we engage in a lot of good conversation and dialog online about this, because we're kind of torn as a society on whether we should be, you know, patting ourselves on the back for being able to multitask, or what are we really missing because we're attempting to multitask. And so by looking at it more through the lens of time management, you can be more productive than just trying to juggle a bunch of things and have them all fall because you can't keep up. So we talk in this class that I teach about your Tiger time, that being the time of the day where you could be most focused and most productive. For some people, that is right away when they get up. For some people that's going to be in the afternoon, I am definitely more of the morning person to get work done, and by two in the afternoon, I'm exhausted, so I'm not going to be very productive, and I know that now. So if I want to schedule a meeting that we have some, you know, heavy mental work to do, I should plan that meeting in the morning, and so understanding your own workflow and your own times of day and how you might work best can really help you then be more productive, and you don't have to multitask in doing that, but you can manage your time better and get to your ultimate.

**Kara Snyder**

Goals. That's great advice. Thank you for sharing. So what would you say that the favorite part of your job is?

**Julie Schumacher**

hands down, teaching. I love to work with students and be in the classroom. And you know, being nutrition is such a broad umbrella term, and when I have different classes that have a focus to them, we can really dive into those topics. I teach a community nutrition class where the students create and develop a project out in the

community, and I teach a nutrition counseling and assessment class where it's really that foundation to becoming a clinical dietitian and learning how to write medical notes and things like that. So really, taking that student from that first day of a semester and seeing all that they accomplished by the end of the semester is really a rewarding part of my job. For me in high school, I never wanted to be a teacher, and that's why, ultimately, I went to school to be a dietitian. I am a dietitian, but now I also have this other title of being a teacher, and I enjoy that. I wish I would have you know, figured that out, maybe later, but this is how it worked out. I'm a third generation teacher, my grandma, my mom, my sister, my dad, and now I am also a teacher, and I love seeing that aha moment that students have in the classroom.

**Kara Snyder**

And on the flip side, I always like to ask, what do you find to be the most challenging thing about your job?

**Julie Schumacher**

Probably circling back to that time management and email management, I get a lot of emails, like a lot of people do, and just trying to and maybe it's because I like that person to person interaction that the email management can kind of be challenging. If someone you know comes to my office or stays after class and asks a question, I love to engage in that conversation, which might be harder to do via email, and so I think trying to manage my time with emails is a challenge.

**Kara Snyder**

Well, Julie, we are going to finish with a speed round, so just go with your first instinct on these questions. What are you reading or listening to right now? Anything you can recommend to us?

**Julie Schumacher**

I am reading the book. Listen for the lie. I'm very into psychological thrillers and figuring out who killed somebody.

**Kara Snyder**

That's a great summer read. I love that. What is something that is always on your desk? Coffee? Always have a cup of coffee on my desk, hot or iced hot. Even today it's a hot cup of coffee. Where did you go on your last vacation?

**Julie Schumacher**

I just got back earlier this week from South Dakota, but we actually went to the touristy part of the state to see Mount Rushmore.

**Kara Snyder**

Okay, if someone's going to South Dakota, where are you sending them? What do they have to see? Is it Mount Rushmore, or is there a hidden gem that is higher on your list?

**Julie Schumacher**

It would be the whole Black Hills area. But if you're going to the Black Hills. You should see Mount Rushmore, and then I have a laundry list of other things to recommend.

**Kara Snyder**

All right, so call Julie if you're headed that direction. Favorite board game,

**Julie Schumacher**

I like the card game skipbo And my kids and I really enjoy playing that.

**Kara Snyder**

So this is one of my favorite questions to ask. I didn't put this on the list just because you're a dietitian, but now I'm really curious about your answer. What is your favorite thing to cook for dinner?

**Julie Schumacher**

Well, actually, I don't really like cooking, but if I do cook, but one of my favorite things we got a black stone, and I enjoy making smash burgers on there. And of course, I do use South Dakota beef when I am making my smash burgers.

**Kara Snyder**

Okay, I love that full circle. Thank you for coming that up. But tell me, let's unpack that a little bit a dietitian that doesn't like to cook. Is that a misnomer? Then, can you clear that up for me? Let's see.

**Julie Schumacher**

Maybe because I have three kids, and they all have different likes and dislikes, but then at least if one of them is happy, I guess that is good and running in different directions in the evening, having the time to actually cook and not just, you know, throw the frozen breaded chicken in the oven, maybe my day will will Come where I have that time, and take that time to do better meals that involve a few more ingredients.

**Kara Snyder**

That's fair. You're speaking my language. I totally understand. And I ask everyone who comes on the podcast Avanti is gondola or pub two cheese balls?

**Julie Schumacher**

Again, the dietitian is talking, and I have to say the pub two cheese balls.

**Kara Snyder**

And one last question for you. If you could give one piece of advice to a college student, what would you say?

**Julie Schumacher**

I think students should really be open to opportunities when they're on campus, whether it is an internship or their first job, just say yes to the. Opportunities. You never know when those opportunities are going to have that domino effect to create even more and better opportunities ahead. So if I think about, you know, back in 2005 and how I said yes to Doctor Wilson for this opportunity to fill in for that year, and now I think about how many years later and where I am today, I wouldn't be where I am today without saying yes, back in 2005 and so I encourage students to really just look at those opportunities and jump into them, because it will likely open many more doors.

**Kara Snyder**

I love that just say yes. Thanks for that excellent advice, and thanks again for being here. That was Julie Schumacher, Professor in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, and the director of the didactic program in dietetics. Join us next time on the podcast for more stories from our cast alumni. Julie.