

Sandra Brightwell PodCAST Episode

Kara Snyder

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 Dr Sandra Brightwell. Sandra is a health information management alumna from the Department of Health Sciences, and she currently serves as the Director of the Health Information Management program at Central Arizona College. Welcome and thank you for being here. Thanks, Kara. I appreciate it. Well, let's start at the beginning. Why don't you tell us why you chose ISU?

Sandra Brightwell

Sure. So I graduated from Normal Community High School right across the street from ISU, and honestly, I had sites on getting my undergraduate degree at perhaps a different institution, but then, when it all was said and done, I as a first generation student, was responsible for paying for my college out of my pocket, and it just made good sense to stay in town and just enroll there at Illinois State University.

Kara Snyder

Tell us a little bit about being a first generation college student. What was that experience like for you?

Sandra Brightwell

So neither of my parents went to college, which qualifies me as first gen and although extended family certainly did, and so I had influence from particularly cousins that were a little bit older than I was, and watching them obtain their degrees, and frankly, having the fun that they did in college. And I just knew that from an early age that that was going to be part of my path. I started working at the age of 16, and just started kind of realizing what adult teen was going to look like, and that it was important to me to get that degree. So my parents were very supportive of my journey in higher ed, and I'm happy that I was able to earn the degree from ISU without any debt. I worked very hard simultaneously going to college, and have very proud of that accomplishment.

Kara Snyder

Yeah, that's huge. That said that gives you such a leg up as you start your career. So that's, that's a major accomplishment. Congratulations to you.

Sandra Brightwell

Thank you. I made lots of burritos and tacos at Taco Bell there on College Avenue, among some other things. I worked at Rocky's, which was a big, popular place while I was there 30 years ago. So it's, it's been a minute

Kara Snyder

Well, and I'm sure all of those lessons learned and your work ethic that carries over, right? You're not making tacos in your daily life now, but I'm sure the lessons that you learned at Taco Bell, at Rocky's that's still helpful 100%

Sandra Brightwell

Oh, yeah, for sure. And I hope that I'm instilling those values and that ethic with my own children.

Kara Snyder

And I'm curious how you decided to major in health information management, because the health sciences can be a little bit of a discovery major here on campus. So how did you find it, and how did you know that it was the right fit for you?

Sandra Brightwell

So funny that you describe it that way, because that's absolutely my story. I started at Illinois State University as an accounting major in the School of Business, and the first semester, I honestly didn't do very well, and partially because of personal reasons, I had still kind of connections at the high school level, and I wasn't overly focused, to be very honest, in my education. And so I decided after that first semester that I don't think accounting is the place for me. So I literally grabbed the catalog, the college catalog, and flipped through there and stumbled upon at that time, it was called medical record administration, and I had no idea what that was, and I didn't have any family that worked in health care.

And I reviewed that major and go, huh? This is interesting. This is business and healthcare all in one. And I think I might like this. So I'm sure at the time again, it was 30 years ago, but I believe I would have talked to an advisor and decided to pursue that. And so I just kind of landed in there unintentionally. However, discovered, as you said, Gem there at ISU. I later learned, after being accepted into the program and following that pathway, that at that time, the Bachelor's in medical record administration or H I M was in the top three in the country. So it was a really great move, like I said, unintentional, but very, very happy that I was I chose that path, and the success that my education there at ISU has afforded me in my career.

Kara Snyder

Tell me what you miss the most about your time on campus.

Sandra Brightwell

So that's an interesting question. I was a commuter student in that since I lived in normal I lived at home during my college years, which I was not thrilled about. But again, because I was financing my own education, I really didn't have a choice. I can tell you what I don't miss about campus, and that was driving around the parking lots trying to find a place to park, because you had to, like, circle around like a hawk waiting for somebody to come and get in their car and then grab a spot. So I definitely don't miss that, and I park. And in the parking lot, I don't know what direction it'll be, I guess north of the Bone Student Center there, and that was always a frustration. But, you know, I again, it's been so long ago, I'm not really sure to say what I miss about it, because I still stay connected with faculty there and former faculty there and a visit, you know, normal from time to time for holidays and things like that. So it's not something that I close the book on and no longer think about.

Kara Snyder

So tell us, then about your time on campus and your transition from your time on campus to your current position, because I'm particularly curious about your shift from the healthcare industry to education where you are now.

Sandra Brightwell

Sure. So as mentioned, I did work at the local Taco Bell there for quite some time, and when I did switch majors, I realized very quickly that to be successful, I would need to know more about health care and not just what I was learning in the classroom. So I found a job. I worked at Broman Medical Center. Didn't work for the hospital proper. I worked for an outsourcing company that Broman had done some work in their medical record department, and I did that for about three years, and then when I graduated, it was so funny. It was my last day of my practicum, and I was at one of the hospitals in Urbana, actually, and we were doing some meetings with outsourcing companies. The hospital there in Urbana was looking to outsource part of their work, and the director of the Health Information Department said, I'd like you to sit in on these meetings. And so I did, and I had a suit on. I was very professional. It was my last day of my practicum, and I was going to be get my assessment and my review, and one of the ladies that was coming in for a meeting, assumed that I was the assistant director of the department, which I was like, wow, that's cool. And then I learned from my program director at ISU that this particular woman had just started a new company and might be interested in hiring folks. And so I asked her, prior to that start of that meeting, could we have a discussion if she had time, you know, before she left. And it was a case of being at the right place at the right time. I explained that I'd worked for a similar company as to what she was opening up for the last three years at Broman. Her business was located in Chicago. I was very interested in relocating to Chicago, and lo and behold, and within a month or so I'm hired by that company and relocate to Chicago. From there, I worked for a company that did outsourcing work all over the country, and found myself in management there, right out of the gate, and worked my way up to a high level. And then at some point, the owner of the company wanted, learned of an opportunity out in the Phoenix, Arizona area, where a huge health system was looking for some outsourcing solutions. And at the time, I was single, and I was eager, and I was the chosen one to leave Chicago and go to the Phoenix area to start up this new company. And so I did that and commuted for a year, which is kind of funny because I would come to Phoenix for three or four weeks at a time, and then go back to Chicago for a weekend and then come back. And I don't really consider that commuting, but that's what we called it. And then I was asked and agreed to kind of officially relocate to the Phoenix area, and lo and behold, did that for a few years, and I should have mentioned that, starting in my undergrad experience there at ISU, I also learned quickly that not only working in the industry would be important, but also volunteering in the industry would be important. So I volunteered at the student level there for health information Association, and then when I relocated to Chicago, got very involved with the Chicago Association and the state of Illinois as it relates to H I M

so I continued those efforts when I relocated to Arizona, and in 2007 I was the president of the association, and I was asked to sit on an advisory board for a community college that was looking to get their H I M program accredited. And so I sat on that board and learned about higher ed a little bit, and, you know, it's all said and done. And then a couple years later, they approached me and said, Hey, we're looking for someone to be the director of our program here at the college. And I'm like, I don't do that. I don't do education, you know, you know. Thank you, but no, thank you. And they kept at it after me for probably a good year. And then at that point in time, I had gotten married, I had had my first child, I had been traveling tremendously again, once things settled down in Phoenix, and I was on the road again several weeks out of the month, going to different clients. And I kind of got to the point where you're like, you know what? I am ready for something different. And so they kept the college kept calling me, and I finally agreed to an interview. And during that interview, just a light bulb kind of came on, going, Wow. I never thought about again, moving from accounting to health care now health care to education. I never thought I would do something like that, and I just got really intrigued about the opportunity. Right and working in higher ed, and more importantly, really, that idea of paying it forward. And because I was still in my same discipline, my root professional health information management, I decided to make the switch. And I've been in this at the college for 13 years this month, and I'm love of everything about it, and particularly the engagement with the students and helping them see their future goals come to fruition.

Kara Snyder

That's a great story. And what I love about it is, throughout the course of your career, I can hear those times where you said yes to different things and maybe some things that were a little bit out of your comfort zone. And so I'm curious, what does your internal process look like for that, how do you know when to say yes? Because I think it's equally important to know when to say no. So what are your guiding principles when you're faced with big decisions like that?

Sandra Brightwell

That's an interesting question. I think that again, for me, I have found, especially in the last 15 to 20 years, I just find myself in this frame of mind of giving back and that realizing that somebody helped me get to where I am, and not just a person, multiple people, helped me, lift me up to where I am. And I think that's what helps keep me driving and saying yes to different things is that I want to be able to help

others, and I also am somebody that I get bored. So I'm not this type of person that likes to do even though I've been in this position for 13 years and I was in the other one for 17 years, they are their jobs that we do different things every day is a little different, and I like that variety. So with my job in higher ed, that is my daytime gig, but I'm very involved in other things that I say yes to. And I think the reason that I say yes is to not the not don't put all your eggs in one basket concept, but really to make sure that I am staying in the know and knowledgeable about a lot of different things and not falling victim to that tunnel vision or anything like that. I just, I don't know. I just, I guess, come to a point where, you know, way out, the risks, the pros and cons, the benefits and whatnot. And I don't want to say that I'm a daredevil or a crazy risk taker by any stretch of the imagination. I'm somebody that very much will make sure that there's a plan B and things of that nature, but you know, that's just what comes to mind when you ask that question. I'm not sure if it really answered it, but that's what comes to mind.

Kara Snyder

Yeah, that's great. Thank you. What is the biggest challenge you have faced in your career so far?

Sandra Brightwell

I'm not sure you know, again, when I was working on as a vendor in the health information world for 20 years, really, but 17 at that last job, I feel like I wish I would have attained my advanced degrees maybe a little bit sooner. It was really interesting, having graduated from Illinois State in 1995 and earning my master's. And I think it was 2016 so it was a significant gap there, again, at the time in the vendor world, I didn't necessarily see a huge benefit in getting the advanced degree at that moment. So that's not really a challenge. But I would just say, if I would do something different, that would be maybe one of the things that I would look at the challenge. I would say working in higher ed is very different than work being a practitioner in health care, things in higher ed often move much slower, which is, can be very frustrating for someone that was working in the hospital and, you know, having to make decisions, and having it happen right now, and even hiring folks, it was a more of a fast paced experience, where my journey in higher ed has been much slower, and that's frustrating to me, coming as a vendor that supported staff and clients, 24/7 and I came to higher ed, and I said, Well, what if a student needs help at six o'clock on a Saturday night? And I was told, well, they call the help desk and you don't have to worry about it. And I'm like, Well, what do you mean? So I had to, like this challenge of sort of learning new, I guess, boundaries in a way, and it was a good learning experience. It was a challenge that was

positive for me, because it helped me really balance that life and work a lot better, because it was very much work heavy for many, many years. And so I think that challenge turned into a positivity in my career.

Kara Snyder

And I'm curious now that you've seen this shift from industry to higher ed, and then also your experience getting your advanced degrees while working full time professionally. What kind of time management advice would you like to share with our students and young alumni that are listening? I'm curious. It sounds like you've had to balance a lot of competing priorities throughout your

Sandra Brightwell

career. Yeah, absolutely. Mean, again, even starting as a high school or undergrad, I had to work to support paying tuition and all of the things. So I learned very quickly that you had to balance and if it was important to you. And I've studied motivation quite a bit. And so you know, if you know what your goals are, and you know that you have the ability to do them, and you understand a way. What is required of you, then you stay motivated to get that reward that you have, of that goal. And so I would just give the advice of Be intentional, very intentional about time to do a thing. I tell that to my students now, don't wing it. Don't just say, Oh, I'll get to it tomorrow. I really recommend chunking out time, literally putting it on your calendar to say, especially in an online environment, if students are taking online courses, you know, plan your week, plan your day, and block in time to do that school work. So that way you have that intentionality, and you'll be successful, and you'll achieve what you're trying to do. If you just say, I'll get to it this weekend. Well, we all know something more fun is going to happen this weekend, that's going to be a disruptor and a distractor, and then you don't get your schoolwork done, or you turn in subpar work, which then leads into disappointment of yourself and frustration, and it can just snowball into something pretty ugly. So my number one advice always is just be intentional about it. So I block out time for everything. My husband finally has appreciated that, I think where, you know, blocking, I mean, I don't literally put time that I'm going to go to the grocery store on the calendar, but I almost would if I felt like I needed to. But I just think it's important to have that intentionality to manage your time the best you can. There's lots of theory, you know, ways of to approach it out there. There's lots of different styles, you know, eat the frog, one in particular where you do the hardest thing first and just get it out of the way. And then you can kind of take a deep breath and

be proud that you accomplish something and then start doing other things. But that's my number one advice always, is to be intentional about scheduling time for you to do the things, whether it's coursework, whether it's working, whether it's going to the gym or whatnot. So that way you and I'm a visual learner too. I've also learned that. So seeing things on a calendar and knowing that this is what tomorrow looks like, oh my goodness, it's going to be really busy, so I might shift what I'm going to do today, or vice versa. I just think that's that's how I been successful. And it frustrates me when those folks that don't operate in the same way, and I live with many of them. So if we're learning that as we go on this journey of life, that we know we're not all cut out of the same cloth, and that's okay, but it's kind of interesting.

Kara Snyder

I totally understand. Thank you. I love that. Be intentional. So I know that throughout your career, you have held a variety of leadership roles. How would you describe your leadership style?

Sandra Brightwell

Well, I think it's a combination of things. I would say that I'm a situational leader. I definitely can read the room, I can walk the walk, and talk the talk, pretty much with any group that I might be addressing. So I would say that I would like to think that I'm also so kind of a hybrid of of situational, transformational and transactional, for that matter, and a servant leader, so kind of all of them. It's sort of like what is needed at the time. I've been told many times that I'm a people person. I have joy learning about folks. You know, when I start working with someone, I look at it as a relationship. And obviously there's lines to not cross, but I want to not just think of somebody as their title. They're a human, right. And at the end of the day, whether their title is fancier than mine or not, the end of the day, we're both going home, and we're just a human so I really think that I have a variety of leadership styles. It just depends on what it is that I'm leading. I try and lead by example, and I just think that's really important. So for example, when I hire a new person, one of the first things that I do is I put their birthday on my calendar and actually have one coming up Friday. A colleague of mine's birthday is Friday, and I just think that's important to celebrate them as a human and remind them that I know that they are a human, and, of course, appreciate their effort and all the work that they do and the excellent stuff, but I just think that's important. But I'm also not afraid to ask questions about a thing. I'm also not afraid to push the buttons if need to, or nudge things and ask questions and the tough questions. Also not afraid to ask for

help. I don't think that I'm the end all be all person. I've accomplished a lot, but there's still more to do, and we all just have to work together. So it's really a total hybrid style. I would say I would never classify myself as anything if I had to pick one which I haven't mentioned yet, I guess I would say authentic. But as far as the different styles that are out there that we study and know about, it's definitely a blend. Excellent.

Kara Snyder

Thank you for sharing. Yeah, and I know that you're very active in your professional groups and organizations. Can you tell us about the importance of professional development and why you choose to give your time to those organizations?

Sandra Brightwell

Yeah, absolutely. So you know that started there at Illinois State. Well, actually, it started younger than that. I think I was in second grade, and my mother I wanted to become a Girl Scout, or brownie or whatever, and my mom bought the whole uniform, and she would make me wear that to school every week. On the day of our meeting, I was the only kid that had it on, and my mother was just like, I bought you that thing you're going to wear. And so from that, I swear, I that's where I got my sense of spirit from there, and then I participated in a lot of different things in my high school ages. And. Whatnot. But then in college, there did start participating as a student member of the Health Information Association. And then, you know, I took a job as a vendor in a very specific sector of H I M, and I learned quickly that this is a niche that I'm going to be really good at and lead. But geez, how am I going to keep tabs on everything else that's going on in the health care ecosystem and the H I M workspace. And so I realized that volunteering would allow me in the H I M profession to get to know others that work in the different sectors and work at different organizations. And so to me, that was just tremendous. And so I've been volunteering heavily for 30 years now, there as a student and then as state association, and I've been privileged to be serving for my National Association. I was on the council for Excellence in Education a few years back, and then I was recently elected as a one of the directors for the American Health Information Management Association, which is a fabulous honor to help direct our association and oversee the profession. In addition to that, I again, when I came to higher ed, I kind of drank the Kool Aid. I earned my two advanced degrees, and I've gotten involved in the last six years pretty heavily with the Arizona women in higher education, which is a really neat organization, and it's a little bit of a

kumbaya sisterhood, anything. And a first conference I went to, I was like, Huh? I figured this is just going to be, you know, how to write the robust syllabus, or how to do this, that, or whatever, and there's a little bit of that, but it was really more about being a good human and all of that. And it just really spoke to me. So that's kind of a neat thing that I participate in. And then as well, maybe the last same thing, 678, years, I have been volunteering pretty heavily for the Arizona chapter of HOSA, which is an organization, a nationwide organization, of students that have an intention of obtaining a degree and working in the healthcare space, one way or the other, whether it's veterinary science to surgical tech to sports medicine to nursing or hi m so that's been a fabulous thing to really kind of help those that have an intention of working in health care, help them see the light, if you will, and that's been a fabulous thing. And then on the side, I do PTA work and Cub Scout work, and so I'm just kind of all over the place. So professional development, because I have a professional credential, I'm required to sort of clock, if you will, continuing education units on an annual basis. And I've always go well over what the minimum is. And you know, professional development provides lots of things and is important for several reasons. One, obviously keeping relevant with the education and the new things that are going on and in the healthcare space, particularly in hi m, which is a blend of business technology and science and data, we have to be on top of new technologies that are out there, softwares that are used in healthcare now, with the, I mean, AI has been around for extremely long time, but now the major focus on AI and how that is working in healthcare is just huge. And so the professional development is necessary from a healthcare perspective. It's necessary as an educator, to understand new teaching methods, and again, software there that's available. And then lastly, the networking that comes with professional development that is attending conferences in particular, webinars are fine, but going in person to conferences and, you know, meeting new people and sharing best practices and those sorts of things is just is crucial to stay relevant in your profession. So that's why I do all that.

Kara Snyder

What would you say to someone who is considering a degree in the health sciences?

Sandra Brightwell

So my first question to them would be, do you see yourself as a hands on clinician or not? Because those of us in H I M know that we are not. We didn't come out of the mold to deal with needles and vomit and blood and all of the things we beat to a different drummer, if you will. So I that would be my first

question is, do you see yourself? You know, I know you said health sciences, but my mind's going straight to health care in that. How do you see yourself? And then kind of go from there. I again flipping through that catalog, Geez, 34 years ago, or what have you again. I never thought I would work in health care. I didn't even think about the behind the scenes aspect of health care and the business side of health care, and clearly it served me well. I've worked hard as well, but it's been a good choice for me. And so I would just kind of see where they think they see themselves, you know, in five or 10 years. But that would be my first question is sort of that bedside clinician type position or something different, and maybe it's like, I'm not sure. Then it could be something in the middle, where they could work in a lab, you know, and they're looking through a microscope all day and doing lots of cool analysis and data and all of that. They're still hands on, but they're not at the bedside. I know that. I'm not wired to handle the sad part of health care. I couldn't handle that. I know not all health care is, ooh, we have a new baby that's healthy, and everything's great, and they've got 10 fingers and 10 toes. There's a lot of sad things that unfortunately come with the business of health care, and I just would not be somebody that could handle that on a day in and day out basis. And I see that in my profession, I've had many clinicians come. Through my program, that we're nurses or respiratory therapists or medical assistants, and they're like, I just can't do it anymore. It's, you know, I've been doing this for 1520, years, and my body can't handle it anymore. It's a mental drain. I don't want to work 1012, hour shifts, but they have all this wonderful knowledge, so they'll come and talk to me about a career in ham. That's what I would say, that person thinking about a degree in health care or health sciences, kind of just needs to see what their end game is, and then go from there. And definitely they would want to talk to folks that work in that discipline and get a real understanding of what it would take, not only from education standpoint, but just kind of what the day in the life would be for that particular profession to get a good understanding. And of course, you know, almost all health care programs are going to have some sort of clinical or practicum internship, I would hope, associated with it, which, again, it's usually at the end of the program, but it still gives that student that opportunity to really find out, is this what you know they're all cracked up to be?

Kara Snyder

Well, that's great. Thank you for sharing. Yeah. Well, Sandra, I have really enjoyed our conversation, and we're going to finish with a speed round, just to get to know you a little better. So go with your first instinct on these questions, the first one texting or talking.

I'm going with texting, but depends who it is.

Kara Snyder

Tell us about your morning routine. Oh my

Sandra Brightwell

gosh, it's a whole new world right now. My son just started high school, and so I'm getting up at 4:30am I'm taking him to school, which is crazy. Prior to that, I was still an early bird. I go to Pilates every morning from six to seven, and then take the kids to school, and boom, I'm on my work day, so my mornings are, I'm an early bird. And that's, that's me

Kara Snyder

Up and at 'em, yes, what are you currently reading or listening to? Anything you would recommend to us?

Sandra Brightwell

So right now I am reading, I've gone through it a little bit. Would be this four dx, which is a four disciplines of execution. It's, it's a model that the college that I work for is looking at from. It's from Sean Covey, actually, and a couple other authors just kind of talks about, I don't want to get into it, but it's, it's kind of a boring leadership type book. I have this weird type of Amazon amnesia that I think if I buy a book that's recommended, that when it sits here on my shelf, that somehow it's going to get in my brain. So that's one of my weaknesses, is that I buy books, but then I often don't get to them right away. So don't do that.

Kara Snyder

It's the power of osmosis, right?

Sandra Brightwell

Yes, right, yeah, not amnesia. That's what I meant, osmosis. Sorry, wrong word there.

Kara Snyder

So maybe that leads right into my next question is, what is something that's always on your desk? So maybe a stack of books, right? Paint a picture for us? Yeah?

Sandra Brightwell

Well, I work remotely, generally, so I live in Arizona, and it, I know it's a dry heat, but it's hot, so I always have ice water by me, for sure. That's absolutely 100% which may be normal for everybody, but out here, it's you won't survive if you don't have that. And I would say the other thing, which is random, but it's a calculator, just the old school calculator I always have on my desk because I'm always doing some sort of data check type thing.

Kara Snyder

Well, and I always think of, you know, the math teachers that used to say you won't be able to carry a calculator around. It's like, well, we showed them Right, exactly. So if you're going grocery shopping, what is one thing that is always in your cart?

Sandra Brightwell

Well, being a mother of two boys, I would have my first response here is milk. They go through milk. I'm like crazy, which I'm happy about. That's fine, but that's what comes to mind, is two to four gallons of milk every time I go.

Kara Snyder

That is wild, but I'm sure the dairy industry appreciates it. I know right, what is the best concert that you have ever been to.

Sandra Brightwell

Well, definitely, probably shouldn't say that was not my son's fifth grade concert last spring. It was really frightening. I went to normal community, and I was in the marching band, and at that time, it was a phenomenal, big deal. So I have to rip on my son. He'll never hear this, probably, but no but regular concert, I would say, was probably in the last five years when Queen came out to Phoenix. It was

amazing. And I wish that I would have seen them back in their glory days. But it was phenomenal. From the music, from the stage decorations, or whatever you call it, the sets. It was just awesome. Or the whole place was up singing the whole time. And you know, the digital version of a lighter, which is your cell phone light, was just going around that website. That was my favorite concert.

Kara Snyder

It is hard for the fifth grade version of Hot Cross Buns to compete with that

Sandra Brightwell

Right trombone. And you know what? He doesn't get any better if he doesn't practice it. So that trombone, it just sits in his case, until he takes it to school, so, which is really hard for me, because I took music pretty seriously. We did that as Ironman there and normal,

Kara Snyder

Yes, yes. There's a life lesson in there somewhere. He's still got time. He's only in fifth grade. And then my last question for you, Avantis, gondola or Pub II cheese balls?

Sandra Brightwell

That's a tough one. I would say a half gondola with a side of cheese balls, is what my answer would be. But I think I have to go gondola just because that bread can't find it anywhere else. I know Jimmy John's gives them for a run for their money, but it's just not the same. It's funny, I flew to normal about a month or two ago, and I've never done that before. I actually flew right into normal or Bloomington. I had never 30 years. I've never done that, and it was awesome. And I walked across the street, and by the way, there's no crosswalk there from the airport in Bloomington straight to ivani's, and loaded up because I love it, so I'll have to go gondola, but the pub two cheese balls definitely close second.

Kara Snyder

Yeah, I'm always curious when it's somebody that, especially when it's somebody that's from Bloomington, normal. Okay, what's gonna win in your mind?

Sandra Brightwell

Well, and number three is monocles. Sorry, I like, oh sure, cross pizza. So yeah, I mean, there's a whole list of places you have to hit up when you come back home.

Kara Snyder

Yeah, do you get it with the French dressing?

Sandra Brightwell

Oh, absolutely. Yeah, yes. Critical, 100% Yeah. Like I said, I was just back in town not too long ago, and the family ordered several pizzas, and we actually bought a whole bottle. You know, monocles got smart A while back, and now sells the bottle for purchase. So we were all set.

Kara Snyder

Yes, yeah. If you could get that through TSA at the airport, you'd be in great shape, right? Well, one last question for you. If you could give one piece of advice to a college student, what would you say?

Sandra Brightwell

Aside from being intentional about everything, just ask for help when you need it again. I was a first gen student. I didn't know what I was doing, but most colleges and universities have a tremendous team that's going to help guide you along the way. Take advantage of those resources with your advisors. Talk to other folks that you know that have gone to school like don't be afraid to tread that unknown territory. And it's worth it, and it's just a blip in life. It can be feel painful, maybe at the moment, but it's a temporary and it's necessary, and you'll be very proud of yourself for completing it. So I know that was more than one answer, but that's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Kara Snyder

That's great advice. So thank you for that, and thanks again for being here. Oh, my pleasure. Thanks, Kara. That was Dr Sandra Brightwell, Director of the Health Information Management program at Central Arizona College. Join us next time on the podcast for more stories from our CAST alumni.