

## INTRO

**Stephanie Jackson:** Now That's INTAresting. This podcast is about the Georgia Tech Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, its graduates, their careers, and how the Nunn School has helped to shape their future. Take a listen.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Welcome back to Now That's INTAresting. I'm Stephanie Jackson.

**Sydney Piwonka:** And I'm Sydney Piwonka.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Today, we would like to continue our series on minors. We would like to welcome Kayleigh Nortje, a senior Business Administration Major and Global Development Minor student from Georgia Tech, who will be graduating this December.

**Sydney Piwonka:** While at Georgia Tech, Kayleigh has worked as a volunteer with Partnership Against Domestic Violence, Outreach 360, and WWOOF USA. In addition, Kaleigh has worked as an Event Coordinator for Alumni Connections Committee of Georgia Tech, as part of New Student Engagement for the Georgia Tech Orientation Cabinet, and as a Student Assistant at the Office of the President at Georgia Tech. Kaleigh also completed a study abroad at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, and an internship at the Carter Center as a Syrian Conflict Mapping Intern.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Well, thank you for joining us today, Kaleigh.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Thank you for having me and for that lovely introduction.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Oh, great. You've certainly been involved while you've been in school.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Thanks. Yeah, I've tried.

**Stephanie Jackson:** As I said, you know, we've been running this podcast series on alumni that have earned our minors, and we thought that, with the end of the semester approaching, it would be a good idea to hear a perspective from a student that is soon to graduate and what your experiences in college and having this minor have meant for you and your ideas on what you might do next. So, I would like to begin our conversation by asking you a few questions about your pursuing the Global Development Minor.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Stephanie Jackson:** First, I recall, you actually started at Georgia Tech as an IAML student.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yes.

**Stephanie Jackson:** But now you're a Business Administration major with a focus on Information Technology Management, is that correct?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yes, that's correct.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Okay. So, how did you learn of the Global Development Minor?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** So, I think I learned about it after I made the switch to Business Administration. And I still really had an interest in pursuing or maintaining a focus in International Relations. And I thought, I think I was kind of doing some research and seeing how I could maybe tie in a minor or what minors I could pursue at the same time. And then I saw Global Development, and I read a little bit about it. And it seemed like there would be some really great crossovers between IT Management and then also still maintaining that perspective of International Affairs and Global Development. So, just kind of through some searching and yeah.

**Stephanie Jackson:** So, how have you seen like the topics that you covered in this minor--you kind of hinted towards that--overlap with your major studies in IT Management?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah, I think, especially recently, I've seen it within some of my final courses. I'm currently in a class called Technology and Poverty, with Dr. Neha Kumar. And it's been really interesting to kind of understand and be in a class also with Computer Science, majors, and then master's students and hearing their perspectives of technology and development, and so, I'm working on a final research paper. And in one of my other business classes, we talked about policy, and more specifically, like with health records, and HIPAA. And so, it's been interesting, kind of, now have a final research paper where I can really see a lot of the intersections coming in from my other business classes. I'm also in a coding class and kind of seeing, you know, the biases that overlap in programming and how that has an impact on individuals. So, I think it's been great to kind of have both sides of humanities and then business and kind of coming into classes with different perspectives about it's not just about the bottom line, and I think that's something I've definitely been more conscious about by taking global development classes and, you know, hearing perspectives of people who maybe have done other volunteer things outside a campus, so that's been really great.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Yeah, okay. That's interesting.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Yeah, that's awesome. And so now, we would like to move on to a little bit, talking about some of your experiences while at Georgia Tech. So, you've worked in various roles at Georgia Tech, including stints with the Student Alumni Association, and with FASET. And so, tell us a little bit about each of these experiences.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah. So, with Student Alumni Association, that was actually one of the first organizations that I was involved with at Tech. And I kind of happened to stumble into it, because I think, you know, during your first year, you get lots of emails about joining organizations, and so I was like, why not give it a shot. And I think, looking back on it, it was really invaluable, because, I mean, it definitely put me out of my comfort zone, because part of my role was connecting students with alumni and planning faculty dinners. And these events where, you know, alumni would host us and they would tell them, tell us about their experiences at Georgia Tech and their careers and what we could do to kind of advance our careers. And definitely being a First Year at Tech, I felt like I was not qualified, really, to, you know, talk to the alumni that were amazing and then also coordinating between master's students and older students. But, it was really a lot of fun. And I learned a lot, and it was a great way to make connections with others. And it was really kind that they gave so much responsibility to someone who just came to college, and they put that trust in me. But I'm really grateful that they did. And then with FASET, I've been involved with FASET also since my summer after my First Year, and it's kind of where I found a community and a way to give back to Georgia Tech. And it's been a lot of fun, you know, inviting the new students to come to Georgia Tech and telling them about the incredible opportunities, and also,

you know, getting to tell them about my minor and then the experiences that I've had while being here. And then being on Cabinet, it was also definitely put me out of my comfort zone in trying to lead others and build them up as leaders. And so it was a different role than I had had when I was actually an Orientation Leader.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Yeah. And so how has seeing this administration, or leadership side of Georgia Tech affected your course of study throughout your time here?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah, I would also definitely say that having the opportunity to be a Student Assistant at the Office of the President has given me an interesting perspective on the inner workings of what goes on with the administration of Georgia Tech, and how much support, you know, it really takes to run an Institute. And so, I've really appreciated being able to have that unique perspective. And really, just seeing how much communication takes place between all the departments that we don't usually see. And, you know, the thought processes that have to go into the decisions and how much weight you know, the Presidents feel, even though we can always see that. And so I think it's been really humbling to be able to see that, and how much, you know, it really does impact the people in leadership roles, like maybe heavier things that have gone on campus, and how much they carry that weight as well. So, that's been really special, I think, especially during my time here.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Yeah, that's awesome. That's so cool, that you've been able to see that side of Georgia Tech as well. And so, for students who may want to get involved, whether with the Alumni Association, FASET, even working as a Student Assistant places, what advice would you give them to find these jobs or to be able to work in these organizations during their time at Georgia Tech?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah, um, I think a big part of it is I know FASET looked a little different this past year, with everything going on. But, generally, there's an Organization Fair, and I think they were able to kind of do that virtually in some capacity, I want to say. But I think really just, you know, I signed up for ballroom dancing, or maybe you accidentally sign up for too many clubs when you first come, you know, but it's great to still get those emails and see those opportunities. And I think there are lots of people tabling on Skiles. And so, it's always fun to kind of just talk to people and hear about their experiences, even if you don't want to join maybe it could lead to something really great. And I think also just talking to older members in like organizations that you might join and seeing what other experiences they've had and like maybe you'll stumble into something really great. But I would also say, you know, venture out of your comfort zone and, and try something new like with Student Alumni Association I, you know, never really thought about planning events or doing that sort of thing, but it offered a great experience. Or doing FASET being Orientation Leader, you know, I never really thought I could do it, but people encouraged me to try out. And I'm very grateful that they did. So, I would just say, you know, go out on a limb. Sign up for emails, and if you don't want to do it, you can ignore it and unsubscribe. But, you know, maybe perhaps you'll stumble into something really great.

**Stephanie Jackson:** It's interesting, you know, the experiences that you've had, you know, on campus. And so that kind of extends into some of your other volunteer work. Looks like you've had some other volunteer opportunities that you've been involved with, including Outreach 360.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Stephanie Jackson:** And WWOOF USA. So, and you hinted to this a little bit earlier, but tell us how have these experiences impacted your studies of global development or business, or helped shape what you think you might do in your future?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah. I would say Outreach 360, that was incredible, because that was actually part of the Alternative Service Breaks on campus. And so, it's really great that they set up those opportunities for students too, and that they really encourage anyone to go. But I feel really lucky to have been able to go to the Dominican Republic and kind of participate in teaching students. And it was great, because I got to use some Spanish that I hadn't used in a while and see another side of teaching. And after that experience, oh my gosh, I just have so much respect for teachers, because I had no idea how complicated lesson planning was. So, I think that was a great experience so like, a lot of respect for my professors, and all my teachers throughout high school and middle school and everything. So I think that was, you know, a really great perspective to see and how much teachers really do impact their students. And you know, like how your work really just has a way of impacting all of those around you. So taking that, you know, throughout college, and even doing the little things and how volunteering allows you to like open new doors and see different sides, especially in the Dominican too, and seeing how kind everyone was. And then, the WWOOFing, is what they call it, I actually did it this past summer, during the pandemic, and we were up in Maine for a month on a farm.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Oh.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah, it was incredible. And they had livestock, and they were a Scottish Heritage Farm. So, they had, you know, the shaggy Highland Cows, which was awesome.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Yeah.

Yeah, it was great. And so, I think it was, that was also an interesting perspective, because the women who owned the farm and who worked on there, they were actually skeptical of technology. And I think my friend and I, who went together, we were kind of taken aback by that, because I think being at a tech school, you know, I think technology does have incredible potential, but also being aware that some people don't see that. So, I think that's something that I've been able to bring both to business and to global development and kind of seeing, you know, why people were skeptical. And like, we might think that it will solve a lot of problems, but how other people might not believe that. So, I thought that was interesting. And then, you know, from working on a farm, they talked a lot about sustainability and the impacts of how we eat and just everything and we'd have like hour long discussions at breakfast, before we were like, okay, we should probably actually go do some work. But it was interesting to hear their takes on how we can make a difference by just the small things. And so, I think that's also helped me see that I really want to work somewhere that values working towards sustainability and having a positive impact on the environment. And you know, also towards helping people and being aware of their skepticisms. And you know, what they really want from technology. Or do they even want technology instead of maybe imposing those onto people. So.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Yeah.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** That was definitely a really interesting experience for me.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Okay. What kind of advice would you give to students who might be seeking similar types of impactful volunteer experiences that allow them to, you know, see some of the theories and

things that they review in class come to life in some sort of practical experience? What advice would you give to students who are seeking those kinds of experiences?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Stephanie Jackson:** To volunteer with different organizations?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** I would say, definitely kind of think about some of the things that you'd always hoped or dreamed that you'd wanted to do--like going to the Dominican and going abroad. I always thought that it'd be--not specifically the Dominican but working in a Spanish speaking country--and look for those opportunities around you. Because I think there really are more than we recognize. And Georgia Tech has tons of incredible opportunities, and you don't even have to go far to really have an impact. And so I think looking for organizations that kind of fit your interest, whether you're interested in medicine, or maybe STEM, or policy, or, I think there are tons of, again, organizations on campus that can really help you do that. And even just doing that in Atlanta makes a big difference. So, I think that's a big thing. And then, also with the WWOOFing, it was like just some abstract idea that my friend and I had always thought, talked about doing and, you know, I think sometimes you just have to go for it. And maybe things work out, and maybe they don't. But it's always worth a shot. And I would say, don't be afraid of reaching out to, you know, whether it's a professor doing research you're interested in, or an organization off campus as well, you know, the worst someone could say, is no, and that's okay, too. But I would say just sometimes,

**Stephanie Jackson:** Yeah.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** You have to go for it. And definitely, that's something I've had to learn, because I'm not the best with reaching out or sending emails. So, I would say, though, it's definitely worth your time to, you know, just go out into the limb sometimes and do the things that you've always wanted to do.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Yeah, I think that's great advice, especially as people are finding, you know, what opportunities they want to, want to have during, or find,

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Sydney Piwonka:** During their time at Georgia Tech. And so, shifting a little bit to some of your international experiences. So, you spent a semester studying abroad at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yes.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Correct?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** That's correct.

**Sydney Piwonka:** And so how did you decide to pursue a study abroad at this university?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah, I think, especially just coming into Georgia Tech, I knew I wanted to study abroad. And that was an experience that I really wanted to have. And it kind of just happened to fall during my fall semester of my, I guess, my Fourth Year. And so, I also knew I wanted to go to Spanish speaking country, because I did come in International Affairs and Modern Languages with the concentration in Spanish. And I have always loved the language. And so, just having a chance to go somewhere where I

had the possibility of practicing it, and kind of being immersed in a culture like that. And also, I would say, during my time in high school, Spanish was a big part of my experience. And so, I, I really wanted to be able to go to Spain again, and to go to Sevilla. And, you know, see different parts of Europe as well. I think that was also a big part of it, just having a chance to kind of see the different cultures and experience different things while being there. And so, you know, going through Georgia Tech study abroad programs, I thought that Carlos Tercero, you know, fit a lot of those boxes. And so, yeah, I think it was really great to kind of be able to practice Spanish again, even though it hasn't really been a big part of my studies. And kind of learn more about the culture there and meet new people. So yeah.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Yeah, that's awesome. That's definitely so cool that you've been able to have such an awesome experience there. And so, were any of the courses that you took there at the Universidad during your time, relevant to your Global Development Minor, or some of the International Affairs experience that you've had, throughout your minor?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah, I actually ended up taking most of my, a lot of business courses there. But I did get to take a class in HR, which was interesting. And, and even just being in a class, you know, with students from all over the world was really interesting and I thought tied into the Global Development Minor. Just of understanding different cultures, which I think is a big part of it, and, you know, learning about what they care about, and how that, you know, affects the business. So, I thought, even though it wasn't directly a Global Development class, it did kind of play into a lot of the things that I've talked about in some of my other courses. So, and I think just like getting to meet people from all over the world, I had group projects, I think, with people from Denmark and, and Germany. And so, I thought that was interesting that, you know, again, it wasn't directly part of global development, but still getting to work with people. And learning what they care about was really cool.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Yeah, I think that all those experiences, not just the classes that you take when studying abroad, but other experiences that you have, while there are super impactful. So that's awesome that you've had such a great,

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Experience there. And so, for students who may be thinking about studying abroad, whether in Spain or in other countries, what advice would you give for them, to them?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** I would definitely, well, if you're going to Europe, there's this big program called Erasmus, and I thought, you know, you had to be a European student to be a part of it. But they're really just this big organization that strives to connect people and, you know, have gatherings for people to get to know each other and plan events where you can hang out and meet new people. And I that was one thing I wish I'd definitely done more. So, I would say, you know, no matter where you go, if it's Europe or South America or Australia, finding ways to connect with people, not only from that country and that culture, but also the people who are coming from other countries because I think you can really learn a lot and make a lot of great friendships from that. And I would also say, you know, take the time to wander around, it was always really fun, you know, to explore a different city and kind of amble around with no, you know, purpose exactly. And then maybe you find a new coffee shop or, you know, a great park or something where you can sit. So, definitely taking the time to get lost, I would say, is really fun. I'm sure that's kind of a cliché one but would definitely recommend.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Wait what is the cliché? Not all that wander,

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yes.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Are lost. That's the cliché.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Not all who wander are lost.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Yeah.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** But definitely true, I would say.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Okay, yeah. I agree. I agree. Okay, I have some questions for you that about things that were a little bit outside,

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Of your campus activity. So, you had an interesting internship,

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yes.

**Stephanie Jackson:** With the Carter Center. Your title was Syrian Conflict Mapping Intern.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yes.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Tell us about that role.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Okay, well, actually, a funny story. So, I found that role from one of my, my Introduction to Global Development course. And the founder of that program came and spoke to us. And I was like, wow, this is an incredible, you know, job. And it sounds interesting to kind of have that intersection between technology and also working with people. So, I really, I was excited about that. So, I heard about that a year before I applied. And then a year to the day that he came to our class, I accepted the position, which was crazy. And then I, I was telling everyone, I was like, Guys, can you believe this? Like it just seemed otherworldly. I could not believe it. But yeah, so I, that was really great. And I don't think I would have found that opportunity had it not been for my Global Development class. But it was really interesting. You know, you got to also meet people from Emory and UGA, and people from different campuses. And so, working with other students was an incredible opportunity. And I think that also definitely put me out of my comfort zone, because a lot of the students, you know, maybe we're studying Public Policy or International Affairs. And so, sometimes I felt a little out of place. But I think everyone was very patient with me, and I asked lots of questions. I remember, you know, talking to my, I guess, like the other cohort of Syrian Mapping Interns, I was like, I'm so sorry, if I ask a lot of questions. And they're like, no, like, ask as many questions as you need. And the team was very supportive. And so, it was really great also to kind of understand more about the nonprofit side of working. And I definitely appreciated that. And now that I have a better understanding of nonprofits. And I got to meet, I actually met someone from Spain, Madrid. And so, when I went to Madrid, she was able to pick us up from the airport, which was incredible. And I also wouldn't have had that without my internship.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Yeah.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** So, lots of full circle things, honestly, which was fun.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Yeah.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** But yeah, definitely an incredible experience.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Good.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** And I think it really showed me the opportunities for kind of those intersections with how can I merge my IT position, or like my major with my global development classes.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Okay. So, from that, even though you had a very unique experience in obtaining an internship, for students who might be interested in working either with the Carter Center, or finding different types of unique internships like this, what kind of suggestions would you give them? Aside from being in a class with a good speaker?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** I would say, honestly, LinkedIn is your friend. Someone actually reached out to me on LinkedIn once and they're like, Hey, I'm applying for this internship, what can you tell me about? And I think, you know, that's what it's for. It's for making connections with people. So, if there's ever, whether it's working at the Carter Center, or maybe you want to work at another nonprofit, you know, just reaching out to people. And again, I would say, like, I'm also not the best at that, and definitely learning how to do that. But, you know, the worst that could happen is maybe someone doesn't respond, or it just doesn't end up working out. But that's okay. But yeah, definitely use LinkedIn. Use those resources. Look to see where Georgia Tech alum are working and where you can, you already have that immediate connection of going to the same university. And I would say, CareerBuzz, also, you could kind of look there if you wanted to, for some of those experiences. And I would also say, recently, what I've been learning is if you have an interest in working for a specific company--whether that's a nonprofit or something else--just googling it and seeing, you know, who can I reach out to and talk to about this opportunity, and if there are any openings, like would they let me know about it. So, yeah. I think really, if you find something interesting tried to find someone to connect with. And I think people are always more willing to meet up, I guess, in this case virtually, then you would think. So, yeah.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Yeah. Okay.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Yeah, that's awesome. And so, finally, as a kind of wrap up, so first of all, congratulations,

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Thank you.

**Sydney Piwonka:** On your upcoming graduation.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** It doesn't feel real.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Yeah.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Yeah. It happens so quickly.

**Sydney Piwonka:** And so, as a graduating senior, do you have any immediate steps after graduation, any plans for future career paths, future jobs, anything that you have planned immediately after graduating?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah. I would say I think, you know, also being in a last semester, it's giving me time to really think about what career I want to pursue. And I feel like I'm kind of at a crossroads of figuring that out right now, of merging these two disciplines together. And so, I'm interested in a career in cybersecurity, I think that would be really interesting. And I'm hopefully going to talk to some of my professors to see what their careers have looked like in cybersecurity, and what opportunities there are for, you know, recent graduates. So, I think that would be one interesting pathway. And then I've also always thought about maybe doing public health in the future. So, potentially getting a master's, but I guess that's kind of far out, you know, once I find some funding or something like that. But so yeah. I think those are some of the things that I've recently kind of gravitated towards. And then, I think I might stick around on campus for a little bit working at the Office of the President, since there's a lot of movement in there with my boss, and they said they could use some extra help. So, it was kind that, you know, they want me to stick around for a little bit. So, I have that for maybe a month or two after graduation, I guess. But, yeah, currently, I'd say kind of figuring out where I want to apply, and what exactly career path I would like to follow. So, I guess, like I said, you know, reaching out to people and, and just talking to them about their opportunities, and what they've done to get to where they are in their careers. So, lots of talking to people, which will be interesting, I hope.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Yeah, that's awesome. That's super exciting. Well, we can't wait to hear everything that you do in the future. And so one last final question. So, for anyone who's possibly considering the Minor in Global Development, what words of advice would you have for them based off of the experiences that you've had,

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Within this minor?

**Kayleigh Nortje:** I would definitely say it's been like one of the best decisions I've made for my time at Georgia Tech, just because of all the opportunities and windows, it's opened for me. And I think, I've really appreciated how it's kind of taught me to think slightly differently and, and keeping in mind, you know, the people side of it, and how your actions really have bigger impacts than maybe we think. And so, I think it's been a really no matter if you're doing STEM, or if you're doing Public Policy, or whatever career or major you choose, I think it really has given me a lot of windows into things that I hadn't thought about before, which I think is really great. I think there was a quote, something about education is not the learning of the facts, but the training of the mind to think. And I really think that Global Development has helped me think in different ways, which I love, and especially in kind of conjunction with the Business Major, where maybe you focus more on the bottom line and forget about the people aspect of it. I think it's been an invaluable combination that I think it can really be invaluable for anybody, no matter what you're thinking about doing. So, yeah. I really loved it.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Well, we're glad that you did. And we're glad that you completed that particular minor. We want to thank you for your time today, Kaleigh.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Thank you for having me.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Great. This has been an insightful conversation. And I think you've really made some really strong points about the benefits and the importance,

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Yeah.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Of making connections throughout your academic career.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Exactly.

**Stephanie Jackson:** We do wish you the best in your future. And we hope that you're staying safe and healthy during this time and we look forward to hearing more about your future successes.

**Kayleigh Nortje:** Thank you so much.

**Stephanie Jackson:** Thank you.

**Sydney Piwonka:** Thank you.

## **OUTRO**

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