

“Student Affairs Talk” • Trinity Scott, Senior • July 1, 2020

Q: First of all, how are you holding up during all of the craziness that has accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic?

Scott: Definitely crazy, but I'm enjoying time with family. Communicating with friends and engaging them in different ways has been difficult, but also really fun to explore. That's how I'm holding up.

Q: A senior out of Blythewood, South Carolina. How did you escape USC's backyard and end up at Clemson?

Scott: It's always the funniest story to me. I toured USC twice. The first time was in May and I was suffering from heat exhaustion. I had to go to the bathroom, quit the tour early, and it wasn't a good time. The second time, I went with my school, but we didn't finish because it was raining or something like that. They weren't offering me the experience I was having at Clemson. The environment was a big thing for me choosing Clemson, but also the family ideal. I felt very welcomed and comfortable with everyone who has gone to Clemson and is at Clemson. That was a big factor in me choosing Clemson over USC.

Q: Let's talk about that experience a little bit. What are some of the early memories of Clemson that you look back on fondly?

Scott: Definitely freshman year Orientation. We were late-comers, which is funny now that I'm an Orientation Ambassador and it's kind of frowned upon. I was late to check in, but everyone welcomed us with open arms, checked us in and got us to our next destination so we could experience the Orientation process the way it should be. That was one of my fondest memories when I first got to Clemson. I toured Clemson my senior year of high school and everyone was just so welcoming. They always asked us if we had questions. That's one of the things we talk about. If you ask a person if they have questions, no matter how nervous they are, they'll end up asking you questions. It was always real friendly to have that on our side.

Q: You got involved in Student Government; can you tell me about your work with that group?

Scott: I'm in the Council of Diversity Affairs. I started fall semester my

sophomore year. As a freshman, I was different about dabbling in everything. So, sophomore year, I stayed cemented in a lot of organizations I'm still involved in today going into my senior year. The Council of Diversity Affairs is just as it sounds. We seek to include everybody on Clemson's campus, kind of like a multicultural organization. We just want to promote the education of several groups on campus, no matter their race, disability, sexual orientation — we seek to increase awareness about all of those different groups. The main thing that we put on is with the Gantt Multicultural Center called the Tunnel of Oppression. It's part of MLK Week and it's been really fun to lead and organize it the past two years. I'm excited to do it my last time, as a senior.

Q: With everything going on around us in terms of race relations locally and nationally, where are your emotions and feelings right now as you examine the landscape?

Scott: The first word that comes to mind is exhausted. This is what we've been trying to tell people for years and years now. But it also makes me kind of excited, because people are more willing to listen. I'll just pull out the facts I've been trying to use from years ago. Exhausted comes to mind, but also excited for what can come in terms of change now and in the future.

Q: Clemson made news recently when the Board of Trustees met two weeks ago and opted to remove the name of John C. Calhoun from the Honors College and ask for an exemption to rename Tillman Hall. What was your take on those decisions and what it means moving forward?

Scott: I definitely think that there's historical steps (to take), and I am so glad I'm a part of the Clemson student body as those decisions were made. It really speaks to everyone who has been involved in Clemson in the last four years and the work that has been done. They sought to remove this name about four years ago and it's just a continual process. Again, I'm glad to be part of the student body. But there's a lot more steps to be made. As we are taking down the name, we should remember where we came from. That has pressured

me to keep up with my history of Clemson, John C. Calhoun and Tillman, so that I can educate others so they are aware.

Q: One of the reasons we have you on the show this week is to take listeners through the Orientation experience. Is this your first year as an ambassador?

Scott: This is my first year serving as an Orientation team leader, but last year I served as an ambassador. I went through a second process to serve as a team leader.

Q: Take me through the difference between an ambassador and a team leader. Now, I suppose, you have a few ambassadors who report up to you?

Scott: Yes. I have six people on my small team. There are five other team leaders who have about five or six ambassadors on their small team. There's 33 of us combined; kind of a big group. But if you count how many incoming students we take each year, it makes sense. You can only serve as an Orientation ambassador for one year. Then you go through basically a tryout process again to be a team leader, which is the role I'm serving in this year.

Q: I know ambassadors are required to take a course in the spring leading up to Orientation season; did you have to take it again this year?

Scott: Yes. I've had to take it twice now. EDSA 3090 is the course section.

Q: It's been quite the roller coaster since January. How have OAs and team leaders been able to pivot and continue to prepare for that in-person component we hope to launch in August?

Scott: It's funny, because we were just talking about this recently. It's always so interesting how quickly the OA team comes together. But if you factor in that we meet in November and January and then take a whole class together, it kind of makes sense. I think it's very important to have a team of 33 come together before you can introduce some to the Clemson Family. We have been trying to not only get to know ourselves, but get to know our students in different ways — including social media and personal outreach.

“Student Affairs Talk” • Trinity Scott, Senior • July 1, 2020

Q: One thing I’ve found through talking to various OAs over the years is that family aspect you touched on earlier, in that you made lifelong friends from this group. Is that the case for you as well?

Scott: Definitely. It’s so interesting, because as we switch from in-person to virtual this year — comparing this team to last year’s team — I still feel the connectedness and closeness between all of us. It doesn’t feel any different now that we have to communicate primarily through GroupMe or Slack. I feel the family part of Orientation.

Q: What’s it been like working with Glenn Spurlin, our director of Orientation, and others who have been instrumental in shaping your role?

Scott: Glenn has been great. I’ve learned so much from him, but the main thing is to just go with the flow. Sometimes, I’m so rigid, but Glenn has definitely taught me to be adaptable and versatile. That’s a testament to his character, because he’s not just focused on one thing. He tries to know about our personal lives and how we’re doing academically. It’s been great working under Glenn and others in the office that was just renamed the Center for Student Leadership and Engagement. Working with all those people have been great; I’m excited for this next year.

Q: You’ve also been a resident assistant in your time at Clemson. You’ve lived in Douthit Hills; tell us about that experience.

Scott: I lived in Douthit Hills West last year and will be again this year. It’s primarily a student-athlete and upperclass community. I mainly work with the men’s basketball team. That was really awesome, getting to experience their surprising wins last year and congratulating them in the hallways last year. It’s been fun getting to see different athletes. It also hosts the ClemsonLIFE community, so engaging with them every once in a while as you’re working the desk and they’re in the lobby has been super fun. Just working with the co-workers on the resident assistant team is great. They’re so willing and fun and we do a lot of social gatherings. It’s been great working as a resident assistant.

Q: Academically, you’re majoring in psychology. Tell me about it and any plans you have post-Clemson?

Scott: Psychology is honestly a great major. I think it’s one of the largest at Clemson, if I’m not mistaken. Get to meet so many different people in each of my classes at Clemson. I have taken a psychology class every semester since the beginning. It has been a great experience just getting to meet with other people through group projects, but also learn something different in every class. I think psychology is very versatile and can go many different ways; so that’s pretty awesome. Post-Clemson, I’m looking into higher education. As many student organizations as I’m involved in, I’m looking into higher education post-Clemson. I really recognize the impact my supervisors and graduate assistants have had on my time at Clemson. I would love to make that long and meaningful impact throughout the rest of my life.

Q: Are there other organizations you’ve been involved with that have helped shape your Clemson experience?

Scott: The last one is National Residence Hall Honorary and the Residence Hall Association. They have impacted by Clemson experience in the ways that I show recognition to others. It’s really just about bringing people together throughout the Clemson community. But also showing recognition to the people who make our Clemson Home.

Q: As you prepare for a fall return, given the current situation with COVID-19, what are you hearing from fellow leaders in Orientation and hearing from incoming students?

Scott: It’s crazy, because as an Orientation ambassador we definitely get a lot of those questions. It’s kind of “I don’t know... coming soon... we’ll tell you in a little bit.” That’s definitely been a little weird. I’m excited to get back to Clemson. I think it’ll be different going into my senior year; it won’t look like others’ senior years have gone, especially not the class of 2020, but also what a traditional senior year might look like. That is definitely scary, but also exciting just knowing I get to finish it out in a pandemic.