Justice: Greetings earthlings, and welcome back to another episode of Chat with WRAC, the only podcast about Michigan State University's Department of Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures. I'm your guide, Justice Curry, here to take you on another adventure within the WRAC department.

Justice Curry (...: Joining us today is Charlotte Bachelor. What year are you in at MSU?

Charlotte Bachelor: I am a third year student, but this is my second semester in the P2W program. I transferred into the program. I was a journalism major before. It didn't work out for me, per se, just was not for me. So I found P2W. I was just on the website. I was like, this looks like a cool program. I can write and do creative stuff, but being in the program, I've been able to do like so much more than I ever expected or ever expecting myself to do. So I really, really am appreciative of this program. I love the program. I love the people. So I am overall having a great time during my third year at MSU.

Justice Curry (...: That sounds really awesome. I'm really glad that you're like enjoying your time in P2W. You mentioned you found P2W on the website, like what, what exactly on the website, or what did you read that really made you think like, “Oh, this is the major that I want to go into.”

Charlotte Bachelor: The versatility, because you have so many different skills that you can use on a day-to-day basis. Like I have graphic design skills, I've done zines before, I have written rhetorical analysis of stuff. So, I just have so many skills, so I don't feel like boxed-in and so now at my job currently, when they're like, “Oh, we need social media content made,” I'm like, okay, I got you.

Justice Curry (...: I want to know more about what positions you hold with this job and how you've applied the skills you've learned from your P2W classes to this job.

Charlotte Bachelor: I am a student ambassador for my Spartan story, and my spartan story, if y'all listeners are not aware, is a new program through the office of the Undergraduate Provost that allows students for the first time to be recognized for out of classroom co-curricular experiences. So research RSOs, Greek life, intermural sports, working on campus, campus leadership positions, we basically have a database and you can go in and request something with your transcript called the Spartan Experience Record, and this record lists the time commitments, what you were involved in, what you did, and the learning outcomes. I remember when I was in WRA 202, like I hated doing these in WRA 202, but they really did save my behind, the art of the memo. Or why did you do this? So when I make my designs, I add a little note: this is why I use this color, this is why I use this font, this is why I use this layout.

So now when it's time for staff meetings and evaluations, and my bosses are like, what was the purpose behind this? I can give an explanation to my design. So it's more than, well, because I thought it looked cute. And making myself a resource, I think, and being a team player is like one of the most important things I learned in P2W. Being a part of a team, because that's where like real leadership comes in. It's not saying, I have this title where it's... I'm influencing other students into doing this, but I'm actually on the ground doing the work. If I don't have a question, I go to my supervisor. Being able to influence people's decision, but also teach them and help them out. So they know what they're doing.

Justice Curry (...: With your experiences and the projects that you've done in your P2W classes, has it given you any ideas for your future career or project endeavors?

Charlotte Bachelor: It actually has. This is going to be a lot, but I'm going to explain my thought process and what I want to do after I graduate. After I graduate from MSU, I'm also going to attend MSU for the MBA program in Digital Rhetoric and Professional Writing, and just further some skills in research because I have always had an interest in fandom. I've been a part of geek culture, nerd culture, whatever you want to call it since I was like around four or five. I find it very interesting how the behavior patterns and how we dictate who is influencer and who gets platforms, dictates how people think in those spaces and how people act in turn in the real world. Then I want to take that there and then do brand consulting for things like San Diego Comic Con, New York Comic Con, Yama Con, these big major conventions and corporations say, how do you make your programming more accessible?

How do you diversify? So it's not just white men and women presented, let's get black folks, let's get queer folks, let's get disabled folks. Let's get folks all over the board, but how do we do that in a way that's not tokenizing, that's respectful of their identities and not making sure they are the expert or the monolith of a subject. Then kind of on the side, I also do work that speaks to life experiences and travel I've experienced. So I published a zees for my WRA 260 class that was based off a journal I kept from August 2018 till about October 2019, which was probably like the hardest year of my life.

I dealt with severe manic episodes because I was un-diagnosed bipolar at the time. So I poured my heart out into that. And it was like, my professor really saw that and she was like, “Wow, well can you make a zine for this book I'm writing and I'll offer you a fellowship.” People being able to see my talent, to see my story, as this isn't just a one-off thing, but you have a real gift here for telling stories and an eye for designing things like that. I find that to be really crucial and just, I just make things that speak to me.

Justice Curry (...: You briefly touched on your mental health and discovering that you had bipolar disorder. How has your mental health affected your studies and also your creative processes?

Charlotte Bachelor: I think that's an interesting question because when a lot of people think about disability, they think of the terms, Oh, this person is in a wheelchair, Oh, this person needs full assistance or they can't walk. In addition to bipolar one, I also have chronic fatigue syndrome and postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, which is an autonomic nerve disorder, which basically means that my nervous system does not respond in the proper ways or there's like overkill basically. If I don't feel good or if I don't drink, I'm going to fall out. I'm just going to fall down. Legs will stop working, temporary paralysis. So, but people don't think of disability as the invisible thing. So how that's affecting my studies is I'm definitely grateful that MSU has a resource of, for the resource center, for persons with disabilities to RCPD, they have nothing but been great with kind of verbalizing what my needs are like in the classroom and just getting around campus as far as like accessible transit and stuff.

Day to day looks different for me. Some days are good. Some days I can't get out of the bed on my own. It's just like, again, a learning process, and just the key thing is just, I try to be patient with myself and I try to give myself that grace, because I know my professors are willing to give me that grace and kind of like lower the standard for myself and stop being... Disability has taught me to stop being so hard on myself because we're all human and Some days we're just not going to be able to make it. I guess that's the long answer to your question.

Justice Curry (...: I was going to say, I really liked how you mentioned, how a lot of disabilities are invisible. For someone personally, I've struggled with anxiety and depression for a very long time, and it's still a struggle for me to even consider it a disability. I think that stems from my experiences in my household with having those, having these disorders like invalidated. It's really difficult for me to like, to ask for help. It took me having like a really, really bad mental breakdown to actually get registered with RCPD, and I did finally decide to get help and finally decided to find a therapist because like, it's something that's really stigmatized within the Black community, but also, like you said, you still live your life. You still continue doing what you got to do, but I want to thank you so much for joining me today on a Chat with WRAC.

Charlotte Bachelor: It was great to be here.

Justice Curry (...: And also be sure to keep a look out for Black and WRAC, if you are a Black student within the P2W or XA community, and you're interested in having a community space to collaborate and chat with other students. DM a Chat with WRAC on Instagram for more information for that, and thank you guys so much for listening.

Justice Curry: Thank you so much for listening to Chat with WRAC, follow us on Instagram and Twitter at Chat with WRAC and tell us what topic you'd like to hear next. Don't be a stranger.