

History of Black Women at the University of Maryland

Interviewee: Traci Dula

Interviewer: Kiara Henighan

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Henighan: My name is Kiara Henighan and I am a student at University of Maryland, College Park and today I am interviewing Dr. Traci Dula in room 2100 [inaudible]. Also present is Ms. Miranda Morris, she is our scribe today. Today is Tuesday, November 28th, and we are conducting this interview as part of a class assignment studying the experiences of black women at the University of Maryland. Thank you so much Ms. Dula. To begin, would you please say your full name?

Dula: Traci Dula.

Henighan: Before we begin, can you tell us a little about yourself before you attended UMD? Like about your family, where you're from?

Dula: Sure. I'm from Baltimore, Maryland. I'm the youngest of three girls. I attended Seton High School which was a private all girls Catholic high school. It was my first experience, before then I was in public schools, at the time I guess Baltimore public schools were going through a bit of a budget crisis, classrooms were overcrowded and my parents made a decision to have me do high school at Seton High. Seton High then merged with Keough High School after I graduated, so the school that I went to exactly doesn't exist anymore because it did merge with another school when, I guess, the archdiocese of Baltimore City, Baltimore County felt the need to collapse schools. What else would you like to know?

Henighan: So, can you tell us the years that you attended UMD?

Dula: [Laughs] Oh my gosh! Let's see, I graduated from high school in [19]85, class of [19]85, so I was here 1985 to 1989 as an undergraduate student.

Henighan: Okay, and what made you choose College Park? What made you choose coming here?

Dula: I think a couple of reasons. I don't think... the reasons were exactly sound. Part of my background is that I was first generation, and my parents attended and completed high school but they did not attend college. And

so, while it was important for them to have me attend college, there was not much guidance that they were able to offer beyond, you know, the financial support. So, I didn't choose Maryland for particular academic reasons, but I did choose it, one, because my older sister had gone here and I would spend weekends here with her. And I just loved the school, I loved the big team spirit school thing, I fell in love with College Park from day one. Then it was my first choice. The other reason probably why I came here—and this could've been anywhere, frankly—is that I grew up not far from Morgan State University, like literally walking distance, blocks from it. And I wanted some distance from home, and so College Park seemed like the right amount of distance without being too far. In retrospect, however, [chuckles] I will go to my grave saying the school I should've attended, I should've attended Morgan State. But when you're seventeen, you don't know what the best choices you should make all the time.

Henighan: So what makes you say you should have attended Morgan?

Dula: Well, I think one, because it's an HBCU and it's smaller. I think an intention that HBCUs—at least Morgan, now that I know, gives to students in preparation. It was a liberal arts college, I think it would've been a better education experience for me, a better social experience for me. I think the nurturing that I didn't get here—and I had plenty of mentors here, so don't get me wrong, but they weren't faculty members, and I think Morgan would've given me the nurturing of faculty members that I didn't get here. I think I would've had better guidance. College Park, when I was here, was a very different school than it is now. The focus was on graduate education. Undergraduates were here to just help pay their bills. We could've been invisible, really. I mean, unless you were really a very high achieving, high flying student, the focus then was on graduate education. After I left, in my understanding, when the new dean or assistant dean of undergraduate studies came in, things really flipped where she turned all that around and College Park from that point on, which was probably the mid [19]90's, to now is a very different institution in that there's loads of focus on the undergraduate experience, which is why we have so many live and learning programs to make the large campus smaller and manageable for students; to give them special academic experiences. None of those things existed when I was here. You literally were a number and people used to refer to Maryland as a degree mill. It's not that place now, and I'm very proud to say that it's not.

Henighan: Okay, so can you tell us on record what your major was?

Dula: On record? [Chuckles] My major was radio, television, and film, which I wanna say—I graduated in [19]89—and I wanna say around maybe [19]95 or [19]96, they got rid of that program. They probably started phasing it out in the early [19]90's. Which I don't think is a good idea, but for the resources that the university was putting into the program at the time, it probably was. It either needed to invest heavily in that program or dismantle it, and they, I guess, chose to dismantle it. Which I think was a mistake 'cause film studies now is just huge. And as a matter of fact, I think the campus has brought back a film studies department. But it was not very well supported at that time and I think that sort of reflected on the experience I had as an undergrad academically.

Henighan: Okay so, let's talk about that. What was your academic experience here?

Dula: So, my academic experience is that the faculty of color were very few and far between. I remember having good relationships with a couple of faculty members who were in sociology, there was literally one that I could think of in radio, television, and film who's still here, actually. She's in American studies now. And I don't know how she ever got any sleep 'cause every black student that was in radio, television, and film lived in her office. It would be her desk and it would be all of us literally [chuckles] 'til we were out in the hallway of her office. I don't know how we didn't just use her up because she was it. And again, things have changed, so now kids come in from high school having done internships and research. Back then, the messaging was to say you sorta did an internship around junior year. And I will say, academically, there were not faculty, in my experience, who directed me, supported me, said, this is where you might wanna go to get an internship. I mean, I found internships, but there just wasn't any type of systematic support or nurturing of students in that manner—of me.

Henighan: Okay. So, curriculum wise, what kind of classes did you take as a radio, television major?

Dula: Honestly, I don't remember. But they had to do with production in all medium. I remember taking film theory, I remember taking several production courses, writing courses. So, we didn't bleed over into

journalism, but we had similar type courses in terms of writing copy and things of that sort. We had some sound courses that I remember.

Henighan: Do you remember if the faculty for your specific major or your classes were predominantly male or female?

Dula: They were predominantly male and predominantly white.

Henighan: And then you said there were few and far between African American faculty members. Were there any in your department at all?

Dula: Mm-hm.

Henighan: Or just that one you spoke of?

Dula: I think I remember a man, a black man, but I had absolutely no interaction with him. So I don't know if it's just I didn't happen to take a class with him, I don't know. But he was not a person that had students—students didn't gravitate towards him. Yeah, I don't remember any type of rapport.

Henighan: Okay. So, you mentioned sociology, one sociology professor. Were there any other—

Dula: There was a couple of those. I mean, they were here and there, they were different departments. There was this wonderful woman over in psychology. Oh, and actually another black man in psychology 'cause psych was my minor, and they were wonderful. Just absolutely wonderful. So, you know, I mean, there were people spread out, but you're at a PWI, you're not an HBCU and so you understand that coming in.

Henighan: So, now I'd like to transition and talk about student life outside of class. So, when you attended UMD, where did you live? Did you live on campus?

Dula: Mm-hm. All years I lived on campus. I first lived in Centerville Hall. So all the residence halls, for the most part back then, were single sex residence halls. I don't think we had any co-ed now that I think about it. I don't think co-ed housing existed [laughs]. And so, I was in Centerville. A lot of my new friends who were freshmen were over in La Plata [Hall], so I spent a lot of time in La Plata. So, by second semester of my freshman year, I had

moved over to La Plata and I stayed in that same room for all my rest of my time here.

Henighan: Do you remember if, like, was it overcrowding at any point in the dorms? So, like now?

Dula: Oh my God, no. [Henighan laughs] Not only that, I had what I would call a single, a double single. Like, so I moved over to La Plata—yeah, 'cause that's where you take the twin beds and you take em' off of those hideous bed ends they had back then, and you put the beds together and I had full size sheets and it was a wonderful thing. What was your question? Oh! No, so I moved over to La Plata and so Crystal and I had a room together, and then Crystal moved someplace, I don't know where she moved, maybe on the other side of the hall. I can't remember where she moved to. And then, it's like almost every other semester I had the room to myself, and most of my time there I had the room to myself. So, one semester this young lady moved in, we were really good friends, but she immediately joined a sorority and moved to that house, and then another young lady moved in who was a commuter—I'm sorry, not a commuter, she was a transfer student and she just needed to be home. Being away from home was just too much for her, so she kinda left, I think like mid-semester or something. Plus, she had this boyfriend that was like ten years older who thought he was gonna live in my room and I had to shut that down real quickly. I'm like, no, that ain't happening. So, [chuckles] I had a room to myself most of the time. Tracey Williams across the hall from me had a single, so she was Tray Will, I was Tray Moo, 'cause my maiden name is Moody. She had a single, Monique down the hall had a single, Crystal was on the other side, Alisha had a single, so all of us came in together as freshmen and so, yeah no, they were begging people to live on campus.

Henighan: 'Cause when you said that you lived there for the remainder of your years, that made me think of how they usually push you off campus.

Dula: Yeah! Like my son is a junior, he's home, he's commuting because—

Henighan: Yeah, I commute now.

Dula: —they kicked him off. Well, they told him he can have housing and live in Denton Hall as a junior and he was like, I don't think so. Yeah, he wasn't havin' that, so. [Laughs] Yeah.

Henighan: So, since you lived on campus, what was it like—so, I'm from Baltimore too, so I live on campus. So, for me living on campus and being a freshman, did you long to be home a lot?

Dula: No.

Henighan: You didn't long at all? You liked school? [Dula most likely nods] Okay—

Dula: As a matter of fact, I wanna say my first summer I think I went home and then not any summers after that. I managed—well, okay, no. So, I was an orientation advisor for two summers, so I was down here. And then, I'm trying to think, why do I remember living in Leonardtown for a while over the summer? Maybe I was hanging out with Audrey, I can't remember. Basically, after freshman year I don't think I ever spent another summer [laughs] in Baltimore, I was always down here.

Henighan: Okay so, did you enjoy being an orientation advisor?

Dula: Yeah, I loved it.

Henighan: How did you get involved in it?

Dula: I have no idea. I guess I just applied. I really, I don't know. I don't know if somebody, like if one of my mentors said—'cause most of my mentors are from the student affairs side of the world, so campus activities, which is where I lived. So, I really don't know, that's a good question. But my guess is that somebody probably encouraged me to apply and I did, and I probably said, okay! And I did it. And the same woman who is director now, **[unsure]**, was there when I was a student, so, you know. [Sighs]

Henighan: That's amazing. So, outside of being an orientation advisor, were you involved in any student organizations?

Dula: Mm-hm, well, my sorority. And then Order of Omega. What else did I do? Oh, well my sorority and then as an extension of that, I was a leader in Panhellenic Council which is the governing umbrella of the Divine Nine. Yeah, I think that's about it.

Henighan: Did you hold a specific position in the council?

Dula: Oh my God, yeah. But, let me think. I can't remember, I know I won Greek Woman of the Year at some point. I was on executive board, that's about as much as I can remember, that's as far back as I can go. But yeah, I seemed to have always been on the executive board in some manner or another.

Henighan: And you received the Woman of the Year?

Dula: Mm-hm.

Henighan: That's really nice. So, what was your experience with Zeta Phi Beta sorority?

Dula: What do you mean?

Henighan: So, how did you get involved with that on campus?

Dula: Oh Lord. So, I was—I think my freshman year—I was good friends with a woman who—'cause she was fast—as a freshman she was dating some fraternity guy who happened to be a Sigma, and Zetas and Sigmas are brother sister organizations. So, somehow through her, I think, I probably became a Sigma sweetheart, and as a result of that, always hangin' with the Sigmas, Phi Beta Sigmas, I was always hanging around with the ladies of Zeta Phi Beta because they always did a lot of things together: community service, events, all sorts of everything. And so I got to know them and so I think that's probably how it morphed into me then seeking out membership.

Henighan: Do you remember how many members were part of your chapter or at least your line?

Dula: So there was five of us on line. And then the next semester, the next spring, I was dean and we took over ten, and I wanna say, comin' in, I don't know. Maybe Kelly, Ruda, Sharon. Maybe they were already about ten women in the chapter, I can't really remember.

Henighan: Wait a minute, I lost my track. Okay so, what was the demographic makeup of your sorority compared to the Panhellenic Council? So, like did you only accept African American women?

Dula: Oh, absolutely not. No, absolutely not. And none of the Divine Nine organizations are that way. We've always been open. As a matter of fact, there was this little Zeta woman who was a terror, she happened to be a white woman, I was most afraid of her, she was crazy. And she wasn't even from College Park, she was from UMBC or something. But no. Now, the answer to the question is no in terms of it was always open. In terms of who was in the chapter, I would say it was probably all women who identified as African American, maybe a few biracial in one direction or another, but yeah.

Henighan: Okay. So, what involvement did your sorority have in the UMD community?

Dula: I would say, I think we pretty much covered all areas from community service, which we tended to do a lot of our events with Sigmas, I don't know, I feel like they still do it, but the Sigmas started the first ever sleep-out for the homeless where we would all sleep out on La Plata beach. It was always so freezing, but in the multipurpose room in La Plata we would have hot chocolate and other things, so people sorta kinda come in and go back out. So, things like that we've always did. We threw a few parties, but not too many because that was mostly a frat thing to do. So, I would say most of our work, that came from us from our chapter, was service. I would say it was service and then probably a few academic support type programs like study breaks or things of that nature.

[Phone begins ringing and interview is temporarily stopped]

Henighan: Outside of your sorority how did you make friends? Did you have friends outside of your sorority?

Dula: Oh, absolutely. So, [chuckles] people used to call me... happy go lucky. I'm not that person anymore unfortunately [laughing]. But yeah, oh yeah, I had loads of friends. As a matter of fact, I used to be called the rainbow coalition because I had so many friends outside of the black community. I think because of orientation probably and then Order of Omega, I just really flowed through different circles around campus, yeah.

Henighan: Okay so, when you were a student here, what was Nyumburu Cultural Center? What was it for you?

Dula: It was the epicenter of the campus, it was home, it was how I didn't go stir crazy after hearing these crazy white people. First of all, it was located—it wasn't a cultural center physically, it was always Nyumburu, but the cultural center came in I wanna say it opened up when I was back on here on campus as a staff member, so maybe that was around [19]95, [19]96 cause I knew the architect who worked on campus who designed the building. So, I remember when it opened, but when I was an undergrad they had a small space over in South Campus dining hall. Up on the same floor as the MaryPIRG and the radio station.

Henighan: Where [**unsure**] are you familiar with that? The newspaper?

Dula: Unh-uh.

Henighan: So, when you said that you got involved a lot, your mentors came from student affairs, did you have any mentors in Nyumburu?

Dula: Oh yeah! I mean, Otis Williams who was the director, he was my son's godfather before he passed away. He actually passed away before [**Benny?**] was born, months before, like less than two months before [**Benny?**] was born, but oh yeah. Anne, who was still there—she ain't never going anywhere—Anne Carswell, Otis Williams, they were like, they were your salvation. And then there were other people on campus like Marie Davidson, there were people over in academic achievement/ EID Program, which I don't think EID exists anymore. I mean, yeah, but that was your salvation, that's where you celebrated Kwanza, the gospel choir, all of that was a part, it was like one big community. So even if you didn't sing on the gospel choir, you were part of the community because you went to all their concerts. It was the epicenter of your sort of black student existence here. You could walk across campus, go inside South Campus dining hall, go up to the second floor I think it was, slip into Nyumburu, and you would think you were at Howard. [Chuckles] I mean, or Morgan or North Carolina A&T, you just forgot for a minute that you were at College Park. It was a safety place I think.

Henighan: I was about to say.

Dula: It was definitely a safehouse.

Henighan: And so, were the staff supportive of student issues?

Dula: Yup! Yeah, I would say if there were real issues, like I would say Anne did more of the programming, but if you had issues, Otis was probably the person to go to. But then of course there was... over in Hornbake was... OMSE.

Henighan: Office of Multicultural Student.

Dula: Well, it was different. It wasn't quite that name, but it was OMSE and it was Charles Richardson, it was a whole bunch of people who had your back. So, in between classes you were either in one of two places, you were either at OMSE or at Nyumburu. Or at Roy's in the union. 'Cause we used to have a Roy Rogers in the student union. And it was like this big eatery, and it was this section like this L shaped section in the student union where the black people hung out at. So, you were either at Roy's in the union because that section was closest to Roy Rogers, or you were at OMSE, or you were at Nyumburu, or you were in class.

Henighan: Was there a reason for these specific locations? What was it about Roy Rogers that you all—

Dula: I don't know! I think it's just sort of where people ended up clumping and it was the place. You know, where you ended up hanging.

Henighan: Were there any like political or social demonstrations?

Dula: Oh my god, yeah! We were involved in apartheid, that was in the [19]80's, that was big. Forcing the university to divest from South Africa. That was huge. I remember [chuckles] walking into President—was it President Kirwan or President Slaughter, I don't remember who was president at the time, but it might have been Slaughter—I remember being a part of that. I wasn't a leader of the movement, but I was definitely involved and engaged and more upfront than in the back of it, but I wasn't one of the organizing leaders of it.

Henighan: So, what would you say the relationship between black students and the administration were during your time at the university?

Dula: It depends on administrator. I mean there were a lot of good people here. And then there were people who just didn't quite figure out what to do with this population. But I had a good experience by and large in terms of that regard because I just had so many mentors and they weren't all black, you know, and I think it was because I was so involved on campus. I just connected with so many people who had my back and supported me. So, you know. And the other thing is that the black community, like we were still tight enough, like things were still sort of—aggressive is not the word, but sort of adversarial enough out there in the atmosphere and the climate, in the racialized climate that we were still very close. And it wasn't all these other organizations, it was Divine Nine, it was BSU, and it was NAACP, and I think ASA. So, I mean we were just very close because when you're small in number and the atmosphere feels like it's against you, you coalesce. Now things are different, it looks like the black community is more dispersed. So, things are better for students, but it seems like they're not as close as they were during my time because they're more dispersed. So, I don't know.

Henighan: So, you mentioned the Black Student Union, do you remember any specific issues that were like their cause during your time?

Dula: I think it was apartheid. I think it was definitely Maryland divesting. That's not something that happened in a semester, that was something that was over a period of time. That I could recall.

Henighan: Do you remember anything specific about the NAACP?

Dula: No, not really. But again, I mean I can't recall who was leading the charge, but we were all in it, you know? So, it might have come out of the NAACP, it may have come out of a BSU meeting, but we were all in it together.

Henighan: So, in relation to the College Park community, not just on campus, what was the relationship that black students had outside of campus around here?

Dula: I don't know 'cause I wasn't engaged in anything off campus.

Henighan: Okay. So, your life was on campus?

Dula: Mm-hm.

Henighan: Okay. So, you mentioned that apartheid was the main issue—

Dula: That I could recall.

Henighan: Right. So, what types of activism—did you like go out and say, okay, this is why we need you to divest? Like did you all partake in marches, did you do sit-ins, things like that?

Dula: Yup. All of the above. We had shanties out on McKeldin Mall.

Henighan: And what are those?

Dula: Little—you can look it up—but the little dirt houses that people were being forced to live in, we sorta had mimics of those out on McKeldin Mall. That's what I recall. I do remember—this was serious—I do remember, and I want to say this was the NAACP brought Farrakhan on campus, Louis Farrakhan, and I thought the campus was gonna just erupt into a civil war. Especially like the Jewish students were at our throats, they just could not understand why we would support Louis Farrakhan and bring him on campus. I just remember a lot of police being around and whatever.

Henighan: So, what was the relationship of black students to Jewish students to white students to other minority students? Do you know the difference?

Dula: No, not really. 'Cause again, I kinda lived in a variety of worlds. I think people just kinda stayed in their corners. That time when we brought—well, not we 'because I wasn't involved in it—that time that at least one of the black organizations brought Farrakhan on campus, that's the only time I can really remember there sorta being this pitting. But, you know, they got over it.

Henighan: Okay. So, I have a question, like a personal question. As a black woman, what would you recommend to any young black woman coming to the University of Maryland based on your experience—

Dula: I would tell them to go to an HBCU. But if they had to come here, I don't know if this would be just for a black woman, but I think I would tell any student to just—the beauty of what Maryland has become is that there are

so many opportunities from the different living and learning programs, and those can be exclusive and selective so sometimes you don't always have a choice whether or not to participate in those, but there are things like federal fellows, global fellows, I mean there are just so many opportunities on campus to get involved in that sort of complement your academic coursework. And then research opportunities, internships, again, these are things that, you know, people didn't do research with faculty except for graduate students. I mean, and now we just have a whole different mindset on our approach to undergraduate education and I think if you are a go-getter, if you are an ambitious student and you want to just devour the academic experience, College Park is really a great place to be. No one's gonna hold you by your hand, no one's gonna really point you unless you specifically ask. It can be a difficult place to navigate, so if you're coming here you better sort of be ready to take it on or be left behind because there's not a lack of opportunities on the campus. If you want to leave here with a full resume.

Henighan: What makes you say that College Park is difficult to navigate? In what ways?

Dula: Well, I think it depends on the type of student you are. I think I have wonderful colleagues. I think if you ask for help, you'll get more than you can [chuckles] probably take in. Like my mentees, when I start talking to them, they look like deer caught in the headlights because there's just so much for me to share with them and people to refer them to. And I feel like I have very gracious colleagues who just want to see students be successful. But you have to be a student to go after it, and you have to be a student to ask, and if you're waiting for someone to tap you, that's not likely to happen. I don't think it doesn't happen at all, but, you know, College Park, I mean we have an honors college, but the truth of the matter is, the most average student who's admitted to Maryland is pretty talented and academically prepared. I mean, it's very competitive to get into this school and so we admit the type of students who are ready to just kinda take on the world and leave their mark and be fearless, you know, it's not just a campaign slogan. And so, if you're not that type of person, you can find being here overwhelming because everybody else is just kind of doing their thing it seems like.

Henighan: Okay. So, you mentioned how the number of opportunities are large. Would you say that during your time here they were limited? I know you mentioned—

Dula: I would say so, yes.

Henighan: 'Cause you mentioned how this was just a degree mill.

Dula: Mm-hm.

Henighan: But you're solid in your resources being your mentors and your safe haven such as OMSE and Nyumburu?

Dula: Mm-hm, especially Nyumburu.

Henighan: Anything else you wanna offer us? Any takeaways?

Dula: [Sighs] Hm. No, I think that's it.

Henighan: What makes you so adamant about saying go to an HBCU?

Dula: Well, I mean I think you need to go where it's your fit. I have one son who came here, one who went to an HBCU and everybody has to sort of figure out their own path. But I feel like there's a nurturing and a taking care of that generally happens HBCUs, a instilling of pride, you know, just somethings you don't have to worry about at an HBCU that you often have to concern yourself with here. And I still hear students talking about it, so I know it hasn't gone away. Like I walk into a room and not sure if I really belong here or feel like I gotta prove myself to that professor, or nobody wants to be in a work group with me because they think I'm gonna be the one to slack; in actuality I end up being the one that does all the work. So, I mean, I think those are things that can kind of get in your psyche depending on your stamina, your mental stamina, and your ability to persist past those things. I think the good thing about being in these environments is that, you know, you have some experience in dealing with that. However, I think your colleagues who come out of HBCUs have a sense of confidence about how they approach the world and whatever's the next step for them that kids who come out of PWIs don't necessarily have unless it's who they personally are. It's not something that is deliberately developed in you. So, I'll give you an example: I have a

colleague who went to Hampton and she kind of assumed that there were things that we did here because she experienced them at Hampton, and she was like, well, everybody—and I was like everybody, who? I said, no, no, no boo-boo, that was your experience at a HBCU, we're not doing that here. And it's not that it's necessarily a bad thing, but there are just things that HBCUs do. And so, what I would say sort of not always a good thing about HBCUs, they can be kind of paternal, and hovering, and don't treat you like an adult sometimes. So they have their issues. But I'm like, that was a feature of an HBCU, we don't do that here, you might get it over in the business school or you might get it if you happen to walk into the career center, but it is not something that every College Park student is gonna get just because they're here. That's not a phenomenon of a PWI. And she was like, oh really, I thought—and I was like, no. [Laughs] No, no.

Henighan: Miranda, do you have any questions? Think I should cover anything else?

Morris: I am curious, were you in college when the Len Bias occurred?

Dula: Oh yes.

Morris: I was wondering what your take on that was?

Dula: [Sighs] Wow. Okay, let's go back to La Plata, which was again, single-sex, right? Although you would think it was co-ed because there were many a men, I mean I can't count the number of times I went to the bathroom and there were feet facing the other direction, it was a little [whispers] brothel. So, Len Bias was always in La Plata Hall, I don't know who he was seein', but he was always around. We used to love going to the basketball games, I mean, I would say that is definitely among the top five of highlights was going to the basketball games and I don't know why this was, but they used to have on the floor—do they still do this, seats on the floor? So, you didn't need a ticket or anything, if you got there early there was this platform—

Henighan: Oh, they have that still, but I don't know—

Dula: And there were seats on the floor, and for some reason the black community just dominated that. I mean, I sat up in the stands a lot, but most of my memories was of being on the floor. We loved to go to the

basketball games and it was just so much fun. When Len—when that happened—I was actually just talking about this with someone. That might have happened the summer of my freshman year or something. I remember coming back for—I don't think I went to the funeral, but I definitely came back for a memorial service that was out on the mall. I remember coming back for something because word got out that it happened and I remember grabbing the car from my mother and just heading back down this way. I'm trying to remember what I went to. I just remember a service, but I'm thinking it wasn't a funeral because I don't remember being in a church, but I don't know. And so, there's this book, if you're interested in that, called *Lenny, Lefty, and the President* or something to that effect 'cause Lefty was the coach, the basketball coach. Of course he got fired and then John Slaughter who was the president, and as far as I know, the only African American president of the College Park campus—they called it chancellors then—he was chancellor and he ended up leaving because, you know, there was just controversy and everything because, you know, so he was doing drugs and whatever and then the fall out was that people knew, people like the coach, adults who should've intervened knew and turned a blind eye to it because he was the star player. So, that's sort of the quick and dirty of my memory of it, but yeah.

Henighan: So, you said the basketball games being on the floor was a top five highlight, what were your other top five highlights?

Dula: Well, I think the different people I've met, my mentors, my sorority, my friends. I think I had, for the most part, a positive undergraduate experience. I would just say that College Park failed me academically and that's why we go to college. I mean the rest of that stuff, that sort of rounds out your experience. But I would say College Park failed me, and even if not a HBCU, I should've at a minimum been at a smaller institution. Because as a first-generation student I did not understand how to navigate a college campus and I really didn't have anyone to sort of tell me what I should be doing, who I should be talking to. I think my sister tried to help when she could, and so, you know.

Henighan: So, you feel that they failed you academically because did you not feel you've taken away a lot from your undergrad experience academically?

Dula: Well, I would say they failed me, I think by and large—well I have friends who would totally say the opposite, and I've heard them on panels say that, but for me, I would say, and it may have been the major I chose, I'm not sure, but I just feel like a liberal arts education would've been a better experience for me. It would've helped me to learn those sorts of skills of critical thinking and writing that are important no matter where you go to next. And it was just big, the classes were big. It just, you know...

Henighan: Did your perception of Maryland change upon graduation than it was when you used to visit your sister?

Dula: No, I think my perception of my experience changed as I became older and wiser and after my—probably not immediately—but sometime after graduating undergrad, maybe a few years later down the road, upon self-reflection, I began to think, you know, I didn't quite get all that I should've gotten in the classroom from Maryland.

Henighan: Alright. Well, that's all I have. Thank you!

Dula: You're quite welcome ladies.

Henighan: Thank you.

Morris: Thank you so much.

Dula: You are so welcome.

[End of interview]

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