

# ColladoShakeelConversationAug23

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Farwa Shakeel '20, President Shirley M. Collado

- P** President Shirley M. Collado 00:00  
Farwa, thank you so much for making time to talk with me today. I'm so excited to hear your thoughts about the academic year, we're about to start what I think is going to be a really exciting year. So I really appreciate you doing this.
- F** Farwa Shakeel '20 00:13  
Thanks for having me. I'm excited.
- P** President Shirley M. Collado 00:15  
Good, good, good. Well, I was wondering, since we're coming off of the summer and going into the academic year, is there something formative that you experienced or that you'd be willing to share about your summer?
- F** Farwa Shakeel '20 00:27  
Yeah, I think one of the biggest things I was working in finance this summer for an insurance company, and it was my first time doing finance, it was my first time doing something that was totally out of the realm of what I'm studying at school. And it forced me to recognize my own capabilities, which was amazing. And I think you don't recognize exactly what you can do till you're thrown in with the sharks, and you have to learn how to

swim. So that was definitely a transformative experience in that way. But it was also transformative in that, like, I gained a lot of new mentors and a lot of new friends who I'm gonna have around for a long time, and I think that's the most important thing.

P

President Shirley M. Collado 01:07

That sounds fabulous. Yeah, there's nothing like summer, when you really dig into something new and exciting.

F

Farwa Shakeel '20 01:13

Yeah. And it was in the city. So I got to explore, got to eat a lot of good food.

P

President Shirley M. Collado 01:17

Yeah, the great city of New York. Fabulous. So we have well over 1500 new students starting this year. And they'll include first years and transfers. And we also have, as you know, usually a great group of graduate students joining us. And I'm curious about what you want the new students to know.

F

Farwa Shakeel '20 01:41

So I think there are two different aspects to this question, I think for students personally, but also generally, for us as a college, I think for students personally just to follow their journey and like, trust that they'll end up where they need to be and trust the process, and be really confident in their own skills in their own abilities, to get them excited where they need to be. So I think that's the biggest lesson I can impart on anybody starting any new journey, whether that's, you know, freshman year, whether that's a new journey at a new school for transfer students, for our graduate students who are starting a different phase of their lives, to trust, where they're starting and trust that they'll end up where they need to be as long as they put in the work. And as long as they trust their own skills. I think institutionally, everybody should be really excited that there are really exciting things happening going on all over campus, dining is changing. There's sort of this new, I feel like zest for being an Ithaca College student and being an Ithaca College faculty member and staff member. And I think that students should really take advantage of this new energy that's going around and also know be part of the changes that are happening, right? Sit on the committee's that are making changes happening. Sit on different search committees that are bringing new faculty to campus, right. There's a lot of energy to change. And I think students should be really excited about that and take advantage of that opportunity.

P

President Shirley M. Collado 02:58

That's really wise council and you know, you are now after being involved in the student governance council on many things on campus, you have this wisdom of your years at Ithaca. And when we think about the first-years and new students, they don't even understand that energy shift. They'll feel the energy that's here. But you know, a longer story. And I'm wondering when you think about and I'm so proud, so excited that you're going to be at the helm of SGC ... What kind of impact do you really want us to have on the student body and student life?

F

Farwa Shakeel '20 03:35

Our commitment, when I say our I mean, myself and my eboard, all five of my vice presidents, we were very committed to making SGC, a household name for people, a sort of rebranding, not in the sense of, you know, the the logos and all that kind of stuff, making sure that people understood that this was where they could come and voice their concerns, or this is where they can come and tell us what we're doing right. But also definitely to tell us what we're doing wrong. And also as a means for students to just come and get involved in exactly what I'm talking about this new stuff that's happening, have a voice and a connection to the places where decisions are being made that could affect them. So we really just want to re energize SGC, in terms of how we're planning on doing that we're planning on maybe bringing some of our meetings down from the third floor of campus center to a more accessible space, we're talking about, you know, just bringing a new fresh vibe to some of our like marketing materials and making things more bright and energetic making our office an open space, putting ourselves in our office as a resource to students, opening ourselves up to students to come in and have that space. And for all students to be able to do that at any level, whether it's graduate, whether it's undergraduate, whether you're a first-year, you're about to graduate, we want to make this sort of the people's house.

P

President Shirley M. Collado 04:54

That's great. I love this idea of the people's house. Yeah. You know, one of the things that I know you have supported greatly, in my short tenure as president is really kind of figuring out where are the students and meeting the students where they are. And I think if we're intentional about it, we can figure out all kinds of ways to do that. Is there one major initiative that you're thinking about, maybe it's SGC or not, that you're really excited about this year?



Farwa Shakeel '20 05:22

I think one thing that we're really excited about, and it might seem small, but we are actually really excited about gearing up for our fall elections. And part of the reason for that is we really want to pull together a full Senate. And we have about 20 seats open or so. So for everybody listening if you're interested. But we do have about 20 seats open, and we want to get them all filled up. And we want to increase our voter engagement. And so for the past couple of years, voter engagement has been pretty abysmal. There's just no other way to put it, very small percentages of the entire student body have been voting, what we are planning on doing is re energizing all of our social media making it something that people are really excited about, reaching out to the people that we might already know are interested in SGC, and getting them to, you know, come in and say, you know, this isn't intimidating. A lot of times people don't run for a SGC, because they're intimidated, or it's just seems like this really big commitment and this big prestigious thing. And it is, it is all of those things, for sure. However, we want to make sure that we're getting people that may shy away from it, to come back into the conversation and to come back in and to participate in elections. So elections for us are going to be like a big, big push this year. And we're planning on getting started on that as soon as classes start.



President Shirley M. Collado 06:40

Well, that kind of engagement is really important. And I think the kind of modeling that you and the team are thinking about speaks to the importance of being civically engaged and putting yourself front and center, no matter your background, no matter your interest, in playing a role in the kind of change that we want to see it IC and in our community. So I think it's great that you're pushing that. And that's a major priority.



Farwa Shakeel '20 07:07

I think one of the things that is going to enable us to do that is that four of the five academic schools are actually represented just on our board alone. So we do have hands in sort of all different places around campus. And we can reach those students that maybe typically are not participating in elections, or even just in the campaign process, whatever that might look like. And I did that on purpose. When I was assembling my team, I said, I want people who are going to be able to reach the people who are not normally here also get to the people that of course do normally participate. We know we need those people too. But we need a wide array of people to help us make good decisions throughout the year.

P President Shirley M. Collado 07:43

That intentionality is really something. I mean, imagine if every student organization, when we think about the leadership of the college, everything that's going on, if we were intentional about what voices aren't represented, what we lens are we missing? If we all did that, in all areas of the college, I think the outcome would be pretty powerful.

F Farwa Shakeel '20 08:08

I agree. And sometimes that's hard to do, right? Sometimes it's hard to, you know, maybe sometimes it looks like there's so many people that you need to pull in. But I think the more effort that's made is definitely better than not making the effort at all, even if it seems like a big sort of group of people that you need to pull in. But the more you start pulling in, the better it is, I think,

P President Shirley M. Collado 08:27

So Farwa, one of the things that I try to do in my role, even as president of of Ithaca College and people thinking I'm super experienced in this role, and I have all this background, I try to be really intentional about what I personally want to step into and how I want to learn and grow as a leader. And every year presents, as you know, on a college campus, all kinds of things. And I'm wondering with this incredible role that you serve in as the president of SGC. Is there a part of you that you're looking to grow or stretch as a leader, as you look to your year ahead?

F Farwa Shakeel '20 09:05

So one of the biggest things that I was intentional about as well, in building my team, my campaign ticket, was making sure that I had people who would challenge me, I think for a really long time, SGC has been able to operate without too many challenging voices. And I think sometimes, you know, that can go a little awry, if you think about it, you have too many differing opinions in a room, then things don't get done. I think what I've been able to do with my team is set up that balance of people who are going to be able to say, you know, I don't think we're doing this, right. But also Yes, let's work together to come to an agreement, to come to a decision. And that to me is really important personally, because I'm working on also like how to deal with criticism and how to personally just take people who challenge what I think about. And that's really important, because that's helped me grow over the last four years, both personally, but also I think it's going to be really, really important as I grow as a leader, because what it does is it expands my view of a situation or a problem that we're trying to tackle or, you know, maybe we're trying to put together

initiative and somebody says, you know, for whatever reason, this isn't going to reach students in HSHP. Or this isn't going to appeal to students in Whalen, right, or whatever that might look like. And so I need those people to bring those perspectives so I can expand my own knowledge base, but also expand the amount of impact that we're able to have as a leader myself, but also together with my team and in general.

P

President Shirley M. Collado 10:37

So insightful. I wish I had that wisdom in college. It's a, you know, I think it takes a really confident leader to not only want but actually intentionally put herself in a situation where she's surrounded by individuals who are going to allow you to see things from different lenses, you know, and not surrounding yourself with people who will yes you to death or who will be just like you. Because that just it's not good for the people we're serving at all. So that's a, that's a really insightful answer. And I'm looking forward to seeing what happens with all this good advice that you get.

F

Farwa Shakeel '20 11:15

I also want to say that's I would give that advice to new students coming in as well to find people who are not like you. Because most of my really good friends are very different from I am in terms of background and where they've come from, but we get along and we've helped each other grow in a lot of different ways. And they've definitely expanded my own worldview. So I would definitely tell students to insert themselves in spaces where maybe they're a little bit uncomfortable, but that's probably where they're going to do the most growing.

P

President Shirley M. Collado 11:46

So a last question that's really like two questions together. And that is, I'm sure some listeners are curious about this is your senior year, ya know, what are you hoping to do after college? And what's your big wish for IC?

F

Farwa Shakeel '20 12:01

Well, the first one is a big one. I think for me, I really have gotten comfortable with uncertainty over the past three or so years. And I think I'm going to take some time to work for a couple years or so, figure out what I want to do for grad school, go back and get my education and see where the tides take me. And you know, honestly, three years ago, I would have told you, I'm going to this school, and I'm going to do this program, and this is exactly where I'm going to end up. But life has taken me in so many different

directions that I never anticipated on going that I'm kind of excited to just sit back and let things happen. Obviously, I'm going to put in the work. And I'm going to apply to the grad schools, and I'm going to apply to the jobs and everything. But seeing where I end up is sort of exciting. I think more than scary. I was definitely the first-year that walked in and thought I was going to have to plan and I knew exactly what I was going to do. And that has all gone out the window. And it's been much more fulfilling, I think, than if I had stuck to exactly what I thought I was going to do. And the second part of your question, what's my wish for IC?

**P** President Shirley M. Collado 13:11  
Yeah. One wish, one wish...

**F** Farwa Shakeel '20 13:16  
That this energy that I've been talking about that this positive sort of ambience on campus remains for a long time. And that the the enthusiasm for Ithaca and the enthusiasm for this place and this college and this town that we call home stays for a really long time.

**P** President Shirley M. Collado 13:35  
Wonderful, wonderful. Well, I share that wish with you. I look forward to welcoming you back over and over again. And I just want to thank you personally for making my time at IC so formative. You've played a major role and it's been it's been great to talk with you about the year ahead.

**F** Farwa Shakeel '20 13:50  
Yeah, thanks so much for talking to me. I'm so excited.