



Javier Cruz with Caleb Bauful, Josiah Nahhas, Melissa Olivera, and Swathi Vudatala

Josiah Nahhas: [00:00:00] Simply, the amount of professionals at PAST was astounding in their career, which I think is really cool, how PAST control expertise from like any field into like one building, one place.

Annalies Corbin: [00:00:14] Welcome to Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and the future of work. This is Annalies Corbin, Chief Goddess of the PAST Foundation and your host. We hear frequently that the global education system is broken. In fact, we spend billions of dollars trying to fix something that's actually not broken at all, but rather irrelevant. It's obsolete. A hundred years ago, it functioned fine. So, let's talk about how we reimagine, rethink, and redesign our educational system.

Annalies Corbin: [00:00:48] So, today on Learning Unboxed, we have a very special episode, because this time on Learning Unboxed, we're actually having a takeover. So, one of our internal colleagues, Javier Cruz is taking over the mic today in the interview. And he is going to be leading a conversation that's all about student experiences and what that means in a STEM world, in an innovative program, in a design lab, in a community that's all around and all about innovation. And so, I am super excited today to be handing the program over to somebody else. So, Javier, the mic is yours.

Javier Cruz: [00:01:31] Alright. Thank you, Annalies. So, just a little bit about me, I'm a senior at Metro High School. It's my last year. I am planning to attend the Ohio State University, majoring as visual arts. And this was an idea that I suggested to Annalies maybe a couple of weeks ago about maybe having an episode of where students just have this conversation about their experiences at PAST and just how that has influenced their pathway moving forward. So, I think the first thing we should do is like have an introduction, because honestly, I know some of you very vaguely. I've seen you around Metro, but I feel like an introduction, just like your name, your major, or any of the projects that you've been working on recently. So, Caleb, we can start with you.

Caleb Buaful: [00:02:17] Okay. My name is Caleb Buaful. I'm a third year at Ohio State studying industrial and systems engineering. A couple of projects that I'm working on right now, start a company called Electrion, which deals with energy and sustainability. And I have some other like music stuff that I'm going over the site too.

Javier Cruz: [00:02:37] Alright. Melissa.

Melissa Olivera: [00:02:40] Hi. My name is Melissa Olivera. I'm a second year student at Ohio State and I'm majoring in industrial design. And some of the projects I'm working on right now is I'm designing furniture for an urban public space to hopefully attract more people to a space that's not commonly visited on OSU's campus,

as well as creating like a free library system on campus that will encourage more students to take time to read some books.

Javier Cruz: [00:03:08] Alright. Cool. Swathi.

Swathi Vudatala: [00:03:11] Yeah. Hi, everybody. My name is Swathi Vudatala. I'm a third year at Ohio State studying economics and public policy analysis with a minor in global public health. And a few current projects, I guess one that I was involved with in the past was a podcast called Fresh Off the Boat, and it was an Asian-American podcast. I helped produce episode there. Currently, I'm working with some of my peers at the Fisher College of Business on an impact challenge where we're essentially focused on having more intentional discussions around diversity and inclusion. And yeah, in the future, I'll be pursuing an internship this summer in consulting.

Javier Cruz: [00:03:49] Alright. Cool. Josiah.

Josiah Nahhas: [00:03:51] Hey, my name is Josiah Nahhas. I'm a first year student at BGSU, majoring in construction management. Because of the pandemic, there's no really projects for me to do as a freshman. But this summer, I'm going to be co-oping at Corna Kokosing in Columbus, Ohio.

Javier Cruz: [00:04:06] Oh, that's cool. Cool. Yeah. So, I think this episode was kind of touching base on like, because I know that you guys, at some point in your high school career, you went through a program at PAST. It could have been Metrobots, or a club, a summer program. So, if you guys could also share a little bit about, what was your first introduction to PAST? Was it through a club? Was it through a summer program? And what made you choose that specific program? And then, you can go the same way. So, Caleb.

Caleb Buafu: [00:04:38] Okay. So, what kind of got me at PAST was I did a learning center called Digital, which is focused—there were two different types of digital. There was the music side of digital, and then the more graphic side of digital. So, I went the music route, because I have a passion for music and stuff like that. So, I went that route, and I went to Drew U, and also took a couple of classes at PAST. That's how I kind of got my introduction to PAST.

Javier Cruz: [00:05:07] That's cool. Yeah. So, like I was trying to go into digital media as well. That's actually how I got this internship at PAST. Right now, I'm working as a video production. I started off as exactly the same, like try to get into the media production aspect to it, but I feel like just through the internship at PAST, I was like, maybe that's not the best route for me. I'm not the best at that, so let me try something new. So, I think that's the cool thing about PAST. So, Melissa, what about you?

Melissa Olvera: [00:05:36] I got involved with PAST through the Metrobots. I joined that club my freshman year, and then I stayed in the club all throughout of high school. And then, I continued to be involved with the learning centers, and then helping out some of the summer camps that they run.

Javier Cruz: [00:05:50] That's cool. What about you, Swathi?

Melissa Olvera: [00:05:52] Yeah. Similar to Melissa, I was also part of the Metrobots all four years of school, joined freshman year, and yeah, I found myself at PAST a lot for that. And then, just like Melissa said, junior year, I also pursued a learning center at PAST through the Bodies Learning Center, and that also found me even more at PAST through that. So, yeah, been pretty, pretty involved there.

Javier Cruz: [00:06:19] Cool. Cool. What about you, Josiah?

Josiah Nahhas: [00:06:21] Yeah. My earliest memory of PAST was actually a Minecraft mathematics club back in the seventh grade or something like that. It was like in the back rooms before the building was remodeled. I really got involved in PAST, of course, with the robotics club, and really the fabrication and mechanical side of robotics.

Javier Cruz: [00:06:39] Yeah, that's cool. I mean, I was also interested in the Metrobots, but I never got the chance due to scheduling and all that. So, I kind of wanted to like, to me, this is an opportunity to learn more about the Metrobots and how that worked, because I know a lot of my friends are still at the Metrobots, and they always said, it's a great opportunity, especially for like engineering, and mechanical, and all that. So, I don't know if you want to share any cool projects that you guys did, or how has that influenced your pathway currently?

Josiah Nahhas: [00:07:05] It really helped me in terms of, I feel like any mechanically sided project, I feel like I can do it now or at least have an understanding of how it works. There's a whole another side to robotics, of course, that's like the writing, the research, the grant writing, which Melissa actually did a lot of, which you may be interested in. But the skills that I learned may not help me in my major, but it definitely will help me for any projects I decide to do.

Javier Cruz: [00:07:33] So, are you guys all in the same team during the-

Josiah Nahhas: [00:07:36] Yeah.

Javier Cruz: [00:07:36] Oh, okay. Yeah. So, what was your part in the Metrobots?

Josiah Nahhas: [00:07:41] I mainly worked on the mechanisms. So, you see a robot from actually two years ago, it had these pistons, so it could lift itself up and kind of like drive on blocks. I designed the mechanism with the pistons attached to the robot. My senior year, however, I was the main fabricator, so I was just back in the shop cutting metal, drilling metal, using the mill, the lathe, the chop saw. I found that rather fun.

Javier Cruz: [00:08:08] Yeah, that's cool. I mean, yeah, that's something that I really wanted to do, especially because I know PAST has so many programs and one of them was like the Metrobots. And when I was in my freshman year, I really wanted to join the Metrobots, but unfortunately, I couldn't. And now, like everyone's talking like how cool it was and like all this experience that they had. I was like, oh, dang.

Josiah Nahhas: [00:08:28] I will say it's a huge time sink.

Javier Cruz: [00:08:31] Yeah, it is. It is. Because I know you guys want to like these cool competitions. And they would also talk about that in Metro, like you guys won all these cool awards and I was a little bit jealous. But Swathi, what was your part of the Metrobots?

Swathi Vudatala: [00:08:45] Yeah, I had more of an administrative business side role on the Metrobots. So, as soon as I started off that, I think I dabbled a little bit in the mechanical and engineering side of it, but I think I had joined right during our build season, which is probably like one of the most inopportune times to join, I think, just because it's very hectic, there's a lot of stuff going on. So, I think I found myself gravitating towards the fundraising and business side, and that's where I stayed for the rest of the time.

Swathi Vudatala: [00:09:14] So, yeah. So, throughout my role as the fundraising manager, I think kind of like just I had mentioned, a lot of grant writing, and learning how to work with our sponsors, and retain that

relationship, as well as kind of find new people to potentially sponsor us as well, and writing grants, really focusing on that funding. And I think to your question about how it's kind of influenced my, I guess, professional path now, I think it provided a lot of rigorous, I think, professional development and soft skills at like, what, like 14 to 18 years old.

Swathi Vudatala: [00:09:46] And I don't think being able to talk to people who are significantly older than me, or are in really high positions, or things like that. Like those types of development and even like learning how to write grants and write professionally, I think that was a lot that I don't think a lot of other high schoolers can say that they've been able to do, so that was really, really cool and really foundational.

Javier Cruz: [00:10:07] Yeah, that's very cool. The other question I was going to ask you is, did you have an interest of business or like that aspect before joining Metrobots, or was that something that like you got the job, like got that position at the Metrobots, like maybe I should further this more, or how was that?

Melissa Olvera: [00:10:24] Yeah, that's a good question. I think honestly, I was always interested in like more like the public service side, like law and government going into high school and throughout high school as well. And I think what I liked about business is the fact that it was so broad, and I was like, okay, so within it, there's so much you could be doing with the grant writing and fundraising. And one of my degrees is in the business school now, and it's econ, so it's not necessarily like along the lines of what I was doing at the Metrobots, but I think it kind of provided an insight as to how broad the business world can be.

Javier Cruz: [00:10:58] Yeah. Oh, that's very cool. What about you, Melissa?

Melissa Olvera: [00:11:01] So, similar to Swathi. I also was on more like the business and administrative side of things. For a little bit of time, I was on like the engineering side. And even though that's kind of what I do now, I just found myself being more attracted to that business and administrative side of things. And for most of my time on the Metrobots, I was a manager on the team. So, even though I was on that administrative side, I took on more of like, there was managing those small subgroups that we had, kind of like overseeing everything they were doing.

Melissa Olvera: [00:11:33] So, I kind of dabbled into like the grant writing, the fundraising, but also like the media aspect of everything, and like photography or like producing videos, and then also like our outreach portion, which was a huge part of our team, like the reason that we did get so many cool awards, like go to like worlds and whatnot. So, I got to help with all of that too. So, that influenced me because I gained so many soft skills that have helped me in my design career so far.

Melissa Olvera: [00:12:01] Like I get to be like leaders on projects, because I can like manage people well and like I can understand like from a design point like the way that—like what a user might need if I'm like designing a product or something, and like how that might be incorporated into different types of communities and whatnot. So, a lot of those like really valuable soft skills are the things that I learned that I continue to use now.

Javier Cruz: [00:12:26] Very cool. Yeah. I know Caleb, were you at the Metrobots or no?

Caleb Buafu: [00:12:28] Uh-uh.

Javier Cruz: [00:12:28] No, so you're just like me.

Caleb Buafu: [00:12:30] I also wanted to join too, but I have picked up sports, so with the whole time commitment, I didn't know if I would be able to do both and school at the same time.

Javier Cruz: [00:12:37] Yeah, it's the same with me. I did sports as well, and then just managing that time, but at the same time, I feel like that's a good thing, trying to manage your time, see what works, what doesn't. But I am kind of sad I didn't at least try Metrobots. But did you have any cool internships or how was your learning center?

Caleb Buafu: [00:12:59] I took a couple of classes like advanced mechatronics and stuff like that, which was very hands on. So, we did a lot of building and stuff like that, which I found very helpful, because like prior to coming in, I wasn't really a handyman. I'm more of like try to see if I can try, but it kind of gave me a lot of skills that kind of like pushed me and showed me like, hey, you can do it, just look it up, see what you need to do, and then try to get your hands dirty a little bit.

Caleb Buafu: [00:13:27] And even just hearing the stuff that they're talking about also applies to like my startup company that I'm a part of, like with the whole grant writing. It's just really, I'm hearing a lot of like things that are similar. And it's very exciting to hear that a lot of people are being introduced to these different things, coming in early, because then they can actually apply that to their lives.

Javier Cruz: [00:13:51] Yeah. That's very cool, yeah. Alright. That's something I've like also noticed that sometimes, especially like the communication skills, like I used to be very shy and all this. And then, slowly, like I started to open up more, because I had to like present like with all these people that had to actually work in a group, which was something I was always scared of. And it's something that can help me out through life. So, I know we've all talked about like the influence at PAST, but I feel like, like I said, the Metrobots was something I really wanted to try out, but I couldn't, was there something that maybe you saw at PAST that you wanted to try out but couldn't or wish that you could have tried?

Swathi Vudatala: [00:14:32] I think I appreciated how many programs PAST had. I thought like being there all the time in high school, I was like, yeah, I know what PAST does. And I was like, no, I don't. Like the PAST is so much, and with so many students and so many different programs. And I think part of me is just like maybe one summer, if I was free, I would have wanted to help out with some of those programs and help kids learn about X, Y, Z science topics and stuff like that. So, I think it would have been nice to, I guess, be exposed to the parts that weren't necessarily through Metro, but just PAST individually was doing. Yeah, I think that would have been really cool.

Javier Cruz: [00:15:10] Melissa, you said you helped out with the summer programs, right? How was that?

Melissa Olvera: [00:15:13] I did for one summer. I think was in 2019. I actually helped run one of the summer camps and it was at KIPP Columbus. So, it wasn't even at PAST. It was like another like high school, middle school. And I worked with, I believe, kids who were between the sixth and eighth grade. And that was a really fun experience for me. That lasted like a whole month-and-a-half and I was there every day from like 9:00 to 4:00.

Melissa Olvera: [00:15:37] So, kind of like working like a full-time job, like Monday through Friday, but it didn't even feel like it, because the day went by so fast. And like the kids are like, they're so smart and bright. And it was so fun to see them learning all these things that they didn't know about or that maybe they were introduced into like some of their science classes, and then they got to learn more about it in a cool way and like do all these fun projects. So, the programming that PAST does in their summer camps are really cool opportunities for kids to be.

Javier Cruz: [00:16:06] Yeah, I do think so too. And I think one of the great things about PAST is that I know they work with so many other schools and it's not just like Metro in general, even though they have a good partnership with Metro, but it's just like the same opportunities that we may get, other schools, they offer that to others, So, it's really cool. I think, Josiah, did you say you did the Minecraft program?

Josiah Nahhas: [00:16:28] So, that was back in like seventh grade. But since then, a lot of times in high school, I even volunteered at the FLL Tournaments. And even one year, I did also do the KIPP camp. I was what they called a student ambassador, I think. And it really was just helping these kids with their projects, their learning activities, and their different, I guess, activities that they did, like they are finding things, they built ROVs, which are remote operated vehicles, and they kind of drove them underwater, which was very cool helping them with that.

Javier Cruz: [00:17:02] What about you, Caleb?

Caleb Buafu: [00:17:04] Like Swathi said, just getting more involved with stuff outside of Metro. And even with Metro, some of the stuff we did, like I had taken a Tai chi class, which was very cool, and it was a new experience, and it's definitely something I'm glad that I was a part of. So, just kind of tapping into that market outside of Metro, and kind of learning more about what to do, and just kind of get myself more involved with them.

Javier Cruz: [00:17:29] Yeah. I think I could say the same in a way. Like I share that same experience. Due to the class at Metro that was in partnership with PAST, I kind of feel like I dabbled in a little bit of everything, especially the Tai chi class and the wellness. And then, from there, that's where I started going into the media aspect of what I wanted to do. That's what I learned. Because like the first two years, I didn't know what I was going to do. Like I didn't have, I was like, like what major should I choose?

Javier Cruz: [00:17:56] And due to like dabbling in little things and like getting hands on from this learning center, and I'm like, maybe that's not the right thing for me, let me try this. They just let you explore and I think that's the great thing about PAST. So, yeah. And then, a little bit off-topic from PAST, but I was just wondering, I know the COVID pandemic is just like, they brought a huge just hole in the education system, especially like online learning.

Javier Cruz: [00:18:23] Like I know we've all had our like horror stories of like virtual online learning. And in my personal experience, it wasn't the best. Teachers were trying to pull everything together and see what they can do. And then, some teachers couldn't even figure out Zoom, so that was a whole story. But in your opinion or experience, like what is something that the current education system is missing or failing at, or like what is the suggestion? It could be big or small. It's just from your personal experience.

Swathi Vudatala: [00:18:53] Something that I've noticed and I've talked to my peers about is just the fact that I think we're so incredibly focused on the grades, and the outcome, and that GPA, and whatnot. And I think while it is important to have some sort of metric to measure how you're performing and whatnot, and whether or not you've actually learned the concepts, I find that like because especially it's in a virtual environment, too, I'm literally going through classes for the sake of getting them over with and getting an A in it and moving on. And that's like my end goal.

Swathi Vudatala: [00:19:24] And it's so sad, because like I'm paying tuition, and I'm paying money to this university to learn, and I'm not even putting the effort into actually like, do I actually retain anything? Do I actually care, or am I actually struggling in learning, or am I just trying to get this over with for the sake of

getting a name and just being done? So, I wish we found a way to strike a balance between like—and there have been some classes where I've actually really struggled.

Swathi Vudatala: [00:19:50] There is an accounting class where I found myself going to office hours because the professor, she was very intent on making us actually learn, and if that meant us bombing an exam and if it helps us to learn better, then so be it, right? So, I appreciated the fact that she took a much more personalized approach into making sure that we actually understood what we were learning rather than just like funneling out bajillion students, we're just getting As and whatnot, grades in these classes, but not actually learning.

Swathi Vudatala: [00:20:19] So, I feel like there's a couple of classes here and there throughout my high school and college career where I actually had to struggle, and go to office hours, and forced myself to learn, because I wanted to and the professor showed interest versus taking classes that I'm just like, I'll get an A, but do I remember anything in it? No. Do I actually—yeah. So, I wish we kind of put more of the focus on not just like the end goal, and the outcome, and that metric, but actually the process of learning. Do we actually understand anything?

Josiah Nahhas: [00:20:48] Maybe activities that relate to the class itself, because our physics class, they're like, okay, we're going to do all the labs online. So, they give us this tiny little red box. I can actually show you what. It's called a IO Lab. And they can measure like acceleration, and velocity, and force. And it's all kind of cool stuff, but activities that they have us do with it, it doesn't really correlate with the class. They're just kind of random. And it's really hard to create these hands-on activities that you can both do virtually and that help you learn, I feel.

Caleb Buafu: [00:21:25] Something I would say is kind of like personalized learning, I feel like a lot of the times, we're just taking a lot of like random classes, like, hey, just fill this requirement. We don't really care what you do, but just fill this requirement. But if we could just find classes that are more geared towards what we're doing, and what we're studying, and the stuff that we would use like past college, like she was saying, like the retention, like a lot of these classes, we're taking them just because.

Caleb Buafu: [00:21:48] And because of that, like we're just, hey, I just need to know this for the exam, and after that, I'm okay. That's all that matters. So, trying to find those classes that are actually stimulating to your brain, but also, I think, that you would want to learn about and want to know, and stuff that you would actually still retain in your mind and would help you like past college is definitely something we should put more emphasis on.

Javier Cruz: [00:22:13] Yeah, I totally agree, honestly. Yeah.

Melissa Olvera: [00:22:15] For me, I'm kind of in the same boat as Josiah, where I wish there was more like hands-on learning that was incorporated in what we're doing, because at least for me, as a design student, like everything I do is hands on. And after the pandemic hit, everything became virtual. And if I'm like designing something, it's always conceptual. Like I'm never doing anything with my hands or like making it come to life, which makes it really hard to like go through that design process and like really understand the different methods that I'm using to try to create something, which is applicable in like most classes.

Melissa Olvera: [00:22:50] Because you go to the class, and it's like, it's a lecture, and then you just leave, because you admit you don't have any questions. And you're not really retaining information like after that, even if you do the homework assignment. So, finding a better way to like incorporate like more interactive learning and like things that actually stimulate your brain rather than just like sitting there, and then like going back and studying, and then just waiting.

Javier Cruz: [00:23:13] Yeah, I agree. Like even though I'm still in high school, I kind of feel the same way. We're like, sometimes, you're just, I guess, mindless studying, you're just trying to memorize everything to just get that grade, pass that test, and then move on to the next one. And there's not enough hands-on learning. And so, yeah, maybe like a balance between that, and then especially a lot of hands-on learning, internships, experiences, and all that, which I've always been grateful that I have this internship, because I feel like with like Metrobots, like for you guys, it was Metrobots or just another internship you guys had, even though in that moment, it could have felt like very fun. It was just like another club.

Javier Cruz: [00:23:52] Moving on, you realize that they helped me and like Swathi helped there in their business, for their entire business, and Caleb helped them with writing the grants in his upcoming startup. So, I think there should be a balance between having classes that further your pathway, but at the same time, get you enough hands-on learning. And so, with that, I was just going to ask, like since you guys were at the PAST and you guys dabbled in the PAST programs, was there any program that you would like to see maybe further grow or would you like to see a different program maybe implemented, like just a completely new idea? If you guys had something in mind.

Caleb Buafu: [00:24:34] I could start. Maybe even implementing like real world stuff. Like a lot of the schools now, like you don't learn like, hey, this is how you can file your taxes, don't go pay somebody to do it. Here's how you can do it. More real world application stuff that we can use, not depending on our major or not depending on where we go, but just like everyday skills that we can pick up on, that we can actually use.

Javier Cruz: [00:24:58] Yeah. So, like with Caleb, with that, I feel like everyone says that, we need like a class that teaches how to file taxes, because even then, we were like 16, you're just starting to get a job, like maybe that should be a high school class, because like you're just getting them a job and you feel—sometimes, I know I went blindly, then I thought that money was mine. But in reality, it isn't. When you get that first paycheck, you realize you don't have that paycheck as to pay in taxes. So, I feel like that there should be a class about that. And it could be in the economics aspect.

Caleb Buafu: [00:25:32] And even going into like business like, hey, this is what you should look out for. Always kind of put yourself first in terms of business, because if you don't put yourself first, nobody will, try to look out for yourself. I don't know, just like real world stuff that we can actually use.

Javier Cruz: [00:25:54] I know one is like, I guess, more in that way, in the aspect of art or media. I know we slowly started to get more like the photography classes in high school, but I feel like maybe we should have more just to like explore that realm, because I feel like we're always—like I feel like technology, like the T in technology, in STEM can also incorporate media. And so, I think that would be very cool if we have like a class about digital media, Flix, graphic design, and especially like video production, audio production, I feel like that's a very important class, especially right now. Like everything's going digital. And most of the jobs are digital right now. So, I think that would be a very cool class that could be implemented. And I know PAST is dabbling in that, which is very cool,

Melissa Olvera: [00:26:40] Kind of piggybacking off that, I think expanding their summer camps would be a really good opportunity to like incorporate more of that business aspect, media aspect into whatever they're teaching. Because if I'm not wrong, I think most of them are like STEM-based. I think I've only ever seen them do like one kind of like art based on, but I know that a lot of people who did the art based on or a lot of the kids really enjoyed it.

Melissa Olvera: [00:27:04] So, if they get more of that, I think that would be a really nice way to continue their mission of like pursuing STEM or further developing STEM education, but also like incorporating that really important business aspect that a lot of the students in robotics had, that they've also found really valuable, that can be transferred really well over to summer as well.

Javier Cruz: [00:27:27] Yeah, I think that's a very good idea. Yeah. And like off of that, like the summer program, I feel like the summer programs has always been like a good way to further explore like the arts, and just any other program, because I know, like we said, like for me and Caleb, like we wanted to join the Metrobots, but we couldn't, because of like sports, and time management, and all that, but in the summer, you usually have a little bit more time. So, I feel like having those opportunities in the summer as well, just to get that experience is a very cool, cool way. And do you guys have anything else to add just in your experiences, like the past impact, can be about anything?

Swathi Vudatala: [00:28:09] Yeah. I think all I would say is the fact that like even throughout whenever we'd write grants and stuff for the Metrobots as well, we discussed how our group and our team was very fortunate to have the resources that we were provided at PAST, having the lab, and all the equipment that we were given, and just like the fact that we were able to stay as late as possible and things like that to actually work. So, I think one thing I would say is that, yeah, I feel like any student comes into contact or is able to work at PAST or whatnot, is very fortunate, because I think we are very lucky to be able to actually have a place like that, where it's very focused on learning, and growth, and just like curiosity.

Swathi Vudatala: [00:28:50] I think a lot of schools and a lot of students may not have that opportunity, so I think yeah, I think that I would just emphasize the fact that any way that other schools, and facilities, and foundations can make sure that students have a place where they can grow, learn, just explore, and things like that, I think that'd be highly encouraged, because I feel like the sooner you're able to start like learning, and failing, and growing, I feel like that just creates better curiosity in that person for the rest of their lives. So, yeah, it was a really cool experience.

Javier Cruz: [00:29:22] Yeah.

Caleb Buafu: [00:29:23] To piggyback off of what she said, I'm sorry to cut you off, but yeah, I definitely applaud PAST for just kind of creating that environment and that open space where people can be very innovative, just having all those resources available to students to use, especially for it being so close like, hey, you need to—like even with the Metrobots, like hey, you're designing something, you need to cut something real quick in the chop shop, like just having those resources at your fingertips definitely helps, kind of have being exposed to that environment definitely does help.

Javier Cruz: [00:29:54] And I just want to point out like what Swathi said, I think failure, it's very important that you said that, because I think a lot of classes or a lot of lab programs, they kind of isolate you from failure. They kind of like want to protect you. And the reality is that that's not going to happen. And I like that in a way, they encouraged failure, because you learn from your mistakes, you grow from your mistakes. And so, I think that's a very important part. And I really applaud PAST for that. Yeah. And I guess the prime example is this, they let me host Learning Unboxed, which is a big surprise to me, and it's just a cool opportunity. So, yeah. Anything you want to add Melissa or Josiah?

Melissa Olvera: [00:30:39] I really appreciate how PAST like treats the students that like walk through their doors. I feel everyone is like treated as equal. And they really do believe in everyone who comes through. Like you can go up to them with an idea and they will be so excited about it or like tell them about something that you did, that like you succeeded on or something, and they will be so happy for you. So, they really do believe

in the potential and like the growth that all the students who interact with PAST have, like from their summer camps to people on the Metrobots or any student at Metro.

Melissa Olvera: [00:31:12] And they give you those opportunities to interact with those professionals without thinking twice of the fact that like you're a high school student and you're interacting with someone who might be twice your age. Feels like a professional, like they see you on the same level of them. And I think that was really impactful. And like it not only helps your confidence, but it helps the way that you eventually cater yourself and you start to learn more of those soft skills that they help you develop.

Javier Cruz: [00:31:40] Yeah, the connections that they have. Yeah.

Josiah Nahhas: [00:31:41] I will say, and this may not necessarily add to everything else, but simply the amount of professionals at PAST was astounding in their career. I knew this one man, he was a tribologist, which worked on like friction, and circular forces, and stuff like that. And even though it didn't really have anything to do with our robotics side of things, sort of like the bearings and stuff like that, but he taught me not only how to use the mill, the lathe, the chop saw, stuff like that, but he taught me these complex ideas, which I would never have learned from anyone else, simply because he was like one of the best people in his field in like all of Ohio or something like that, which I think was really cool how PAST control expertise from like any field into like one building, one place.

Javier Cruz: [00:32:33] Yeah, I think that's very spot on. So, yeah. Just the connections just to influence and like the real world experiences that we get from these programs, which is, I think, very cool. Yeah. I just thank you very much for being a part of this episode, taking a part of your day to just talk about your experiences and how that influenced your pathway. So, thank you.

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:00] Thank you for joining us for Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and the future of work. I want to thank my guests and encourage you all to be part of the conversation. Meet me on social media @Annalies Corbin, and join me next time as we stand up, step back, and lean in to reimagine education.