

INTERVIEW WITH KENNETH TAN

Edited for clarity

KT: Kenneth Tan

GC: Gwynelle Condino

GC:

Today is May 7th 2020. My name is Gwynelle Condino, I am a rising senior in electrical engineering, I'm an undergraduate student ambassador for the Asian American and Asian Resource and Cultural Center, and I will be interviewing Kenneth Tan for our Alumni Feature. Hello! Can you tell us a little bit about your story? Such as where home for you is, your K-12 education, and maybe what your favorite childhood memory was?

KT:

Wow! Okay, sounds good! My name is Kenneth Tan and I graduated from Purdue as well with a Bachelor's of Chemical Engineering, Class of 2014. I would say... well... so where am I from? I'm born and raised in Penang, Malaysia and grew up in Malaysia pretty much my whole life. Penang is a pretty small island in the north part of Peninsular Malaysia. It's an island and a pretty small island as well. I would say it's about the size of Rhode Island by square miles. I was born and raised there up until I was 19 years old, which was when I came to Purdue, in 2010. K through 12, I went to public school my whole life. Bluebells Kindergarten, we call it Primary School, which is... We call it Standard 1 to Standard 6. It's basically like your Elementary School. It's called... I guess I'll say it in Malay. sekolah kebangsaan Bakugan Shun. National School of Batu luncheon and I went to high school, public school as well, and it's called Penang Free School. Penang Free School was the high school that I went to. It's actually the oldest school in Southeast Asia. 1816 was when it was founded. And then after that, I did E-Levels. It's a very British pre-University course. I did that for a year and then after that, I was able to transfer some credits and then came to Purdue in the year 2010. That's kind of education background-wise. Very very chill person my whole life. I think I would say my... I have many fond childhood memories... very difficult for me to pinpoint what it was, but I suppose one that comes to mind would be when I was 13 years old. I had the opportunity to play violin in one of our national orchestras in our city in Kuala Lumpur. My uncle is a professional violinist and I picked up violin when I was 8 years old, and at 13 years old, I had this chance to play in this big orchestra. Why was it the most memorable was because I think at 13 years old, it was kind of like a job. And I was practicing for, I would say, about five to six hours a day from Monday to

Friday, and that's just the daytime. And then it's three hours when I got back. And then on Saturdays and Sundays, I would practice for 3 hours in the day and then 3 hours at night. It was for 13 days. It was for the length of a certain performance and then I got paid for it, so at 13 years old I got paid... I still remember it. It's 764 ringgits. 764 ringgits now is about maybe a little under \$200, but at 13 years old for 13 days of work, that was pretty amazing. It was like my first official paycheck so that was really cool. I would say that is one of my most fondest childhood memories. I have more better memories as I grew older, between 16 through 19, but I think that is as close to childhood as I can remember.

GC:

Aw, that was really good! So, what was the organizations you were a part of while at Purdue?

KT:

Wow! At Purdue, I was involved in quite a lot. So when I first came to Purdue, I just had a very good opportunity when I was growing up. Like I said, between 16 to 19, I got really involved in the Catholic church that I was going to, which is close to my neighbourhood, and I was very fortunate to have a mentor that went to Montana State University and he had this whole experience of going to the US and he said, "Look, go there and get involved and live a good life. Don't just go there to get a degree, go there and live it and an experience as much as you can." So when I came to Purdue, I wanted to be involved, so I got involved with quite a few organizations, which was really awesome because it led to more and more different organizations that I got involved with as well. So I guess that was a really long explanation and I haven't even answered your question yet, so the biggest ones I would say was Purdue Musical Organizations. I'm wearing this Polo right now, Heart and Soul. That was one of the biggest organizations I joined right from the get-go when I was a freshman, so I was always involved with music. Love music and I couldn't bring my violin over, so I tried to do singing. That's why I joined Purdue Musical Organizations. I did that for all four years and I sang in the Christmas show for all four years as well. Best memories of my life are in performances of the Christmas show and with PMO. So I did that. I was very involved with St. Tom's Catholic Student organization as well. I did a couple of things in there, like some of the Bible sharing groups that they had, I did quite a few mission trips that they did, the spring break mission trips, the summer break mission trips. I was also a church mouse in my junior year, so I lived in St. Tom's and worked there for 10 hours a week. Again, one of my other more fond memories was also being a mouse in St. Tom's. I was part of the PUMSA, Purdue University Malaysian Student Association. I served there from freshman to senior, became the VP in my sophomore year, and then president for junior year. I did a lot I mean between St. Tom's, Malaysian Association, and PMO, it took up a tremendous amount of my time already, so I was really involved there. Also, there was this softball leadership conference called the Emily Massey Bogle. I don't know if they still have it. It's called EMB and I was nominated to attend it through PMO and after that, I got involved through

the leadership and organizing committee and helped to organize subsequent conferences as well after that. So I did that, and some of the smaller clubs I would say would be a Muay Thai and I Chi Alpha for a short while. The other big one that happened in senior year was I was an RA for Hawkins Hall.

GC:

Wow! You really did a lot at Purdue!

KT:

I would say I was like 60-70% in these organizations and then whatever else time I had was with studies. Oh, I forgot one more, actually. Senior year I became part of Mortar Board, so I was one of the Mortar Boards for my senior year as well.

GC:

You were in chemical engineering, correct?

KT:

Correct.

GC:

Could you tell us how you decided to get into chemical engineering?

KT:

Yeah! I would say it was because... Here's the thing. I studied chemical engineering because when I was going to high school and this whole... trying to figure out what I'm going to do and what I was going to study, I was in mainly a, what we considered, a science stream education, so we did biology, physics, chemistry as part of this science package. Or you could do arts, which you did accounts and arts as well, but I did the science stream, and for the most part, going through that education kind of geared you towards a lot of engineering and just kind of the people around me, parents as well, typical, I would say, Asian kind of background, is big names: lawyer, doctor, engineer-type career path and for some good reason as well because they were in demand, they had decent salaries out of University, and more importantly, the rigor of the education is also very strong, so I leaned into the engineering field and then it was just about deciding what engineering it was. And I think the one that appealed to me most, as much as I read, was chemical engineering, mainly because of what I thought, at the time, chemical engineers did and it seemed to be interesting. I mean, I was like 16, 17 years old. How could I know what a real engineer did, right? How was I supposed to know that this would be the path I would choose for the rest of my life? So I just had to Google online and I can tell you that I got a

lot of my definitions of what chemical engineering was about from Wikipedia at the time, so that's how I ended up choosing chemical engineering.

GC:

Sounds similar to me.

KT:

Yeah? Okay! I'm not too far off from what everybody else has done then. I'm pretty sure, too.

GC:

I heard you were at the first meeting when the cultural center was just being proposed. How do you feel about the AAARCC as it is right now?

KT:

I think it's pretty amazing, right? I still remember some of the names who were there. It was me, it was Victoria L., and Tammy D. The three, or I guess two of them, I met very closely because they were very very involved with ASUB and through my involvement with the Malaysian Association, I was involved with that meeting and it was really the very first meeting of discussing what it would be like... topics... very interesting topics, like... okay, would it be called an Asian Resource Center? Or Asian American? We had conversations at that level because I think everybody acknowledge that Asian and Asian American, although share some common ground on the background of the culture, they were also very different upbringing and background as a result of the two different demographics. And then it was decided it would be Asian and Asian American Resource Center. Unfortunately with all of my involvements, I never had an opportunity to follow up with meetings and be more actively involved, but then to see where it is now, I think it's amazing, because when you see something as talked about in a meeting with 10-15 people, churning out ideas, and then going on to follow up with that, it's very difficult and it's is a marathon cause I'm just thinking how many cycles of students would have to be involved to see it through, pass it, and maybe not see through, and then pass it on to the next group to see through, even for me, to the point where it is now a fully established organization with leaders and mentors and ambassadors such as yourself. To be part of it and it to be very fully fleshed out. If I'm not mistaken, did I hear that there is now even a building for it? Or a place? Which is crazy, right? I mean, how are you going... Could anyone have imagined that a building would be dedicated to Asian and Asian American Resource Center, much like a Black Cultural Center or the Latino Cultural Center, and just to be part of the first meeting that discusses was pretty awesome. So I think it's amazing to see how far it's come and how fleshed-out the organization has become.

GC:

That's really great! It must be really... rewarding to kind of see, from the very beginning, just how much the AAARCC has grown and just... It must feel very... good to be a part of the very beginning.

KT:

Well, the very first meeting. Although I can't claim to have put in a lot of leg work for where it is today, but just witnessing that and seeing how far it's come is pretty amazing.

GC:

So, what was the hardest part or most difficult experience of your undergrad at Purdue?

KT:

Hang on. I think my camera went off... Sorry about that, could you repeat the question?

GC:

Yeah, of course! So what was the hardest part or most difficult experience of your undergrad at Purdue?

KT:

Hardest part and most difficult experience while being at Purdue... Wow... I would say it had to be with my first semester sophomore year. And I say that, and maybe you can share the sentiments, you probably can even expect what I'm going to say. It is the first year you enter the engineering school and it's the first time you're taking engineering courses. And man, it was... it was tough because I felt like I had no clue if I would make it through chemical engineering. I remember the first class was Chem. E. 205 and that was Mass Balances. And now let me tell you why that was tough. So my freshman year went really well. E-Levels, which was a pre-University course that I did, was a very good program that prepared me for math and chemistry and physics for freshman year, to the point that it was pretty easy first semester freshman year and second semester freshman year. I wasn't too phased from, what is it, course ENGR 135? I wasn't too phased out from taking that class, so I thought I'd be okay. I got good grades freshman year, so going into sophomore year, I thought, "Alright, good. I can somewhat deal with this." And then I got to mass balances, and I can tell you it was really really difficult because it was... I was not doing well. I was getting like Cs and I think one of my papers I got a D, which was the third exam, I got like a 48. And I was getting increasingly worried because, first of all, I'm questioning whether I could be cut out to stay in the school, whether chemical engineering was what I was going to do, and I just could not conceptually get mass balances, as easy as this is. Laugh at me for all you want, but mass balances was crazy difficult for me and I could not understand how to get through it. And I was doing my best, but at the same time I was

also very involved in all of these organizations. So I was involved in all these organizations and then the third exam was pretty much right smack in the middle of Christmas Show rehearsals. So I'm coming to the climax of this part of the story, and that is the third exam hit while I was doing rehearsals for the Christmas Show and it was also during the time where... Part of the Christmas Show rehearsals is, if you don't know, when it gets closer and closer to the Christmas Show, what happens is we would rehearse for 4 hours every single day from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, Sunday. So we are rehearsing 7 days a week at that time of me taking the third exam and this goes on for a long time, but as it got closer, we also started to record the Christmas show. So I don't know if you know, but the Christmas Show is recorded and broadcasted on PBS, but not everything is recorded on the live show. Part of it is also recorded during the rehearsals to get more perfect shots for TV. During this time, your smiles have to be on point, your hair, your everything, has to be the same all the time. Doesn't matter what it is. Now, why was it hard was it was during that time that I got my results of 48 for that third Chem E 205 exam, of which I already thought I was going to bomb, and it devastated me. And I had to go and perform. Can you imagine getting a grade and you don't know whether you're going to make it through the class, and the minimum you have to get is a C to move on and I didn't even know if I was going to make it, but then I have to go perform and smile like I'm having the best day of my life. So it was very difficult. All of those coming together and just a couple of stuff that was going on with personal life as well, it was hitting a really really tough part in all the stress, the assignments, the final project, preparing for finals, getting that result, and then rehearsing, and having to smile like everything was like the best thing in the world, was incredibly difficult I would say. I would say that was the toughest part. After that, I think it's pretty difficult to top as a more difficult moment. The rest was fun. Stressful, but all fun stress.

GC:

Yes, I completely understand. Being in my almost senior year, that sophomore year really killed me, because I was like, "Oh, I got all A's freshman year. It was pretty good. My GPA was pretty good." Then first semester sophomore year.

KT:

I guess the bright side was I managed to get a C and move on, but to this day, that C brought my whole GPA a lot lower. Can you imagine getting a C on a 4-credit course? Oh, well of course you can, you're a rising senior, so... yeah.

GC:

Oh yes, I understand. What was your favorite memory of Purdue?

KT:

Favorite memory of Purdue... it's a toss up of two, so I have to choose one, right? I'll tell you the

favorite one and if there's time, I can just tell you about the very close second. I think one of my fondest most memorable memory of Purdue is the Malaysian Association. We banded together really well and we did a lot of good stuff and one thing that we did that I wanted to do before I left was to do this video called One Malaysia. There's a really nice song that was written in Malaysia of all the four common languages that are spoken in Malaysia, which is Malay, our national language, English, Tamil, which is part of the Indian ethnic group, Mandarin, part of the Chinese ethnic group as well... Yeah. These four languages was part of that song. It was a song about unity and what we did was we had decided to do this project where we invite all our Malaysian friends to take part in this video and we recorded it. We got a grant to do it as well and then we went around very popular places on campus to record and it's just a singing along to that to that song. We did crazy things like... one of the craziest things we did for that video was we... in Stewart Center, they have this big sign. It's like LED almost, and then it usually flashes "Go Boilers!" or something like that. We somehow found a ladder and we bought green cloth and we covered that whole thing with green cloth, didn't get any permission for anything, covered it with green cloth so that we could do a green screen effect on that. So if you go online and just put Satu Malaysia Purdue Malaysian Association, you'll find that video and you can see what I mean. We did it all by ourselves and it was just a great memory to do that, to have all the students in our time who were also graduating be part of that video, and it was that video, amongst other things of course, that allowed me to obtain the Martin Jischke Most Outstanding International Student Award. And just those two in combination was a great memory to capture.

GC:

What was the close second?

KT:

The close second was actually, being my senior year of PMO, I got a solo to sing. So the Christmas Show is divided between two parts: one is kind of like the commercial Christmas where we sing about Santa Claus and all that fun stuff, but the second part is the cantata which is just straight up choir. 200 of us standing in front and just singing songs in multiple parts. It was amazing. And to have a solo for that particular section is very difficult cause you need to be practicing a lot and you need to definitely demonstrate that you could pull off the solo. And you're up there alone in front of all these people singing, whereas when you have solos in the other first sections, sometimes you're with other people, you're interacting, things like that. But that is just you in front, the choir behind, and the audience in front, and I managed to get a solo for that, and that was on my senior year and my last Christmas show, so that was pretty memorable as well. And I would say a close third would be being a mouse at St. Tom's. Best time ever.

GC:

Aw, those are all great memories! You seem like you had a very full experience at Purdue.

KT:

Extremely rich. Extremely rich. I mean I slept very little, not going to lie. You know what they say? What is it... Studies, sleep, social. Pick two. I definitely left sleep out of the equation so that I could absorb as much as I can.

GC:

What did you do after you graduated from Purdue?

KT:

I went to work and thankfully I managed to get a job before I graduated. The reason for that was I got an internship with the current company that I'm working with now, so I've not changed companies since I've graduated. I've been with the same company for the last six years, almost. In about two months, it'll be six years. I was interning for the company as a sophomore, summer, and junior summer, and it was after my junior summer did they say, "Alright, look. You got a job offer, just don't mess up and graduate and the job is pretty much yours." So right after that, it was just a matter of taking my summer break off and starting work in June, when they completed my visa. Cause I'm not an American green card holder, nor am I a citizen, so they had to work around and use OPT, for international students who know what OPT is, allowing you to work for one year based on your student visa, so I did that and I did a rotational program. It was a two and a half year rotational program with the company that I'm working for now. The company's called Halliburton and it's an Oil Service Company based in Houston, which is where I am right now, and it was a six-month rotation, five rotations, and they rotate you all around the world, so I did Burleson, Texas, Duncan, Oklahoma, another crazy experience cause it's like 20,000 people or less. Really small town. Dubai, KL, then Singapore and then back to Houston. And then when I got done with the program, I was based in Singapore for 3 years almost, and now I'm back here. I moved back to Houston only in January to assume my new role.

GC:

What is your new role?

KT:

So my new role is Category Manager for Chemicals. So I did a full circle and came back to chemicals. If you've heard, I was in a Supply Chain Management Program, so right out of the gate, I kind of left my chemical engineering discipline and went into supply chain. So that's what I did. Right now, I'm still in supply chain, but what I do is I manage suppliers, so for every chemical supplier that does business with Halliburton, I'm managing all of those suppliers. So

contract negotiations, price negotiations, relationship management with the suppliers as well. More importantly is to make sure we get the best price and that our suppliers are able to deliver good quality safely for their employees and our product and for our employees and actually, believe it or not, for the environment as well. We put a lot of attention on making sure chemicals are environmentally friendly and also to avoid any spillages, things like that, so I help to manage the supplies and ensure their following these guidelines very strictly.

GC:

So, I'm not cutting the interview short, but because Zoom has a time limit for 3 or more people, do you don't mind if I call you back so that we can restart the clock?

KT:

Absolutely, no problem. Let me stop recording real quick...

Part 2:

Gwyn Condino (GC):

Okay so we are back with the questions...Our next question is how do you think Purdue prepared you for what was next in your life?

Kenneth Tan (KT):

Wow, that, it's a really good question. I think, I think two things. First of all I would say academically and then the next is through the student organizations. So first and foremost, that's academic, right, because that's kind of why we go to Purdue. And I'm not just talking about, like, it's a great engineering school or it's top for this and top for that. But the way the curriculum is structured really prepares you for everything in addition to being an engineer. So, for example, the real obvious answers, I'm not, I'm not going to give the obvious answers, which are you learn how to think like an engineer, you know, you got a good, you got to be problem solvers really well and all that, which is true that is 100%. But for me, it is being able to adapt and to manage stress. I think anybody can agree no matter what class or what course you are taking in what major that you take, Purdue is just a tough school. The curriculum is hard, the school is stressful, and it's there to test you in your endurance, in your ability to endure the stress, and to endure and persevere, right. It's not easy to persevere through four years of very very difficult education, at every year, every semester, even, ...very well each semester. So that stress management, the idea of perseverance, the endurance, and also learning to ask for help and lean on friends and professors, that is very very important because in my experience in the all service industry, it is high stress and I don't think I could have managed it if I had not done the same thing at Purdue.

Second part is the student organization. I think Purdue boasts, like, 1000 or over student organizations and I feel like it grows every year. And having that avenue, and being able to get involved and to pursue almost any interest that you can imagine. I mean, think about it. Purdue had a Quidditch cup, they may still have it. but can you imagine having a Quidditch Club in your university? I mean, the sky is the limit on what you can get involved in. Being involved in those taught me a lot about all the leadership skills. It helped me refine connecting with different people from different backgrounds, different cultures, and different ages as well, being able to network with people who are much older than than me, some of the mentors, that's how I got to know Pam. People like Father Patrick [St. Thomas Aquinas], all these big names that I look up to. And being able to sit down and talk to them as well, and build those relationships. Carol Ben-Davies is actually a big one for me as well. And just being able to network with them as well. It taught me all these things, right, which now in my company, in a big multinational company, you need those skills to build relationships. You know, you're working with people constantly so knowing to relate to people at every level of the organization and to understand them as a human being, and to perform my job effectively, those two combinations of strong rigor of the academic and the curriculum, coupled with the organization taught me a lot in those areas, both hard skills and soft skills. And then the combination of the two, really taught me to apply them in the working world today. And I think it's amazing how much I have got out of the Purdue experience.

GC:

What skills do you think are most important for students to have when going into the industry or finding a job?

KT:

Great question. I spend a lot of time thinking about this, actually. and I think I'll answer the second part of your question first which is, Your question is two part, right, what should students do to find the job, the right job and then to be successful in it, right, after?

Okay so the first one is to find a job. I'll say this because this is what happened to me. Find a job that fits your personality. I think that's very, very important. In your four years, five years, some even three actually, what you should discover by being involved in all these things and what I've learned by being involved in all these clubs and societies is getting to know yourself. It's super, super cliché but understanding your personality at the very core, excuse me my camera I have no idea why. Okay, all right and being able to know yourself and understand your personality is extremely important. Because, I learned that my personality fit a role that was not what a Costco engineer, a design engineer I should say that. Because Engineers are actually in multiple functions but the design engineer persona or curriculum that I think I was exposed to in my senior design, I realized very fast that was not who I will last for a very long time.

I love engaging, being, like talking to people, building relationships, and working to get things done. Which is a good thing about internships is that it will expose me to understand, okay, what is glimpse of the future going to look like. And that is how I settle on a supply chain job. The supply chain role has zero application of Chemical Engineering, very, very little in terms of the hard skills. Obviously I'm not designing a heat exchanger nor am I doing fluid mechanics in in my supply chain role. So that was a huge jump, but I had to sit down and think about what was more important. And the chemical engineering degree did a lot for me. That did not necessarily mean having to apply it in a chemical engineer role. So I found a job that was part of my personality that would allow me to thrive in that role. More importantly I would say, in choosing the right job or right work is to understand what your personality is.

Purdue has a great job, I think I took MBTI, DISC, so many Strengths Quest through Purdue and really really well done personality tests that to see a lot more about about who I was, and that gave me confidence in stepping into something that I did not study, right. Because people go through this this motion of, "Man I work really hard for four years in Chemical Engineering degree. I can't really imagine not being a Chemical Engineer. I made that leap and I said "I think its is more important that I choose something that fits my personality... "

So I will say, follow your personality, because if you find a job that is not suited your personality and what your interests are, more than likely you are going to change jobs later or it may become - it is a job, and you go in, and go out. For me, I love what I do. I work constantly. I got night calls all the time and I'm totally okay with it because I feel like I'm making a difference in my role.

The next part of your question, which is to be successful after that is to learn, first and foremost, to be humble. I think that humility is one of the most important things not because you shy away from your strengths or you show less of your strength, but it's more about the idea that there's always somebody or something better, or you can always be better than you are today. You're never the best, right. There's always tomorrow, and you can always be better and you keep pushing, right. Humility helps you to crown yourself and say, "Look, I did really well but there's more to be done," or "I didn't do too well but that's okay, I can still do better," or "I feel like I'm doing good but there are a ton of other people out there better than me that I can still learn from them." so humility is very important to continue to learn. And this process of learning and getting better every literally every single day is most important, right, because when you have that in your mindset, that means you can take that through your work or your business that you're running, that it has to be better and how can you make it better? So that means you're making a change and impact naturally, right, through the people around you, through the work that you do, and then in your personal life as well: Fitness, your interests, your hobbies, that mind of

humility and always knowing that you can be better and knowing that you can learn from someone better is really important.

And more importantly is when you meet someone who is extremely intimidating, not to shy away but to sit, be patient, and to see what you can learn from them, right? And that's really important because I have met a few students that have come out of university or even from Purdue... you know I work really hard at Purdue for four years, I am not going to accept any job that's not paying me above \$40,000 or \$50,000 or \$70,000 a year. I am not saying that's the wrong attitude. What I am saying is, "what are you saying?" You work really hard, that's true. Hard work doesn't stop there and there's a difference between getting paid for your worth and being entitled for it as well. Not forgetting about that as well because you don't to walk into a role thinking that you've already earned it when you really still have to earn your place after even getting the job. Getting a job and staying in a job are two different things, to the humility is very important, to continue to learn and progress.

The other thing I would say is, learning to work with people is very important. Being a human being, empathetic, loving, respectful, and kind at all times. The business world, whether you have a start up, or whether you are working in a multinational corporation can sometimes be very ruthless. Sometimes it's difficult to always meet people where they are at any point in time, know that you are there to help them goes a long way. Because people remember strong, genuine sincerities, not relationships where they think you are there just to get something out and then you're gone. So knowing those skills, like sometimes saying hello to somebody at work I do this all the time, right. We have this internal company message messaging app that we use. I still talk to people in my first rotation and I say, "Hey look, thank you very much, how are you doing, how's your family, something like that. And I even do it with my stakeholders and my upper management, my senior directors as well, asking them how they are, wishing them happy Easter, or happy Diwali, or whatever celebration there are and trying to build those relationships. I think it works really, really well. There are many things of course you can do but I would say you stuck up your career with these two things: humility, and the interest to build strong relationships.

GC:

How is your work currently affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

KT:

Wow, tremendously. I am working in supply chain and I manage supplies all over the world: India, China, Spain, Italy, US as well and these are hot spots, right? in the US. So, first of all, in the actual work I had suppliers that told me, so I am in Chemicals, too, right, so, there are suppliers that told me that raw material is really tight right now. The raw materials that I always

buy are currently being used by pharmaceuticals and healthcare to make hand sanitizers and soap, so it's a very direct impact.

It's very difficult to find people who drive trucks to bring material from the supplier to our operation location because of lockdowns, limited manpower, not all manufacturing facilities are operating at 100% so their output is low. Seaports as well as are lockdowned. Trains are also grounded so moving material throughout the world has been a little slow, I must say, so it's part of my job to make sure we don't run out of material and make sure we are sufficiently stocked. So that is a more direct sense.

The current lockdowns in Coronavirus has also dropped demands throughout the world, right. People are staying at home, they're not driving, they're not going on vacations, they are not spending, so the whole economy is kind of low. And in addition to that, because the demand is low, there's a lot of, in the oil Market between Saudi Arabia in Russia, that's the big one that happened in the news, that has caused the oil price to crash. Because of that, people don't want to work and continue to produce oil, and that ended up in a lot of jobs being lost. So it's been tough. Just in my facility, I just got out of furlough. So furlough basically means unpaid leaves. So it's like you work one week, and you don't work the other week just to save the company money. And then I just got out of it this Monday, and we had layoffs in my facility. So we had about 3,500 people in our corporate office about a thousand have been laid off just this week. Two members of, I manage a team of four people: one in Singapore, three here. I had to let two of them go this week. So it's a very direct impact right now that I am seeing.

So it is tough but I think it's also an opportunity for us to make sure we reset, continue to think creatively, work safely and make sure that all our employees continue to be supported. And for those unfortunately whom we have to let go, I'm working with them to see if I can write them recommendation letters so that they can be better positioned for future jobs. I was talking to an engineer who wanted a shift in Korea for supply chain, and yesterday I was having a conference call with him just helping him prepare for interviews and think like a supply chain professional. Doing what we can as well to support each other as we as we go through this.

GC:

So we're on our last question of today. Time flies really quickly. What are some words of encouragement you would like to give to current and future students of Purdue?

KT:

Words of encouragement, I think right now we are at a very very interesting time in our generation. This global pandemic is essentially a generation identifier, it's going to be defining how we think and act going forward. So words of encouragement in this time is to continue to persevere. Time is tough, everybody's feeling it. Those of you who are graduating this year,

you're not going to get a nice, I don't know if Purdue is doing it, but I highly doubt that you are going to get a nice graduation like all of us had, years before. So it is tough, I truly empathize with you there, but use that opportunity to shape the way you think and to persevere, to build mental strength to learn how can you get over this safely and you can even though times are tough, being a Purdue graduate is a huge privilege and an honor. I was talking to a CEO of a very interesting company called ????. He was a graduate from the Krannert school, and he told me, "Kenneth, if you can speak English and have a Purdue degree, you will never go hungry." and I truly believe that with the rigor of our education and the experience it has provided us, we will be fine. What is most important is how you use that to take care of the people around you and to tell you that you most definitely can. Being a Purdue graduate with the ability to persevere and the ability to relate to people, and I do believe that Purdue graduates have that. Use that to your advantage, use your friends, Zoom throughout out all the world; you know you meet everybody around the world; use them to lean them on your support, going forward in terms of emotional support, networking in terms of getting future opportunities outside of your graduation, and more importantly, to use your education, all your experiences to enrich those around you. And again humility, perseverance, and to always get better. I think it's in the Purdue DNA so I most definitely believe that any student past, present, or future will be able to rise and be able to support our communities as well.

GC:

Thank you Kenneth for your time and for doing this interview. I hope that one day you can come back and visit the AAARCC. Have a good night. I hope you're staying safe and doing well.

KT:

I will. Thank you, thank you very much

GC:

I hope you're staying safe and doing well.

KT:

You as well. Have a good one.