**HFNT #3: Give and Let Fly**

**Episode Transcript**

[INTRO MUSIC]

Scott: Happy Friday, North Texas! I'm Scott.

Alicia: And I'm Alicia.

Scott: And today is Friday, April 26th. Alicia, what kind of show do we have today?

Alicia: Well, a good one, obviously!

Scott: Of course! Why don't you tell us about it?

Alicia: First up, we'll be sharing some info about UNT’s Second Annual Day of Giving coming up on May 1st. Then we'll have a clip from our Day in the Life YouTube series to take us behind the scenes of the Mean Green Softball team. And finally, we’ll kick off our new Democracy Primer series by learning all about primaries.

Scott: That does sound like a good episode, but you know what we need to do first Alicia?

Alicia: What's that Scotty?

Scott: We need to catch up!

[TRANSITION SOUND EFFECT]

Scott: Alicia, we made it through Tax Day. Did you get your refund yet?

Alicia: Yep! I was able to file electronically, so I already got my refund in the mail. Then I immediately used it to pay for most of my oat milk latte. It wasn’t that much you guys; I swear I don't overpay for my coffee.

Scott: I don't know. It sounds like you're living large.

Alicia: Always, and with April winding down we've got finals week right around the corner here on campus and we know that can be a very stressful time for our students.

Scott: For sure. Students, we know you're in the home stretch of the semester and you're hitting those books hard. But please, please, please make sure you're taking care of yourself, too. We have all sorts of events going on to help you get through these last couple of weeks with things like DIY stress kits, finals day snacks, guided meditation, de-stress fest and late-night study breakfasts.

Alicia: That's right. So please check out calendar.unt.edu to see all those events we have coming up on the main campus, out at Discovery Park and UNT at Frisco. You got this y'all! We’re the Mean Green Nation! Nothing can stop us. Scott, you know what else is coming up next week?

Scott: Would that be Lumpy Rug Day on May 3rd?

Alicia: What? No! UNT’s Second Annual Day of Giving on May 1st. You literally did a whole interview about it.

Scott: Oh yeah, that's right, that's right. Yeah, I recently had a little chat with Senior Director of Annual Giving, Nicole Sprowl about what the UNT Day of Giving is, why it was created and how it brings our UNT community together to help students succeed.

[TRANSITION SOUND EFFECT]

Nicole: Hi, my name is Nicole Sprowl. I'm the Senior Director for Annual Giving here at UNT, working for UNT Advancement. We are responsible for working with our donors and our community to fundraise to change student lives.

Scott: So UNT’s Second Annual Day of Giving is coming up on May 1st. For anybody who wasn't aware of it last year or hasn't heard about it yet, can you just kind of give a broad explainer of what it is?

Nicole: Yeah, absolutely. UNT Day of Giving is really a community coming together to create the culture of philanthropy at UNT. Our goal here is to give our donors, our students, our faculty, our staff, really anybody that's been impacted by the UNT community, a chance to give back and pay it forward and make an impact on current student lives.

Scott: And what is the money used for? Does it all go to like scholarships for tuition or are there other purposes that it gets used for?

Nicole: Scholarships is a big one, but it really can go to a number of things, everything from scholarships to programmatic support. We have student emergency funds, a food pantry, you name it. Really, if the fund exists at UNT, it's an avenue that you can utilize to give back for UNT Giving Day and you can find all that information on our Giving Day page.

Scott: Okay and when people donate, can they choose specifics? If they want to give to the food pantry or a scholarship, they can choose what they want to donate towards?

Nicole: Yes, absolutely. There are a number of pages that are set up with the fund outlined, but if you don't see the fund outlined, we do have another option and you can write in whatever fund makes sense for you. I know I have my own personal funds that I'm specifically going to be supporting and anyone has the opportunity to do the same.

Scott: Okay, nice. Then how can people donate? You mentioned the website, what's the URL for that?

Nicole: Sure. It's givingday.unt.edu and visiting that web page is super easy. You can go on to that page and identify an area or avenue that you want to support. We have it outlined by college and unit, or scholarship or programmatic support. We have special programs like our Diamond Eagles program, and you can select that and navigate to the area that makes sense for you.

Scott: Okay, and then are there any other ways to donate? Like if they want if they don't want to deal with the website, can they like call Advancement or anything like that? What's a number for them to do that?

Nicole: Yes, absolutely. They are welcome to give online or they can call in the office and the number to call, if you wanted to make a gift on Giving Day that way, is 940-369-8200. Of course, we will also accept donations if you wanted to bring them in, if you wanted to mail us a check, there's really no wrong way to give. We just want people to come together and make a collective impact.

Scott: All right. So, Giving Day is on May 1st. Is it like, a specific 24-hour period?

Nicole: Yeah. So right now, we're in our early giving stage. We have from the month of April until May 2nd at noon, technically is our entirety of Giving Day. Our actual Day of Giving, the 24 hours, is May 1st at noon to May 2nd at noon and that's kind of the big, exciting event. If you would like to give earlier, you’re welcome to, but if not, join us on May 1st. There's a lot of really exciting and fun things to do. We have challenges, we have initiatives for our ambassadors, we're even going to host a happy hour at East Side that people can join in on, and so, it should be a really exciting day.

Scott: Nice. Is the happy hour, is it that day on May 1st?

Nicole: It's going to be May 1st from 5 to 9 at East Side and we're working with the community. I think a portion of the purchases made that day are going to go back to UNT and then, of course, we will be there onsite if you want to personally make your gift. Then I believe we're going to have some fun things like T-shirts and other things you can take advantage of.

Scott: Get some swag.

Nicole: Yeah, exactly.

Scott: Very good. You mentioned the challenges. Talk about the challenges component of it and how that works.

Nicole: Sure. Our challenges are really set up as an incentive for donors to increase the impact of their gift. These challenges are funded or provided by community members, other donors, sometimes faculty and staff, just really to engage their network and encourage people to join them in making a gift and making a difference, and we have challenges that range from, if we get 100 student donors to the 2024 class gift campaign, there is going to be free ice cream for all of those seniors.

Scott: Nice!

Nicole: To if you make a gift to the College of Music and we get 100 donors to the College of Music, it unlocks $100,000 in support of the college. So, we have a lot of opportunities from many of our units, many of our areas of impact on campus that you can increase your impact by making a gift.

Scott: Awesome, and all those are listed out on the website if people want to go see what they are? If they see one that they want to contribute to?

Nicole: They sure are.

Scott: Awesome! You also mentioned ambassadors. Can you talk about that and, like, what it means to become an ambassador for Giving Day?

Nicole: Sure! So, an ambassador is really just somebody who is passionate about UNT and wants to lend their support beyond just their monetary donation and encourage others to join them. Our ambassadors are really people who are super excited about making a difference at UNT. They are people who want to share the word, who want to encourage others to give as well, and we have a really cool incentive for our ambassadors this year. So if you sign up on our site to be an ambassador, and then you and two friends make a gift through your unique ambassador link, you get a UNT-branded gym bag full of some really cool stuff.

Scott: Nice.

Nicole: So, we have a couple of incentives there to encourage people to reach out.

Scott: Awesome, and then there was a competition component to this between the colleges last year. Can I talk about that and is that happening again this year?

Nicole: Yeah definitely! A little healthy competition never hurts so we wanted to encourage the units to, like rally up and get their donors to join us. The way that our leaderboard works is based on previous giving to that unit and then we've set a goal for them based on that. So the challenge is really not necessarily totally with the other units. It's also with themselves to increase support from the previous year and you can see that on our leaderboards on the page. It indicates kind of a percentage towards what their goals are for donor support.

Scott: Nice. So, this is the second annual Giving Day. Obviously it launched last year, what was kind of the impetus of wanting to make this a thing and make this happen?

Nicole: Well, we realized that we had a number of people at UNT and the surrounding community that wanted to give back, wanted to be involved, and wanted to be engaged, but they weren't necessarily feeling motivated by some of our other donation avenues, and we wanted to provide them with more information about what there is. I think that the challenge for a university is there's always areas that need support, there's always student lives that could be changed, but it's really hard for the community to really know what those things are. So, Giving Day is a great opportunity for us to expand knowledge about what opportunities there are here, how those lives can be changed, how we can come together, and I think Giving Day is really a good opportunity to show any gift amount really does have the power to make grand change. Last year we raised over $600,000 and that was from tons of donors that came together that gave what they could, and we made a huge difference for our students and for UNT, and as an alumna of UNT myself, I got to witness UNT as a student and how much donor support makes a huge difference. So now that I work in that space, just really providing those avenues and those opportunities in a way that's fun and engaging was the reason that Giving Day came about.

Scott: Nice, I didn't know you were an alumna. I like to ask anybody who comes on the show, when did you graduate and what did you study?

Nicole: Sure! I graduated in 2010 with my degree in entrepreneurship.

Scott: Okay. I was also 2010. Nice.

Nicole: Yay!

Scott: So obviously we're here to talk about Giving Day, you mentioned givingday.unt.edu. If somebody hears this after Giving Day and they think “oh that's great, I'd love to contribute,” but they've missed the event, what is another URL or another way they can give to UNT?

Nicole: Yeah, we will not turn down anybody wanting to support UNT at any time of the year. If you were to navigate to our page givingday.unt.edu, we actually have a link on the page once the event is over, which will help redirect to our general giving page. Which is one.unt.edu/inspire and you can make a gift at any point in the year. All of it comes together to make an impact for our students so, we encourage you to join us for Giving Day. But if you can't, feel free to join us at any other time.

Scott: Awesome. Those are all my questions. Is there anything we didn't cover or anything?

Nicole: No. I think just, the main thing that we want to get across is Giving Day is really a great way to encourage a culture of philanthropy. When you encourage a culture of philanthropy in an institution, you have the impact to not only change the lives of those students this year and right now, but it expands across generations. So, donors that gave to UNT when my parents went here are still impacting when I went here and still impacting, when hopefully my kids will go here. So, I think realizing that the power of philanthropy is so strong and that's really what Giving Day is about.

Scott: Very nice. Well, definitely go to givingday.unt.edu, give what you can and Nicole, thank you so much for coming and telling us about it.

Nicole: Sure thing.

[TRANSITION SOUND EFFECT]

Alicia: Scott, have you looked at this Giving Day website? There's a challenge for the Food Pantry where if it raises $1,000, it unlocks a $5,000 gift and that ice cream challenge Nicole mentioned is legit. I love the leaderboards and how they've gamified this to encourage people to donate.

Scott: Yeah, it's so cool and I love how you can pick specific funds, scholarships, or departments that you want to donate to. It's not all just going into a big pile where you don't know what your money is going to be used for. You can pick something that's really meaningful to you, so be sure to check the show notes and visit givingday.unt.edu so you can get in on the competition and help our students succeed.

Alicia: Speaking of competition. As we record, it looks like softball is leading the athletics team's leaderboard, which ties perfectly into our next segment. Over on our YouTube channel, we have a series called My Day in the Life at UNT, that takes you behind the scenes of what it's like to be a student at UNT these days. You can see what it's like to be an undergraduate researcher, an orientation leader, or in this case, a member of the Mean Green Softball team with junior infielder Cierra Simon.

[TRANSITION SOUND EFFECT]

Cierra: Hey, guys! My name is Cierra Simon, I'm with the UNT Women's Softball team and today I'm going to be taking you on the day in my life.

Team: GO MEAN GREEN!

Cierra: So, in the morning I wake up usually around 8-8:30-ish, and I go in and I have breakfast. I usually cook me some bacon, eggs, hash browns, even a little bit of fruit, you know, got to stay healthy. Coffee is very important to me, I think I need it. I need two glasses every day, maybe three, but two for sure to start off my morning. My major is criminal justice. I'm also minoring in sociology and psychology while getting a certificate in trauma informed care. I picked criminal justice, mainly because it's stuff that I grew up around. Most of my family has either been working in the prisons or like state schools or anything like that, but I'm glad I chose it. All my classes are online. I found it really helpful for me as like, a student athlete, not having to rush to class or hurry back from class to try to make it to practice or miss class to get to a game. It's all right in front of me on my laptop. I just open up my computer, I just work on my own, at my own time, and I found that really helpful. I get to take care of my body, you know, my physical and my mental health all while still, you know, doing my homework in class and everything like that. So, I love online classes, I think that is the best fit for me. So 9:30 this morning we went into our individual hitting, and we started off over in the cages. We worked a lot of our drill work, which is like staying connected with our hands as you see them, like the connection ball drill, front toss, and then another tennis ball drills, another connection drill, a lot of the things we’re working on right now is staying connected. I think this is the best I’ve ever hit out of all my fall seasons, and it feels good. Coming into college, I wasn't so confident in my hitting. I was like, I know I can play defense. I just got to get on a base somehow, whether it's a bunt or hit. But I wasn't a strong power hitter and then, right now I think this is the most I've ever hit home runs in my entire life and we haven't even started the season yet, so I’m excited. We have our softball field. I think our field is absolutely beautiful and we're also getting some renovations on it right now. So, we're completely redoing our dugouts, which I think is going to look amazing. I'm pretty sure it's going underground, so it's going to echo a little bit, you'll be able to hear us a little bit more. The weight room is huge. It's very eye-opening coming from like a smaller school and not seeing, you know, mini racks or anything like that. You have like one treadmill, you know, a squat rack, anything like that but you go in there and there's like 20 of them, probably 30, I think. The UNT Women's softball team, it's amazing. The girls we have right now, this is the closest I think we've ever been as a team.

Team: 1, 2, 3. Finish strong!

Cierra: Hey, guys, I'm here with the Molly Rainey.

Molly: Hello.

Cierra: What position do you play?

Molly: I play outfield.

Cierra: What? What year are you?

Molly: I'm a fifth-year senior baby.

Cierra: She's a super-duper senior.

Cierra: Who am I here with?

Emma: Hi, I’m Emma.

Cierra: What was that?

Emma: I'm Emma, jeez!

Cierra: What position do you play Emma?

Emma: I play second base.

Cierra: Do you have any special nicknames?

Emma: No

Cierra: You have pookie!

Emma: Oh yeah!

Cierra: After our individual hitting, I go head home. I'm going to probably eat some more breakfast, some fruits, more coffee, and then catch up on my studying. I only have four classes this semester, so I usually take at least, like, one day to, like, really focus it on one class and get my coursework done for that class in the day. I have about two or three hours to study before I get ready, and I go to our team practice at 2:30. So, after practice we will go straight into weights and we'll start our stretches, wait for everybody to get in there, huddle up. We'll talk about what we're doing for the day, then we'll break up and then you start doing your prework. So, it's like correctional work, you get your body moving, mobility stuff, and then we'll start on our major list. So, it could either be deadlifts or back squats, hang cleans. Hey guys, thanks for joining me on my Day in the Life at UNT. Go Mean Green!

[TRANSITION SOUND EFFECT]

Alicia: O-M-G. Her coffee intake needs are so relatable. That three cup minimum to become a functional human is no joke.

Scott: Yeah, athletes, they're just like us. Seriously though, as someone who went through UNT as just a regular student with no extracurriculars, the time management skills of student athletes have always baffled me. Between practices, traveling, and games, I couldn't imagine how they find the time to study and do homework on top of everything else. So it's cool to see how taking online courses helps her be more flexible and take care of her academics at her own pace.

Alicia: And fun fact, she made the commissioner's honor roll the past two years. So, it sounds like Cierra's kind of crushing it. Check the link in the show notes so you can see what a boss she is, on top of just hearing it and check out the rest of the My Day in the Life at UNT series on our YouTube. Scott. You're pulling double interview duty for us this week. I see you putting in that work. So why don't you tell the good people about our next segment?

Scott: Yeah, this one's a bit of a passion project for me. Obviously, we're in a big election year and I don't want to name any names or shame anybody, but some people make it well into their thirties without fully understanding things like what the Electoral College is or how it works.

Alicia: Some people, huh?

Scott: I said, we're not naming names, Alicia. Anyway, I thought it’d be really useful for “some people” to learn more about how exactly our government and elections work so we can all be a little more informed ahead of the election in November. Now, I want to be super clear here we are state employees producing a podcast for a state agency. This is not the place for us to promote our own personal political opinions. We can do that on our own time. We're not here to persuade. We're here to inform. To that end, even though we're already past the primaries, I figured it made the most sense to start there. So, I spoke to political science principal lecturer Wendy Watson to learn more about the primary process in Texas for part one of our new Democracy Primer series.

[TRANSITION SOUND EFFECT]

Scott: I wanted to ask about primaries. Obviously, these are over now, for this election cycle. But what really got me thinking about these was, I know it's different from state to state, but in Texas you right now anyways, you can vote in either but you can only vote in one and you know, in a state like Texas, sometimes a lot of the races end up being unopposed in the general election. So, the primary can end up being the de facto election for the position. This is kind of a dumb question because I know the answer. Why can't everybody vote in both primaries when it can become the de facto election? I know it's because, like each party doesn't want people to tank their election, it’s just...

Wendy: Yeah, no, it is interesting. You know, if you are a Democrat in Texas, you can participate in the Democratic Primary and you probably, especially if you live in a community where local elections may go Democratic, right? They may go blue, you want to participate in the democratic election. But if you live in, for example, here in Denton, most of the races are going to go for the Republican in the general election and so, yeah, you can participate in the Democratic primary but it kind of feels like a waste of time, right? But so, in some states, I've definitely had, I had a friend who was from West Virginia, which was at the time, this was a long time ago, was a solidly blue state and she was a Republican. So, she went ahead and participated in the Democratic primary in West Virginia because she knew that the person who won that was going to win the general election. So, if she wanted to have a voice, that was where she was going to have it and so that's what I did. So it's kind of a choice you know, if you're a resident of Texas, you don't have to declare a loyalty oath to the party in order to participate in their primary. So, you do have the choice, you can choose to vote in the Democratic primary or the Republican primary. The question then, you know, again, because we are pretty solidly red state, the question for a lot of people comes down to that issue of local elections. Do you care enough about the local elections where there might be some traction for your party that you're willing to kind of ignore, that you're having a voice in the final outcome of the presidential election or the Senate election or whatever? So, it’s a choice that people have to make. Now, there was an attempt when Al Gore and George Bush were running against each other. So again, we're going back to the dark ages. The 2000 election, which had all sorts of interesting things happen. One of those interesting things was Ralph Nader was on the ballot, and this was for the general election, not for the primaries. But there were people who were in red states who said. “Look, blue state people. We really are swing state people, we really need you to vote for Al Gore, right? So, if you would prefer Ralph Nader, tell you what, here in Texas, here in Florida, I'll cast my ballot for Ralph Nader if you cast your ballot for Al Gore.” That is actually, arguably, illegal right?

Scott: Yeah, I was like uhhh...

Wendy: Sounds bad, right? Because it is. Yeah, you're not supposed to do that. So, efforts to sort of coordinate that kind of activity before a primary, efforts to convince Democrats to vote in the Republican primary, that stuff starts walking a really fine line of potentially being illegal. But as an individual voter, you absolutely have that choice. You can choose to vote in either primary, just not both. We also have an interesting phenomenon in Texas, because we have write-in candidates, right? We have them in for getting independents on the ballot through petitions, and if you sign one of those petitions, you can only sign a petition to get an independent on the ballot if you did not participate in either primary, and once you have signed one of those petitions, you cannot participate in a primary. So back when I first started at UNT, Kinky Friedman was wanting to be on the ballot for governor and he got himself on the ballot. But it was a real challenge. I ended up just happened to be in my office when the Students for Kinky came looking for a faculty advisor. I'm like sure, I have no idea who Kinky Friedman is, I’m in. But I talked to them a couple of times and they were expressing their frustration because they were going out with their petitions and they found a lot of people who were happy to vote for him or to sign their name to the petition to get him on the gubernatorial ballot. But they did not want to give up their ability to participate in the primaries for local elections.

Scott: Interesting, and then on the Republican primary ballot this past March. The Republican ballot was way longer than the Democratic ballot, and one of the propositions on the Republican ballot was to make it so that only registered Republicans can vote in the Republican primary going forward. Can they do that?

Wendy: So, yes, technically they can. Absolutely. That would be what's called a closed primary. They can close the primary if they choose that. The primaries are technically run by the parties. So, it's up to them to decide what their rules are. But back in 2008, that was the last year that the Democratic Party in Texas had the Texas Two-Step, where there was a primary, and then there was a caucus immediately afterwards, after the primary ballot closed and I was so excited because this is such a, it was such a bizarre thing that the Democratic Party did, and there were lots of people who stuck around and caucused. There were not many people who stuck around for the conversation after the initial caucus votes, way more than usual but not nearly as many as actually cast caucus ballots and this, you know, I live very close to campus. So, the parking lot at the church had just been full of students, and they'd all come out to support Barack Obama over Hillary Clinton and the kind of old-line Democrats who were the precinct captains were so angry. They were just convinced that these kids were going to ruin it, right? That Hillary could win, Obama couldn't, and these kids were going to blow it for the Democratic Party. They were very angry and the whole conversation, after all of the caucus ballots had been counted and our precinct went overwhelmingly for Obama. The entire conversation was, we're going to go to the next caucus. You know, we're going to go to the state Senate caucus, and we're going to go to the statewide caucus, and we're going to push to close the Democratic primaries. So, they wanted to do that at the time they wanted to make it so that you had to be a registered Democrat, and you had to be registered in advance. They just didn't want people deciding the day of, that they were Democrats and showing up.

Scott: Yeah.

Wendy: So, I think any time there is a lot of division within a party, somebody thinks it's a good idea to close the primaries. Somebody wants to preserve what they think is the right outcome, and the best way to do that is to close the primaries.

Scott: Once they do that, is it like that forever? Or could they put it back on to “no, we want to open this back up this year.” Like, how does that work?

Wendy: It can absolutely change. A lot of states had closed primaries for a long time and then opened them up. So, it's definitely something where the party can go back and forth. I actually spoke up at that caucus meeting, and explained to them what a terrible idea it is to close the primary because it shuts out the youth vote. That's true for the Democrats and the Republicans. You want to get 18- to 25-year-olds to come out and vote for your party immediately. Because if they do that like a number of times, then they're voters for your party for life. So, you don't want to disenfranchise that group of people. That group of people is the group of people that are typically the target of these movements.

Scott: Yeah.

Wendy: It's a very short-sighted plan. It's a very short-sighted strategy, I think.

Scott: Interesting, and then I hadn't originally had this in my questions, but since you brought it up, I would like to ask. So, you mentioned caucuses. You know, I'm watching you know coverage and see the Iowa caucuses, where they're passing like a paper bag around a gym, what is going on there?

Wendy: What are they doing? So, caucuses are a delight. From a political science standpoint, I couldn't love caucuses more. From a practical standpoint, they are a nightmare. So essentially the way a caucus works is instead of going and casting a ballot, and then walking away and being done with it. In a real caucus, like the caucuses in Iowa, members of the party show up to a gymnasium or a church rec room, or someplace like that, and they'll do an initial count. You know, they'll say, if you're in favor of Donald Trump, go to that corner. If you're in favor of Ron DeSantis, go to that corner and if you’re in favor of Nikki Haley, go to that corner and then they count people.

Scott: It’s like dodgeball.

Wendy: Yes! Yes, they count people and if one group, one candidate gets too few votes to continue, those people are now up for grabs, and then there's this period of time where, let's say Nikki Haley got like no votes in the caucus or got like six votes right? In this precinct, she can’t go forward. Now, those six people are going to be mobbed by all of the DeSantis and Trump people trying to convince them. “Okay well, Nikki's out, so come to us, come to us. Here's why you should come over to our corner,” and this goes on and on and it can take hours. Counting human beings is very difficult. Counting anything is difficult, but human beings move and so, counting them is hard. So, this is why you see, if you watch footage of these caucuses, you'll see like people tearing out their hair like. “Oh my God, we had 74 last count, now we seem to have 77, that doesn't make any sense.” It's just because people won't stand still and be counted, and so it can take hours. It's very imprecise, unfortunately, one of the big downside is that because the process is long, it's not like you go and you stand in line and you cast your ballot and you leave. It can take hours, and because of that, there are people with young children, people with physical ailments who really can't effectively participate in the caucuses. So, they do get shut out of that process. But then after the initial caucus at the precinct level, you've got the news reporting the outcome of the caucus, but it's not actually over because then, they'll have another caucus kind of at a geographic level up. So in Texas, it was a precinct and then it was, I believe, a State House district, and then a State Senate district, and then it was a statewide caucus. So the caucuses actually take place over multiple iterations of that process, and a few people from each precinct go on to the next stage and represent their precinct in the next stage, then a few people from that stage go on to the next stage, etc.

Scott: Wow.

Wendy: So technically, the caucuses aren't over, even in a single night. They last over a period of time. But one of the reasons that they did they exist stems from this idea of deliberative democracy. That democracy isn't just me having a decision and casting a ballot, it's me talking to my neighbors about what's good policy and who would make a good candidate, and caucuses do encourage that, sometimes in very loud tones. Sometimes it's more yelling than discussing. But it does encourage people to actually get out and meet their neighbors, and talk about political issues, and deliberate in a way that, you know, showing up and standing in a quiet line and casting a ballot doesn't do.

Scott: Wow. That's interesting. So, is it almost like the Electoral College where, like if, you know, candidate X wins this precinct, then at the next level, whoever goes on from the precinct to represent at the next level has to vote for that candidate?

Wendy: It's like the Electoral College in that they don't. It’s like the Electoral College and that they sort of are going on. So, you know, once we get down to like a decent number of candidates left in the room, you know, once we're down to like two or three people, then they split up the precinct representatives. Let's say it's a third for each of the three, then a third of the precinct representatives will go from each of those groups. Does that make sense?

Scott: Yeah.

Wendy: They'll go up to the next level and in theory, the people who are sort of pledged to Nikki Haley would support Nikki Haley. But if Nikki Haley has dropped out, for example, by the time the next round happens, or Ron DeSantis has dropped out. By the time the next round happens, then those delegates are up for grabs again and in theory, they could just change their mind, right? They could. They don't even have to be persuaded at a caucus event. They could just change their mind in the meantime.

Scott: Wow.

Wendy: Yeah.

Scott: Okay.

Wendy: It's fun. Politics is not precise. I think people have this notion that we end up with a vote total at the end of a night and that's it. It is just not that easy, it just isn't. Counting is harder than it seems, and politics is a very rough and tumble enterprise.

[TRANSITION SOUND EFFECT]

Alicia: Man, who knew caucuses could be so grueling?

Scott: I know, right?

Alicia: Seriously, though, there was so much good information in there. I wish I had known all this before the primaries last month, but definitely a good thing to know moving forward.

Scott: Yeah, and that's something I'm really hoping this series can provide because, yes, it's important to know all the stuff in a big presidential election year, but elections also happen every year, not just every four. So, hopefully this can be useful information people can remember or come back and listen to every time they get to cast their vote. I've got a few more of these lined up with Wendy and other political science faculty members covering things like the Electoral College, PACs and super PACs, term limits and more. So, we'll be rolling these out throughout the year. But if y'all have any other election topics you'd like a basic explainer of, let us know at podcast@unt.edu and I'll be happy to take your questions to the experts.

Alicia: All right, now it's time for my favorite part of every episode besides the bloopers, of course. But let's get to the Q&A! For those of you who are new to the show. We recorded a bunch of these before the show launched to get to know each other a little better, and now we put them in the show so you can get to know us, and we can get to know you. Scott and I take turns answering the question, but we want you all to join in and send us your answers by calling us at 940-565-4341 or emailing podcast@unt.edu. So, without further ado, let's get to our Q&A for today.

[TRANSITION SOUND EFFECT]

Scott: What made you choose UNT?

Alicia: Honestly, the distance and my cousin.

Scott: Yeah?

Alicia: Yeah. My cousin was a big factor in coming here because I didn't know much about like the Texas schools. I didn't want to go out of state because I didn't know much about, like how that process works, and I'm just like, “I just want to get an education, honestly.” And my dad had a Texas Tomorrow Fund. I don't know if you've heard of it. The concept is like any particular year your child is born, you can start putting money into an account yearly or monthly. I don’t know how it is, and it’ll hit a certain amount. It’s at a certain point in their life and when they get to college, they can go to any public Texas college, like any public institution, for the price of the year they were born.

Scott: I have heard of that. I knew somebody in college whose tuition is like what the tuition was in 1980-whatever.

Alicia: Yeah. So that played a part, well, it paid for the tuition but it did not pay for everything like all the other fees, like all the room and board, that's all out of pocket. But yeah, just the education factor. I don't know, quite honestly, I don't know how much that covered, but quite a bit and I'm grateful for that. So, that's definitely a big factor. I'd say the second factor is my cousin, she was basically like a walking ad for UNT. She was just like, “Love it! It's a great school. I'm having a great time. Check it out, look on their website, see if there's anything that you want.” And it came time and I was like, “Well, it's close to home, I don't drive, so this should be fine, you know?” It's a safe distance in case something happens, my parents need to be there or family, I have family there. I'm like this is ideal, you know? And so then I had a hard sit down with my mom and we were like, okay, what are you doing, girl? And I was like, “Well I'm going to UNT, let's do it.” So, it wasn't too difficult of a choice I'd say it was just whether or not I got in at that point.

Scott: Yeah, yeah.

Alicia: But what about you?

Scott: Pretty much the same thing is location and then, yeah, like family connections. My dad got his master's at UNT, two of my older sisters. Let's see here, one sister had graduated and then my sister, who's closest to me in age -she's like two years older than me - she went to UNT and so we overlapped at UNT for like a year after I transferred.

Alicia: That’s fun.

Scott: Yeah, it was that and then location, because I also, I don't know if they still do this, but like, they would make freshmen live on campus for a year, for a while there to get them involved and acclimated to campus.

Alicia: I think they still do that.

Scott: Yeah, I think they do, but I transferred in and so I never like had to live on campus. So, I was a commuter, and I grew up in The Colony, but by the time I came to UNT, I lived in Little Elm, and so it was, yeah, it's a close drive. It was close to family. I stayed living at home throughout pretty much all of college until the very end, so I didn't have to pay rent or anything. So, it was mostly convenience and family went there.

Alicia: Yeah. Interesting, good to know.

[TRANSITION SOUND EFFECT]

Scott: So now that you know why we came to UNT, we want to hear about what brought you to UNT. So, like Alicia said, email us at podcast@unt.edu or call and leave us a message at 940-565-4341.

Alicia: Yes, send us your stories so that we can share them with the world.

Scott: Absolutely. Well, that's all we've got for this episode. We’ll catch you all in a couple of weeks. Until then, we hope you have a Happy Friday, North Texas!

Alicia: And Go Mean Green.

[CLOSING TITLES SOUND EFFECT]

Scott: Happy Friday, North Texas! is a production of the University of North Texas. Today's show was produced and edited by Scott Brown with original reporting by Scott Brown. For more information, visit unt.edu/podcast.

[BLOOPERS]

Alicia: What's that Scotty?

Scott: We need to catch up… [LAUGHS] When you wrote that, I was like how is she going to deliver that?

Alicia: What’s up Scotty?

Scott: It was so natural, I wasn’t ready for that.

[TRANSITION SOUND EFFECT]

Scott: Obviously we're in a big [STUMBLES]...dude, water break.

Alicia: I thought I was the one. I’m kidding. I mean, for real it is me most of the time.

[BLOOPER SOUND EFFECT]

Scott: I’ve got [STUMBLES]...All right, all right, professional.

[BLOOPER SOUND EFFECT]

Scott: Nice! One take Zartman!

Alicia: WOOWOO! WOOWOO! WOOOOOOO!

[BLOOPER SOUND EFFECT]

Alicia: Yes. Send us your stories so that we can share them with the world. I'm going to do that again.

Scott: No, that's good.

Alicia: Really?

[BLOOPER SOUND EFFECT]

Alicia: I’m done.

Scott: No, you did two good takes.

Alicia: I quit, I quit.

Scott: Alright.