

Interview with Client that Embodies Scholars Voice Spirit: S...

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SPEAKERS

Stacey Anderson, Thea L. Racelis, Cathy Mazak



Cathy Mazak 00:02

Welcome to the academic writing amplified podcast. On this podcast, we believe that the culture of academia needs to change radically. Women and non binary people are revolutionising academia within institutions that were not built for us. If you're ready to reject the culture of overwork, kick, guilt and overwhelm to the curb, and amplify your voice to make a real impact on your field, without breaking down, or burning out, you're in the right place. With our team of experienced writing coaches, as CO hosts will share insights and talk to inspiring guests to bring you the practical strategies, systems and mindset shifts. You need to find time to write, publish work you love, and design your career on your terms. And it all starts with writing. Let's go. Hello, hello, and welcome back to academic writing amplified. This week, we have a real treat for you. So we decided to do some episodes featuring clients who have worked with us in our programs who read we really think embody the scholars voice spirit. So this week, we have coach Thea hosting an interview with Stacy Anderson, we are so excited about Stacey and just love her so much. And I can't wait for you to hear everything that she does that really embodies this vision for scholars voice that we've been talking about since the beginning of January. Now before we launch into the episode, I just wanted to remind you that last week on the podcast, I talked about how you can work with scholars voice at your own institution, we are doing virtual retreats and will also come in person, depending on what your institution would like. And we are reaching out to you all our faithful listeners who maybe you've wanted to work with us in our programs, maybe you have worked with us in our program. And you would love to see us doing training, doing our magical coaching at your institution, either virtually or in person. Well, we have scholars voice faculty retreats designed exactly for that. And we would love for you to put us in touch with a decision maker with the key person who works with faculty development or your dean, or your key decision maker in admin, who can hire us to come to your campus and give our retreat again, virtually or in person, we are so excited to have already signed up three universities for this virtual scholars voice faculty development retreat, it's a one day retreat all online, and we would just love to collaborate with your university. So last week, I talked all about it but very simply, you can reach out to us at support at scholars voice.org and let us know that you're interested in bringing us to your campus, you can send an email to the decision maker and copy us and we

can do some follow up for you. Either way, we just wanted you all to know that a great way to work with us is to bring us to your campus. So without any further ado, here is Dan's interview with Stacy Anderson.

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Thea L. Racelis 03:29

Hi, everyone, welcome to scholars voice. This is they are resellers. And today I have the absolute delight, honor and privilege of chatting with Stacey Anderson, who was one of our ubit our client for a while Stacey and when we were thinking about clients that kind of speak to the scholars voice values and vision and the experience of our programs, you absolutely came to mind, of course. So you're in for a treat today, our listeners and friends CC Why don't you introduce yourself? Tell us a little bit about yourself. Oh, thank you. I'm already overwhelmed by that warm welcome. So I am an associate professor of English at California State University Channel Islands. And I also work in faculty development and I recently became interim chair of my of the English department as well. You are holding that

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Stacey Anderson 04:20

to surprise you. I just realized I forgot to tell you. That's fantastic news. Congratulations. Yeah. We've been talking about that for a while. Right and our coaches so congratulations, and congratulations to your department. That's fantastic news. Yes. Just sprung that on me I'm like yeah.

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Thea L. Racelis 04:42

So Stacy, tell us about how you came to our programs like what was happening in your life? What was it that you were hoping to kind of address or grow into through our programs? The long backstory short version of it is that I I was a lecturer for a really long time before I joined the tenure track. So I've been

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Stacey Anderson 05:00

In higher ed teaching since 1995, and I've been at my current institutions since 2005, as a full time lecturer, until I had the opportunity to join the tenure track in 2016. And then I went up for early tenure. So I submitted my file in the fall of 2020. And then I completed the process and earned early tenure and promotion in the spring of 2021. And during that time, my journey towards the tenure track was kind of a similar process to the journey that people have when they go from assistant professor to associate professor, because I had been in my institution for so long. And because I had been so embedded across the campus, I quickly got drawn into a lot of service. And I'm a very service oriented person, that's just kind of my nature. So with that, I had kind of a journey, you know, earning tenure, really having to learn how to situate everything, all of the service obligations, teaching, prioritizing scholarship, and not all the things that scholars voice emphasizes, and also kind of not losing myself in the process. So I got to a good place, I went from feeling, you know, well, I get tenure and promotion to going up early, which is super exciting and validating and it really validated my time as a lecturer as well. And non tenure track faculty are such a major part of our educational experience. And I

feel really blessed and fortunate that I had the opportunity to go to the tenure track. But I also, I want to make sure that the experience of non tenure track faculty really is identified as integral to the institution and not ancillary. So with that, once I became tenured, I was excited to have the opportunity to do more advocacy for our non tenure track faculty, and to being able to be involved in conversations that was more of a sense of power and authority. But I also again, found myself getting drawn into service in the way that happens, you know, you can do all these things once you're tenured. And so that happened for me. So I found myself in the fall of 2021. Again, just kind of everybody wants you, right? Everybody wants me to be involved. And, of course, it is super flattering. And I know that I'm capable, and hardworking, and people like to be around me, generally speaking. So that is all part of the package. We were all still very much remote during this time. So sometimes that made a lot of things that were labor intensive. It wasn't always obvious how labor intensive they would be. I don't think we even knew then how completely burnout we will get? Yeah. So I have some really supportive women friends, in my program, and in my institution, and one of them for to be the podcast. And it was really the podcast that promotes elevate. And she said, Oh, are you? You know, are you aware of this? Have you seen this? And so I wrote back right away? And I said, No, but I just subscribed. And I said, I feel so seen. And just that that message there that really talked about, you know, again, understood the experience with someone who had recently been tenured. And so that was I got into one of the the webinars that explained, elevate, and then I signed up and really invested in myself, I paid for it myself, I said, this is money I need to spend to make my life possible and to find my happiness in this new phase. Yes, I love that. Stacy, I didn't know you had come to us through the podcast. So what a beautiful kind of like full circle moment, to now be able to, you know, be part of the podcast and share a little bit about your experience. And I love that you're mentioning your your experience as faculty development and your commitment to continue to like support and REG advocate for folks who are non tenured the lecturer positions, all of that kind of universe of academia that is so complicated and so essential right to, to the educational experience. And you have another role, don't you as what what field are you in? What? Okay, yeah, so I'm in rhetoric and composition. Oh, I forgot to say that didn't I? I primarily teach writing classes and the role that I was hired into was composition director in my institution. So there's a lot going on with writing in higher ed, if you haven't been paying attention, you can read it pretty much anywhere. So it's been actually nice, because I think that the way that scholars always talks about writing is helped me approach how I speak to students that I teach, or students in my program that I mentor, advise, as well as in my faculty development roles of helping other faculty with their writing. Tell us a little bit more about like some of those books. Can you give us some examples maybe of how, how that has informed your teaching or your faculty development. It's been interesting over the last couple of years to see conversations around deadlines and due dates. And this happens both within the publication arena as we know, but also within teaching. And we sort of we see people saying, Should we just get rid of all the due dates, which sounds liberating but it's actually doesn't necessarily set up students for a successful experience. And the same with faculty, right, like kind of anxiety around always feeling like they're behind that, you know, things are taking longer than they should Avoid being anxious about asking for additional time. And this happens with students and faculty, I see, I really love the parallels there. But sort of thinking, Oh, I haven't been doing anything, for weeks or months to now I need to do twice as much as I haven't been giving, which isn't really, you know, that sounds like the. So what's been really great. And what I really like about this program, compared to other programs I participated in is that it's really about studying yourself, and what your actual process is not your idealized process, not what you think a scholar should look like, gathering that data, and then using that to structure your day, your week, your projects, and all of that. And kind of trusting like, knowing that, it's worked in the past that, you know, you've gone through the ups and downs, and the emotions and self doubts, and you know, that you can do it. And it's just a matter of

getting outside of, you know, one's head. And so, it's been great for me, and I understand that I'm in a privileged position, with my role that I can sort of take this attitude with my students, but I've really been doing this with students as well. And you know, when students say, Well, you probably saw I didn't turn this in, or I was late on this. And, and really, I mean, the main reason I have due dates in my courses now, is that I want, I do want to provide a structure that where students can be successful, and also that they can engage with each other. So I had a student just yesterday saying, you know, kind of having that feeling and beating themselves up, and I said, I get that everyone has that. And really, I just want your lead you're in, you're in the zone of when we're working on this, right. It's not like, it's guided by midnight, that you got it in the next day, or, you know, I just want to do it when it's relevant. I don't want students to do an assignment eight weeks later that I'm looking at, right, the discussion is no longer happening. And also, I spoke with this particular student about how, again, knowing what your process is, knowing, knowing that things can happen, Sunday's are scary days for everyone, I think for faculty, or students, you know, suddenly you think you had all this time and then suddenly, the next day is there, and then something unexpected might come up, right, and then, you know, time you thought you were going to going to get caught up or get some writing done is not there anymore. I know it's so hard for students, and it's so hard for faculty, especially pre tenure faculty to not, like, Please these expectations on themselves and not just feel good about what they've already done. You know, it's hard to just really celebrate where you are. And you know, so it just, I've really tried to just present that. That's just how I present myself with students and with faculty. And you know, that yes, okay, this came up. But now we have an opportunity to let's join this writing group, or, you know, let's just get together and write for half an hour, and get something that gets you back into the next. Yeah, helps awaken. Yes, I love like that you're pointing out the parallels between the process that, that students go through, right, that you get to experience as a writing instructor. And then like, the process that the faculty and academics go through, because, I mean, there's those light layers of anxiety and the layers of self doubt, there's the the imposter talk, and just the idea that there's this idealized process, right, that writing should conform to when in actuality, it's so much more complex and rich and sometimes frustrating and intangible. Right? So I love that that informs your practice, both with faculty and with students, because that's so real. I think we lose sight of that, right? That that students are also kind of learning this practice along with us. Can you talk to a cc about your experience, you said you came in to elevate and you know, you did that and talk to us about like the programs that you've been a part of with us and how that has made an impact on your career. So far. So Elevate, I began in January of 2022. So I launched with the writing retreat in January. And that was really powerful. And that was the time to the writing retreat always happens kind of as my institution that's getting back into gear. And so that's a it's a great opportunity to kind of how do I carve out time for this, which I know that it's important, like my institution wants us to be active scholars, we actually have the phrase scholar teacher, as opposed to teacher scholar that most people have heard. So that was my first kind of taste of how do I work this program into my actual lived life. And the retreat was really cool, great exposure to both the the coaches in the program as well as some of our outside coaches, I still have a lot of materials that I still go back to from that. And I did get to connect with other participants and to meet the Elevate cohort and I have such an affection for that cohort. And it's fine. I saw a bunch of them at the retreat this past January, a year later. And it's really amazing. Like I've been part of many groups where people are supporting each other and you know, particularly women supporting other women and the people that have shared experiences that are coming from different places, but I've never had the experience of so much honesty and vulnerability and compassion. And like compassion for people that you don't, you would not have otherwise overlapped with, you're not in the same discipline don't live in the same state or continent. And, and people are at different stages. It's funny, I keep saying, I think I'm the oldest person in the program, I'm not sure. But I feel like I'm seeing

people that are negotiating different stages of child raising that I am no longer dealing with, you know, my son is 20. Now, so, still parenting, but it's very different from the ones who are, you know, running around Cardian kids trying to and also navigate pandemic parenthood, it was just such a, really all the opportunities to connect with other participants through both the retreat, and then the monthly group coaching calls, as well as the individual coaching calls, which I still pay for and participate in individual coaching calls, as well. Now that elevate has concluded, and I'm in the Alumni Program, which is now called soar. And so I will see the same people and I'll and, but then also new people, but I think because we've all been going I feel like I was kind of a late, late bird, like a late addition to coming in to elevate like other people have come in through amplify or navigate. And so I kind of learned from what they would share, they say, Oh, well and amplify, we did this or I navigate and, and seeing that everyone's kind of gone through similar curricula, even if they were in different programs. And so without making it sound like you know, some sort of group thing, because it's definitely not, but I just know people have kind of a shared, like, if you're doing this, like you, you want to be there, and you know that you are going to get the support that's going to help you and people really, you know, and really, what's been interesting is that I think I didn't really do the momentum calls my first. Like throughout elevate I kind of was just, I wasn't probably also because of the way I came into the program. But then as I started doing those, wow, these are really great too. And I really, and then I started to use them with the same people, but then new people. And so it really feels like kind of like a salon or coffee house or something where people I mean in. That's really the nicest thing I do on Zoom. Like

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Thea L. Racelis 17:01

I love that the nicest thing that should be our new tagline, the nicest thing you'll do on Zoom. Very much. So that's awesome. And so going through elevate and then going through the Alumni Program to talk to us about like you said about how you wanted to really build it into your life and be very intentional from the get go, right? Because you kind of had to just in terms of scheduling. So so how did this start to impact your career, and your mindset? Tell us a little bit about that, because I saw part of the transformation. The coach's perspective. So I'd love to hear what you what your experience of it was. Right away, it helped me i Obviously I was putting meetings and so forth into my calendar and really building my calendar around that and I became much more deliberate about my calendar is kind of my I don't know, guiding force, there's probably a better word, but I really looked at my calendar as the place that I can protect my time and allocate my time. Because if there's ever a time where I maybe I haven't blocked out my calendar for something, and then something else comes in, or if I, I'm even learning to put in buffer time between activities, and so really be more deliberate about where I spend my time. And like I because of this program, I don't check my email until eight o'clock in the morning, after I've done the other things I need to do for my day, not doing the mindless email checks, don't check your email, if you can't deal with it is what I've learned from this program. So when really prioritizing like I've done other things where I've definitely said I'm not available, because I have a coaching call, then, you know, either a group coaching call, or the individual ones, the one on ones. But then really beyond that, I actually found myself as much as I was trying to be deliberate about not being super busy, I again, got subsumed as something that became very time consuming in the spring of 2022. But I was able to go through that through it with a mindset that I was building through the program. And so it helped me be more to step back and to recognize, like, wow, this is how I feel when I'm super ever scheduled. And this is how poorly I sleep when I wake up and do you know, just have this. And also, I think this past year, we've seen how short handed a lot of institutions are and so not even having the resources, you know, other people to help out with things that normally would

have been available. And so just feeling that, like for me, like the scarcity mindset is something that comes up a lot in the program and recognizing that really the scarcity was external, it wasn't what I was capable of, because I could just keep digging in and digging in. And there were some bonds of energy that would come. But being aware of that and kind of understanding like I could give and give and give and it's not going to stop. And so how do I make choices going forward? That helped me be more mindful of time and spending my time and my energy? And I think really, from that point out, it's been easier to do see a sense of myself. It isn't just my job. What I know these things

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Stacey Anderson 20:00

They all sound like cliches. But I don't know what happened. I always tell people like I, I know I used to be a much lazier person. And then somewhere I find that hard to imagine. Somewhere along the way became such a hard worker and just a really a human doing, the way we talk about a human being versus a human doing nothing mindless doing like, just kind of, I mean that, I think that's why we get drawn into so many things. And just one of the group coaching calls recently were, I think, during the retreat, maybe was, you know, this idea of, like, who am I, like, who am I, if I'm not this person who is just constantly on the go, like, everyone knows, like, everyone just knows that Stacy's busy, Stacy's doing a million things, I do get a lot of affirmation when people say, Oh, I see your name everywhere, or you seem to be involved in all these, you know that people appreciate that. And people that I care about, appreciate it, which matters to me. But I know, they also want me to take care of myself and have other parts of my life too. So so really helped me and situate who I am outside of the institution, but also, not being as like overly tied to any particular outcome of anything that I might be involved in. The theme of change has obviously been really significant. And scholars wise this year, and I think dealing with change is the content that I've had throughout my career. And so being able to kind of just understand, whatever things look like today, you're not going to know what it's going to look like, but it's not going to look the same. And that's okay, and you'll just adapt when it happens. And with that, too, kind of then thinking about what were where do I want to put my energy? And where do I want like if even if there's something that I'm really invested in or believing, you know, do I want to deal with all the other parts that I know are going to just feel like, you know, I keep getting knocked back or, you know, the don't feed me or don't feel like the best use of my time. So really, I want to put my time into things that I think are going to matter, and that they matter to me and that, that I feel good in the process. Like I don't want to just feel good at the end of the process. I want to feel good when I do it, because most of it is.

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Thea L. Racelis 22:09

Yes, yes, I love that. And I, I just have to reflect back to you that like I experienced that from you, right, like your other community commitments, your friendships, your relationships, have always like, in our conversations come up with something that's really important. And I appreciate that idea that like we do, we don't just want to like suck it up, buttercup, and then at the end, enjoy something but like really being able to be present and aligned. And just enjoy the process. Not that everything is going to be like frolicking through a field of wildflowers, like every single day. But like, if it feels miserable every step of the way, then there's a problem, right? And that we deserve to feel good about our careers, I think is a is already a mindset shift, even when there is external scarcity and internal ideas about scarcity. Like, we can't just like set ourselves on fire to word the world kind of thing. Oh my gosh, that's perfect. It's not mine. I

don't remember who said it originally. But it's like such a apt metaphor, right? Like, absolutely. Even if there is scarcity, we can't be the ones like standing in the gap for everything. And that idea that like enjoying the process and being aligned and authentic with our sense of purpose is so important. So I love I thank you for that reflection, because that's, that's just really, I think, central to what we're trying to do. And you also shared a little bit about kind of that idea of like observing the data of what's happening, whether it's like, what is your writing process actually look like versus the ideal? Or what is actually required of me in this service obligation? Is that what I want having that that sense that I guess it's almost like that non attachment, having enough distance to be able to observe, rather than get caught up in it, tell us a little bit about that mindset shift for you, and how that kind of plays into everything for you for with your career. I think one thing that was that's interesting is that I did end up having a lot of publications that came out all at the same time because of the pandemic. And so I sort of as I was working towards tenure, suddenly it was just the explosion of things that had been delayed, and then things that just happened to be coming out then. And so I had pretty explosive productivity for a period of time going up to tenure. But then after that, like I think with, I no longer wanted to, I mean, everything that I ended up doing, I felt really passionate about and I'm really proud of, but then I didn't really know like what is you know, because I have a couple of different areas that I write in and one area is really looking at Scientific Communication and literacy and how like the public understand scientific issues, particularly climate justice issues, issues around the coast and access to the coast, and then also in the area of composition and rhetoric and sustainable and equitable conditions for students and for educators and these are all areas

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Stacey Anderson 25:00

Is that I think about in my life, outside of scholarship and outside of the other things that I do in my role, but I wasn't necessarily seeing anything. You know, once I earned tenure that, you know, felt like, Oh, this is what I want to focus on, this is what I want to do. And I think I was feeling anxiety around that, like, I was kind of feeling like, I'm gonna be that person that has all these publications until they, you know, check the box of tenure. And then nothing happens after that. Which is not I mean, one thing is that the program helped me feel like, wow, I've accomplished so much more than I ever thought I would like, Who is this person? And it's me, and, and really the take pride in what I have done? And as opposed to feeling like, Oh, yes, yeah, like, just enjoy that, like, It's okay, just to enjoy that. And to celebrate that. And I think, with this program, and I just with the things I've been learning, it helped me feel better about, like taking my time and being because this is part of it is that we want to be selective, and discerning in terms of where we put our energies, including where we put our writing and research energies. And so I felt, okay, kind of taking my time with things. And then then I started to see calls for papers that sounded really interesting. I mean, maybe also, it's really weird, because my transition into the tenure track, and all of this is during the pandemic, and I don't know how to separate those two things, and how things might have been different one way or another. Except for that, I think, like a lot of people that made me more reflective, in many ways. But the, this program helped me feel okay with just taking my time. And I'm not going to, I feel like there are so many roles that we have in academia, academia that, really, you've got to do this by this amount of time, or else, you're not going to be able to submit for that. And then that's not motivating. That's not an enjoyable motivation. And so, learning to really trust that internal motivation is the thing that will get me going and will help me find the things that I want to work on. And so now I do have different projects that I'm working on across the spectrum. And I feel also that during my time, like, I feel like I've really become an expert in higher education. And, like, all that sort of change is happening across higher ed that I

think people were expecting, you know, enrollment lifts, and things like that a few years from now. But now, with the pandemic, and other, you know, the economy now, like, so many things are impacting, you know, institutions much earlier than they had anticipated. And I kind of feel like I was almost, I don't want to say a prophet, but that I foresaw sort of, you know, like, these are things that you're paying attention to that you have, and my role is composition director, like I've been paying attention to enrollment, and student engagement and student success well, before anybody else was looking at it right to the degree that they are now. So with that, I feel like those are the things I can bring to my work. You know, one thing that's really been neat, in my post tenure experience, and being part of this program is really making time to take weekends off and to do fun things and get out there in the world. And again, like, obviously, a lot of us were more isolated for a couple of years there. And so it's just really been the last year that we started doing more things outside of the home, outside of the institution. But it's so great when you meet people, or when I meet people, if I tell people, I'm a professor, and especially English professor, for some reason, that sounds like something that they have an association with, I mean, they're just dazzled. And just think it's so cool. And it's like any of the kind of drama or politics or things. None of that matters to them. And they just think, and they think we're really interesting. And I found like, well, I can actually meet someone that I have no connection with, and have an hour long conversation, you know, they'll ask me questions, I'll share my insights. And again, this can be things in my institution, or things that I study and write about. And I just kind of, I guess, although I guess the hard work paid off, and I guess I'm sort of where I am now. I mean, I'd like everyone to be able to I don't want people to wait, you know, decades to get to the point of feeling like, yes, like I am who you know, I'm the fullest expression of myself that I can be at this point. And I'm really satisfied with that. And I don't want people to have to go through each stage of the process with self doubt or not measuring up. So that's kind of something that I work on in terms of working with other faculty and working with students too. But also, I think, seeing all the things I it's so funny when you listen to all the podcast episodes and just our discussions, but everyone thinks that they're the non traditional person.

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Thea L. Racelis 29:33

That's so true, Stacy.

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Stacey Anderson 29:36

And I just ended that, of course, I felt that way as well. But the notion that we have a traditional pathway is not that's the myth. That's the exception. I'm not even sure where it exists. And I certainly don't think if you're really digging into the hard work of higher education right now. It's not really possible. I think, seeing all the quirks and seeing all those sorts of things. doesn't seem non normative, or actually, you know, those are all assets. And just being who I am. And maybe to that maybe because I always felt non traditional, like, maybe that made me work harder or sort of, like, this is my thing, like, I may not have gone through this kind of program, but Gosh, darn it, you know, I'll work my tail off and do these things. And I'll start to get, you know, eventually, people really come to me for my insights, they have a situation or kind of dealing with it feels kind of muddy. And so they'll say, This isn't your problem to deal with. But I would love your advice, and your perspective. And so all of that is, I guess, is to say that I kind of feel like I've earned my way to the place I have now. And I feel I feel such empathy for the earlier versions of myself that felt like, I didn't fit in or it wasn't someone's top choice or any of

those things. And now I'm now what I've accomplished is, I feel like I've exceeded people's expectations that kind of saw me in those earlier stages. But then when I talk to people now, like, What are you talking about? You're awesome, like, and they just didn't even see anything? They have no sense of why would be doubting anything. Right? Yeah, I think that idea of like, the non traditional path, I think, is so rich, too, because I think that the idea that there's a traditional legitimates preferred, right routes to academia, is one of the things that's weaponized against women, non binary persons, bipoc, versus any under resourced or minoritized. community, you know, somehow your did like that just fuels that imposter syndrome talk, because we're non traditional, therefore, somehow that was translate to being less than instead of like, using the same kind of, you know, lens of like, what assets are we bringing? What experiences do we have? How does this just enrich the scholarship that we do, the teaching that we do, the the relationships that we build, and the way the ways in which we relate to the institution, because your your, your ability to prophetically see what was coming with all the changes in higher EQ and higher learning in general, right, are partly informed because the journey that you've had, right, and you've had, you know, you're still attentive to those non traditional pathways and supportive of the non traditional pathways. So I think that's really rich insight. And I think it's also a lot of folks like you, like you said, a lot of folks that come into our programs have had journeys that either, you know, for one reason or another, either are feel traditional, or somehow less legitimate to people. So I love that. That's just kind of part of the ethos is that no matter how you come to scholarship, that's, that's kind of irrelevant. That just speaks to what opportunities we've had or what connections we've had. And, and it's irrelevant. The fact is, we're here, yes. And we're doing the thing. And we're trying to do it with authenticity, compassion, and sustainability, right. And be community around it, which is one of the things you also mentioned right about being both part of Elevate, and then being now a part of soar and continuing to connect with folks, is really that idea of being a supportive community. Right, that that is such a need for so many of us in academia. I wonder what you think this is getting more to the like, scholars voice side of things? What does a better way to academic mean to you? Can you unpack that? How are you interpreting that? I'd love to hear your thoughts on that? Yeah, I think one of the things that's been really powerful is this idea that simply being who we are, like simply being who I am and being, like showing up, like, in the ways that matter in all the ways that matter, and the presence that I bring, like that is that is a gift, and an opportunity for others like us simply, I mean, this this sounds really, I'm quoting the program, like I didn't make this. But he does. I know it sounds kind of like you're lucky just to be in the same room with me. But that idea, like it's not about like, all the things you do all the committees are on everything you say yes to even how many, you know, any kind of quantitative sense of publication, like really, it's how do you show up? How do you like, what is it that you're bringing by being part of things and I think that, again, the parts that maybe didn't feel like, I fit in, like, I can be myself, and that's what people want. And I don't have to try to pretend to be a version of myself that isn't authentic, or doesn't feel true to me. And I think maybe previously, I would sort of feel like, oh, again, this is like how this is how a professor behaves, or this is how, you know, anyone in any kind of leadership role behaves, and you have to sort of put the rest of yourself, you know, somewhere else right. And the and I think that you know, obviously I think we've seen more conversations around this and around the fact that it is institutions, they claim to be inclusive, but there's a long way to go to actually get there. And I think this idea that you have to kind of conform, you know, there obviously are things steps we have to go through, you know, there, we have not gotten to the point where we eliminate, these are the things you need to do to get tenure or you know, so forth, but the within that there's still room for freedom and for how you're going to feel during that process. So for me, like, a different way to academic is really looking inside and trusting myself, and letting that guide me as opposed to, oh, I need to impress this person, or, you know, I need to do this thing, because this will set me up to do this other thing. Like I, I am no longer concerned

that people are not going to come to me for things like that is not. And I'm not concerned about people thinking like, I'm not competent, or I'm not doing my job, or I don't bring anything to something, all of those things, I think all of the the infusion of people that really are thinking this way, this is going to be the thing that really saves higher education because it needs saving desperately. Yeah, and really reimagining you know, true, whatever has been happening, that's not working anymore. Campuses are shuttering. And programs are going away, departments are going away. And students are adrift, you know, they they don't feel engaged, they don't feel motivated, they don't feel seen, they don't feel like they belong, and they don't really see a pathway for themselves that higher education can provide. And the more that they see people that also like making myself relatable with students, but also newer faculty, and so forth, just being approachable and being like, This is who I am. And just feeling really confident. And that, to me, that's all part of a different way to academic that being who we are, and just bringing ourselves and to what we do, as opposed to feeling like we have to conform to something else. And also, I think just kind of rolling with change. My husband got me a neon sign that says dealing with it. And when you have that, and I kind of just sort of fits everything, but I can roll with things now like I'm not flustered by disruption, or, honestly, like the things that we've had to navigate over the past few years, they have inoculated me, I guess against really like, oh my gosh, think that, you know, we're not going down this pathway that, you know, we said we're gonna be here at this point, we're not there. I just, again, honoring that data to like, why why aren't we there? You know, what do we need to do differently? And I would say also to really getting away from the culture of overwork, and an unrealistic time expectations and the hurriedness that I think so many of the participants feel I'm taking my time with things. I'm a lot slower with responding to email, not because I don't care about it, because I actually do care about it. And I, I don't want to give a response. It hasn't that I haven't had the time to really think through and look at the implications of that. And I try to model that for other faculty, but also to our leaders and to show them like you can try to be refreshing presence in that way. And again, maybe that's easier for me, because of where I am in my career along. I've been doing this and that I am tenured. But why not? I mean, if my if being tenured helps me like, shift the culture in that way, then good. Absolutely. I love that idea of like, recognizing that there are things and there are steps that we may have to take, but there's still kind of agency within that. So yeah, right now you're afforded certain privileges because you reach tenure. But even without tenure, like we can still make choices, right about how we want to feel about an experience how we want to show up within the experience, even if we can't control every aspect of it. Nobody can though, like tenure, not like we can't,

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Thea L. Racelis 38:50

can't control any of it, but or all of it. And I love it's like a really centering authenticity, right? Like there's a lot of authenticity and alignment and what you're talking about, like really being able to show up as yourself and the impact that can make on academia. And you said something about how this is how we save academia. Can you tell me more about that? Because that was just like, it made my brain tingle in all kinds of ways. Because I think you're onto something. I think you're 100%. Right? Can you tell us more? There radical transformation needs to happen at so many levels. That is really where the urgency is. And it takes I think the kind of reflection and introspection that we engage in in the program. That is what leadership needs to be doing, as well. And I think people probably thought like, oh, you can't, you can never have an online program, for instance, right? Like people won't participate. They won't do the work and clear it. And then everyone went online for two years, right. And then thinking about the students that we're serving, you know, they have gone through an experience unlike

anything that I experienced during you know, the friend that introduced me to the podcast, she says like our students have had, the percentage of their life or the proportion of their life that's been defined

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Stacey Anderson 40:00

by this pandemic, is a much larger proportion than for those of us who have been around for a while, and we can't really imagine what that's like. And I think true for our newer faculty that have been going through graduate school and postdocs, maybe and all those things, too. So, really, like we need to be listening to people. And a lot of times, people, if people have been away from teaching for a while, or because of whatever role they have now, or just away from higher education for a while, we need to listen to the people that are doing it now and to say, this is what it's like, this is what it's like to come to a class. Now, this is what it's like to try to publish now in the midst of a time when we have so many people don't even want to journals can't even get reviewers right now, because this is unpaid labor. So many systems are built on unpaid and really unrewarded labor. And I'm promotable tasks I've, I know, we say in the program, and there was an assumption that that system could keep going, like, you know, people will kind of pay their dues. And then you know, the next generation will pay their dues, and so forth. There's way too much that is expected of people, right now, a faculty in particular, that the activities are relied on unpaid labor are not sustainable anymore. So we're really looking at what is sustainable, what can and what does he mean? Like what is? How do we approach this from a humane point of view? So I think that, you know, so much in higher education is really based on, I guess, ideas that, again, really limited who could participate, either as a student or as a faculty member, and also just kind of was one pathway. And I think now we need to really explore multiple pathways. And we need to really be thinking about like, what is the identity that matters? I guess, my example I will give is that I, in our writing classes, for instance, I've been teaching writing to college students, since 1995. And I think, as I was going through I, I kind of thought that, oh, well, we have this sense of sort of continuous evolution, or, you know, eventually, you know, just I, I've seen the tools that people use to write have evolved, right, like, a lot of people didn't really have computers, necessarily. Now, everyone has some sort of electronic device, practically. Not everyone, but because we know that 10% of students in my university system did not have those, but then we know that those are much more ubiquitous, and access to research, databases, all that stuff has evolved. But really, what writing looks like in the writing classes, you know, say for our first year students, is very different than it was, you know, even five years ago, and we are much more focusing on the process, like we're much more about, like, there's nothing valuable about, oh, let me comment on this paper, you know, and Leslie, and then, you know, together I will, I will write your paper for you. And, and then we will showcase, you know, you will take this with you, right, and yeah. And even though composition has always been focused on the process, I think there was sort of a sense that the product had to look like something. And I think that's again, like, even as faculty to like, we kind of think, oh, I need something really big to give people you know, like, I'm gonna go on a sabbatical, I need to do something really big at the end to prove that I was worthy of time off, like, we're all worthy of time off. So the way we teach writing is, and I was just talking to a colleague yesterday, who has been in the program that I teach in, almost as long as I have, and we're not preoccupied with that perfect final product, we're preoccupied with, how do we help students even get excited about reading and writing again, and to discover their scholars ways, which is really about the essence of what we want to take, I know, people will see writing classes and service classes. And it's, we are really the service we're providing, as we're helping empower students to find their voice and then to use it as they go forward. And so I think that's, those are the ways in which I think higher ed is also

transforming. And I think too, with pretty much everyone I talked to now will say like, I just can't teach the amount of content, if there are more content based discipline, like I can't teach the amount of content that I used to, everything is just taking much longer. So it's like, that's what our writing, right? Like, oh, I should be able to do this many pages and this many weeks, and it's not happening. And with the way information is available through so many means not just through AI, but the information is out there. But really, it's like how do you think and what's the what is the framework? Like really teaching is about what scholars voice is about, which is like, what is the what is the mental framework? And what is the approach that you bring to your work, you know, in these different disciplines, and how do you learn how to learn is everyone's job now? And I think that's something that's got to be integrated across the university. And I think so all those things, I think are just ways in which the more that we can understand that the process itself is the thing that's going to empower students. I think that's the transformation that needs to happen like at its core. Absolutely. I love it. So Stacy, here's here's my my closing question.

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Thea L. Racelis 45:00

To you, you came to us through the podcast. That's how you discovered all of these programs that have now like, you know, you've been such a wonderful part of and such a important member of our community. So what is it you would say to like pass Stacey listening to the podcasts or other Stacey's out there who are listening and really also feeling that that need for, for community that urgency for transformation? What are your your parting thoughts? And your last words of wisdom here? Yeah, man, I would say that I could I do, remember. And I will get my monthly payments, I did the monthly payment plan, I remember thinking, like, you're definitely aware of a program like this when you are paying for it monthly. And so. But knowing when I was doing that, I was glad he made that choice. And I knew it was not a risk, but I knew it was an investment. But you know, there are lots of things we invest in our time or energy. And that notion of sunk costs came up in a recent momentum call, you know, it's like, sometimes we, we put money into something and we put time or energy into something, and then it's not what we want it to be. And then we have regret. And I never had buyer's remorse over this, I never I felt, if I paid for it every month, it sounds really silly. But it kind of reminded me like, well, I made this choice. And I budgeted for this. And I'm so glad I did. And I don't regret that for a second. And I don't think I really anticipated how much the community would mean to me, because I do have other areas, you know, through conferences, or a lot of in faculty development, there are lots of opportunities that I've been involved in, where I also get to connect with other people who are really reflective and vulnerable in these ways. But to have this as a sustained community that's ongoing, and to have, when I came in the Facebook was being phased out, which I was glad for because I also am phasing out of Facebook, right phased out of Facebook. But the Slack community has been really great. And I think that's growing and building and just kind of knowing that this is a place you're not only investing in in yourself, but you're really

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that's also a step towards the transformation that's going to happen. And I think that you don't really know where something is, it's okay not to have to have a sense of what the outcome is. And not to have a five year plan or any of those things just being open to the possibilities and discovering possibilities. You know, people often say like, Oh, we don't know, the jobs that will

happen, you know, that will be available five years from now or 10 years from now. And I don't know the possibilities for myself that will be available at any of these timeframes. Like I never would have thought I'd be where I am now. And I really want to be here. That's one thing I should say is that you because chair is not a role that a lot of people avoid a role like chair, and you have been really helpful in helping me see that this is, this fits me like it's okay to want to do something that other people totally don't want to do. Yeah. So and then to be able to and then knowing, you know, as I have said to you and to other coaches is like they knowing that being involved in this program is going to help me continue to thrive in this new role. That's amazing. Stacey, thank you so much for taking this time to chat with us about your experience. Thank you for showing up as you always do with so much kindness and generosity and know that we wish you all the success in the world. I'm so excited for all the roles that you have now and and all the ways in which you are helping to just transform this weird place that we're all part of. And you know, happy writing to you, Stacy, thank you.



Cathy Mazak 48:27

Thank you so much for spending your valuable time supporting yourself and your writing by listening to this episode. If you like what you heard today, the best way to say thank you is to hop on over to Apple iTunes and write an honest review. The more reviews the more amazing academic women and non binary people will find this podcast so go write one now.