

‘Round About Campus Episode Transcript
Interview with Erin Simpson, Vanessa Aviva González-Siegel, and Colette Sterling
(Season 1, Episode 4)

Alex: Welcome to the Round ‘About Campus podcast. I’m Alex, and recording this today from the ancestral and traditional homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute nations and people. And as always, I’m excited to be here with my co-hostess, Z Nicolazzo.

Z: Hello, hello; Z Nicolazzo [here]. I am the Executive Editor of *About Campus* and glad to be co-hosting this pod pod with you, Alex. Always a delight and a pleasure. As always, right, we start out with a little banter, get people warmed up a little bit and we like to ask this question. Give me your best. And because Alex opened, I’ll be the one to ask. And I’m going to, I’m going to say, Alex, give me your best GIF or JIF. We’re not going to enter the debate about GIFs vs JIFS, but give me your best GIF. I might have just entered the debate, but here we are.

Alex: I’m also entering the debate with GIFs as well.

Z: Yeah. Okay, so Team GIF here. So give me your best GIF.

Alex: Oh gosh. My best GIF is going to be a tie because I think they represent two of the uses I have for GIFs most often. The first is the flaming Elmo GIF, that is just like, bring on the absolute carnage, terror, whatever. Just set it on fire. It’s all like...just do it, just do it. It’s... I think it has a versatile GIF for usage in that it could be about I don’t know, a long meeting you just attended that accomplished nothing. Surely that never happens in higher education.

Z: No, not me.

Alex: Or it could be you are just sort of doom scrolling through your preferred social media app and you just need to express yourself in some way, shape or form. So that’s one. The other one to use, I think more sparingly, but much more sharply, is the GIF of Viola Davis from *How to Get Away With Murder*, the hit ABC show by Shonda Rhimes, where she is collecting her things and just leaving because she is over the conversation happening in the moment.

[Co-hostess cross-talk]

Z: Yes, yes.

Alex: And I would say, particularly in some of my text threads, that is an oft used GIF. But, Z, tell me about your favorite GIF.

Z: I’ve actually received both those GIFs from you and now I’m just giggling internally or as the youth say, I’m screaming, screaming. So I will see your two and give you two back. One, classic: Alice in Wonderland curtsyng. Right?

Alex: Yes, very that.

Z: A little Alice curtsy, which is, you know, my little, my little thank you GIF that I send after I say something funny and my friends enjoy it via text. And then I'm also a big fan of, for folks that don't know me, I do love Schitt's Creek. It's just a delightful show. I'm still sad it's not on anymore, and it will probably be unsurprising to people who do know me that my favorite character is Alexis Rose, and I love the GIF of her, just either looking around and giving the little kind of like, okay, symbol, right? Or the one where she is crossing her fingers, which is my second favorite GIF, the one where she's looking around, just crossed her fingers and just looks like she's really excited and expectant. So yeah, you know that you've entered my good graces when you get an Alexis Rose GIF from me. So yeah.

Alex: I mean, honestly, I don't think you can go wrong with any Schitt's Creek GIF between Moira, David and Alexis. I mean, and I'll see with an occasional Ronnie because Ronnie is one of my favorite side characters in that show for sure.

Z: True. True. I like both red and white wine. Okay. And we could, we could spiral. We could go all through various different favorite episodes. So yeah, take it away from me. Anyway, we are thrilled and excited to move into today's episode, today's interview. And we actually have three guests for this episode: Vanessa Aviva González-Siegel, Erin Simpson and Colette Sterling. This was a fun interview to do. We changed things up a little bit. We moved things around. We had our guests ask each other questions, which was fun and delightful. So yeah, we're really thrilled for folks to hear the interview, and we'll move away and let you listen to it now.

[Musical interlude]

Alex: Today, we're talking about living the work of equity in higher education. And we've asked three pretty awesome folks to join us for that conversation. Erin Simpson is the Director for the Gender Equality Center and Assistant Dean of Students at the University of Oklahoma. In this role, Erin works directly with queer and trans students, faculty and staff to imagine and create an equitable and affirming campus culture.

Z: Vanessa Aviva González-Siegel is an intersectional speaker and educator, trans and queer centered diversity worker and community leader. She works full-time, engaged in trans and queer centered diversity work at Columbia University, where she directs LGBTQ student life for the undergraduate colleges. She's also the QTPOC Caucus co-chair and member of the National Advisory Council for NCORE, the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity and Higher Education. Welcome.

Alex: And Colette Sterling currently serves as the Assistant Director for Colorado State University's (CSU) Office of Parent and Family Programs (PFP). She has worked for CSU's PFP Office for several years in multiple roles, infusing the office with the core of DEI theory and active practice to better serve CSU's thousands of parents, family members and student support networks. We are so excited that all three of you could join us today.

Erin: Thank you so much for having us.

Z: So this season on the pod, we're focused on equity and higher education and are really trying to use Marcia Baxter Magolda's idea of being good company with students. What's a word or a phrase that you think about when you think about being good company alongside students, colleagues and others at this particular moment in higher education?

Erin: Okay. I can start. I think I'm not sure if it's the nature of my work. You know, I do a lot of gender-based violence prevention as well as LGBTQ inclusion work. But for me, it's trauma informed. There is no way, in my opinion right now, that any practitioner in higher education shouldn't be thinking about how trauma informed ideology, practices, pedagogy can better inform our work. A new book just came out, Tricia Shalka, shout out, [Cultivating Trauma-Informed Practice in Student Affairs](#). And I just really found that to be an incredibly salient point as I work with queer and trans students, as I work with students who have experienced racial trauma that is generational in nature, as I work with Indigenous students who are thinking about trauma that is seven generations back and seven generations forward, right. And so for me, it's trauma informed. We have to do a better job there.

Z: Friend of the pod, Tricia Shalka, who is on a previous episode too. So nice connection, nice connection across the episodes, I promise. We didn't plan this, listeners.

Erin: I didn't even know. I didn't even know.. I can't wait.

Z: There you go. What about other folks? What do you think?

Vanessa: For me, what comes up is coalition and coalition building across campus. Very rarely are our individual offices or departments or units really situated either positionally within the organization or with the resources to meet the complete holistic needs of students. And so given that reality, we have to build coalitions with different partners and different folks across campus and that could be, you know, having a collaborator in the dean of students office of, like, hey, the student needs grocery money this month. Or it can be, you know, trying to navigate what does it look like to have a relationship with public safety so you can at least get a heads up if there's an antagonistic event coming to campus and they can give you a heads up so you can have a conversation about preparing students for what that may look like and feel like as that person comes to campus. And I think when there is coalition, you share labor and when things are in crisis or in contentious moments, things don't fall on an individual person. They're able to be done in community. And then students can kind of benefit from that holistic support.

Colette: Even when I thought about this question, I think what came up was this concept of a mirror. I have to and get the privilege of interacting with thousands of community members and my role is very publicly facing. So I do get to interact with lots of trans and queer educators, faculty and staff and student affairs. But predominantly, I'm interacting with people who aren't trans, who aren't queer. And I don't... I think there are times where me and my colleagues, the folks who are interacting with us on the bajillion task forces that I get to participate in. How I get to be in those spaces where we're educators. But for me, it's more important to, with this concept, validate what people know. And it's really just to ask them significant questions about social justice, about the relationship to it, especially when their identities don't align with my experiences, their experiences of this community or the experiences that I know folks in this

community are having to navigate based off of the severe trauma and violence that is being inflicted on it by the environment that, whether higher ed wants to acknowledge it or not, impacts our everyday work. So being able to be a mirror and just asking folks the right questions, whether I'm interacting with parents or family members, stakeholders in my work or folks even in the trans inclusion task force that I'm on. So being a mirror is really crucial.

Alex: Yeah, I love that. And I think all three of you are talking about different aspects of this work in many ways, right, thinking about the sort of interior lives of folks and with your thinking about trauma-informed practice, but also how that interior then shows up in the exterior. Vanessa, I'm hearing like part of the real work of coalition building is creating sort of ecosystems of support for people. And I think, Colette, you're sort of talking about how both of those then intersect to really think about: is the institution really living up to what it says it's trying to do? And in many ways, the best people who would tell us that are the people outside of the institution who may not have the same sort of attachment, perhaps complicity, in these systems in the same way, right. So I think along those lines for each of you, what do you wish people asked themselves or reflected on more in relation to the work of equity in higher education based on your experiences?

Erin: I think it's power. I really wish that people who were thinking about equity work in higher education or were thinking about higher education in general, maybe, sometimes asked themselves where is the power? I feel like there's always a conversation about is something fair? Is something...have we...a lot of equality kind of conversations and not as many equity conversations? Even though we're using the word equity? I do not always think we know what that means. So I hear a lot of like, did everyone get the same? Well, the same isn't going to same the same way for everybody? Like, we know this, we all know this, but we don't interrogate that power relationship very often. And I wish that was...and then we rely on things, we fall back on, things like, well, policy or regents or federal guidelines or codes or, right? And power doesn't move through those equitably either. Like we know this. So I wish, I wish we had a lot more attention to power conversation.

Vanessa: Yeah. For me, building off of that is also, I think, the folks doing this work in higher ed...I don't hear as much around imperialism and coloniality in our work.

Erin: Absolutely.

Vanessa: And how is higher education an imperial project in itself? And yes, like we can still do the work and try to soften the edges so that marginalized students can have a softer experience. But at the end of the day, we need to acknowledge where we are. You know, I work at a university that was founded as a colonial college. That's a legacy that materially lives on in students' everyday realities and experiences. And there are so many other institutions, whether they're colonial colleges or have other fraught establishment stories. There's a piece around imperialism coloniality that I don't feel like, oh that's all in the parts, right? That's helpful for context, but let's look at the contemporary issues. And so I think it's like, no, this is it, that is the contemporary issue because we're not really thinking about that in the ways that that can show up, Erin, to what you were saying in so many different student communities, right? The root is the same. The leaves may be, you know, falling in different ways and in different places, but

that root is still there. And as practitioners, a lot of folks don't get that awareness and training or anything like that. And also then with the expectation or the imperative for us to do our own, in dealing with our own gunk and mess in this.

Colette: I also think, too, about the colonial project, especially working out a state, a land grant institution, as CSU likes to promote it. So the relationship to power, that the more distanced you are from the direct work and impact on students, as well as...just the relationship that you built to being anti-colonial, to working in the Indigenous paradigms and knowledge, shows just how close you are to power, to also a systemic project that for trans and queer people, our body is very distant. So I think a lot of higher ed is keeping students on a college campus until graduation. We love us some retention numbers. We love us some graduation rates.

Vanessa: Yep!

Erin: Yeah, counts and stuff. Let's count some stuff.

[Co-hostess cross-talk]

Colette: Let's just do a report on it, it's fine. But we really don't talk about, for students, what it means to actually keep them here in a colonial project. Also, what it means for staff and faculty. in a system where we are also kind of partially responsible for maintaining it through the lens in Western academia, which has a relationship to power and hierarchies. So I'll throw that out there. It's always on my mind, but it's something especially when we're, at least on my campus, when we're talking about social justice, that we have our land acknowledgment that we play at the beginning of every single event and program, every frickin' event.

Alex: Every frickin' event, y'all.

Colette: Every frickin' event. We do not move beyond that, outside of side conversations in backrooms that happen but leads to no impact. So I want to throw that out too as an extension of what you're all mentioning.

Z: Just gems, dropping gems all over the place.

Erin: Just doing all the things. I feel like some of those things are like these harm mitigation moves that we have really, like, that's how we have...because we, Vanessa, to your point, we want to create this softer space. But that's the point. We're creating a softer space that we're then reifying constantly.

Colette: Right, exactly.

Erin: And we think about it as like, it's okay. I can sleep at night because it's harm mitigation, but it's...the harm is maybe getting bigger than the mitigation has ever been able to keep up with. And I am not not able to hold that wave. You know?

Z: Yeah. Goodness. I'm sitting here thinking too about some of the work that I had done previously with trans students and thinking about what success looks like for them on a college campus. Very different than what we institutionally think of success as in terms of retention rates and graduation rates. And, you know, sometimes success for trans students was stomping out, was moving away from the institution, was finding a different place, was studying abroad. So, I think the dedication and the adherence to keeping people on campus, even that phrase, Collette, the way that you're talking about it is really making me think about coloniality and imperialism and extraction in some new and different ways. Yeah, I appreciate it... I appreciate all this good conversation.

You know, Alex and I wanted to try something a little different with this episode. We wanted to invite you all to ask questions of each other. So I think we're going to start with, Colette, your questions, if you wouldn't mind asking and seeing what kind of conversation we can develop.

Colette: Yeah. So my question for you all that I wanted to bring to the space was: what do you wish trans and queer colleagues and folks in higher ed knew about building bridges and roads to uplift future educators, future activists, students who are interested in social justice work, but also the role in supporting community members since a big part of our work is also outside of also higher education. So I want to throw that out there.

Erin: I really appreciate this question because I actually was spending quite a bit of time this weekend with everyone's favorite Dr. Z Nicolazzo.

Z: It was such a lovely time.

Erin: And in a beautiful community of...beautiful queer community that is thriving in Oklahoma. Thriving in community with each other. I mean, let me be really clear about what that thriving looks like. I don't know that it would live up to actual academic queer thriving standards, but what we are thinking about, what we're talking about is some of the history pieces. I don't feel like people are...I don't feel like I have upcoming colleagues and peers and certainly students that can speak about ACT UP, for instance, or can talk about what movements have meant and felt like and been. And so they have this, sort of like, I don't want to diminish it, but this like TikTok revolutionary sense right? And students are saying things to me like, you know, we've been on campus for four weeks, and we haven't marched yet. And like, you know, for what? I can think of a lot of things we could march about, but what do you want to march about? And they're like, freedom! Okay, maybe more specific, though. So sometimes I want us to be more engaged in the history of what these movements have looked like. We are descended from activists who have fought for so much, and we're losing maybe some of the plot from them. And I think that my hope is that we can do better bridge building between like...between those who came before us and then those who are going to keep that torch burning. But right now, it's like we've got a gap. And I think it's on us to teach those things.

Vanessa: Absolutely. I think also just like investing in student leadership development, I think is really important, like whether they're a work study student in the office or they're a club

president, you know, as in your work with them, whatever that looks like. And however you all are in your roles are connected to that student, what are the skills that they need to be learning? You know, what does it mean for them to learn how to create an agenda? Which sounds so small, but in reality, it's a big deal because if they get a meeting with the dean of students, the first question they get is, so what's the agenda? What do you want to talk about? And then they're going to be like, I don't know what to do.

Erin: What are we marching for?

Vanessa: Yes, right, exactly right. What is that like baseline that wherever they go and whatever they do, that skill will always be there and help them and propel them forward. And also, Erin, to what you were saying, to community leaders, you know, there's some... I work at a school in New York City, and so most of my students are not from New York City. And so they come to New York and they're like, oh Stonewall. And that's it. They don't know anything about their peers. They don't know anything about Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR). They don't know anything about the work in the Bronx or in Staten Island. They don't even realize that Audre Lorde lived in New York City, which is just like, my mouth is always on the floor every year. I'm like, okay, so we're going to go on an outing to Staten Island to look at her house. And, I think it's really important. And there's so many opportunities in New York City for folks to get involved. And to be very clear, sometimes students don't find their space or community on campus. They look, and they find it in the community around. And so like, how do we leverage either our own connections, our own responsibilities, or bring those folks in when it feels mutually beneficial, right?

There was a story of my first year at Columbia. There were students who were like, oh my God, you're from New York. You can organize a ball on campus. And I was like, you know, I think there's definitely a need to educate about the ballroom scene and like where that comes from. It's a site of resistance and joy. But how would that be beneficial to the folks that would be coming to campus? That's the question I asked students, and they just kind of blank stared at me back. And I said, you know, I want us to think about who we all are, right? Because even as a staff member, you know, I'm from New York. I'm also complicit in this, right? We as folks connected to this institution, that has this fraught system of gentrification and violence to the local community, to Harlem, to Washington Heights, to a lot of upper Manhattan, invite people who are being actively being displaced and targeted by the university to come to campus to have its students watch. Like, let's think about that... let's sit with it. The room was silent. And I was like, but if you want to get connected to those spaces, let's talk about how you do that and how you engage, and what you can bring into that space as someone who has access to this one. So I think it's like leadership development and also just getting them connected to community so that they can get connected to that work and also just other imaginative work that we can't even think of.

Z: Gosh, I love it. We should do this more. We should invite our guests to ask each other questions more. This is great.

Alex: I do want to add really quick before we go to Vanessa's question, just like, I don't want to ever underestimate the ability to teach people how to build community. Because I think so

much about, particularly for folks who are younger and going to college, who have spent a lot of formative years at home in front of a computer. I think everyone's like, oh they're the Internet generation, they're the social media generation, and they know how to connect easily. And I'm like, girl, I don't think they actually do. And I think like in some ways, it's just like literally, like, do you know how to make friends? Can I help you learn how to make friends? In some ways, that I think is just something that was never on the forefront of my mind pre-2020, but is so on the forefront of my mind like post that time.

Erin: I feel like it cuts the entire first 6 to 8 weeks of my job now. How can I help you find a friend that you need to make this whole thing more bearable? Like, how can I help you find a friend?

Alex: Yeah.

Z: Vanessa, would you like to ask the other guests your question.

Vanessa: Absolutely. So, my question is, how do you show up for colleagues during challenging times and how do you build coalitions beyond challenging times?

Erin: I'll start first. I feel like I'm just jumping out there, but I got it. I love this question, too. First of all, your questions are amazing. And I love this question because I live and work in a state that is incredibly hostile and has been to unions, queer and trans people, to women, to people of color, to...name them. This is a hostile place to be. And so when I think about coalitions or when I think about this particular question, I think that there is something incredibly...there's something incredibly deep about, frankly, red state activism or red state coalition building or places that feel incredible and feel very desolate are actually sites of deep connection.

So when I first read this question, my immediate response was honestly, like, when have I not had it? Like, when has it not been a challenging time? And that's sort of like this constancy. But how do I build coalitions beyond those? There is no coalition that exists without a deep and abiding relationship here. And so that means I have to really know people. I have to know them in all the ways they want to be known. I have to engage in relationship building that goes far beyond the sort of professional courtesy that doesn't, it just feels very different, and I have to be in deep relationship with the land. I need to be in relationship with the people who have cared for it longer than I have and will when I'm no longer here. I have to think about...I have to think about these things very differently than I was socialized as frankly as a white person to think about them. And that's how I do that, right? Is that I stay learning from the people who are willing to teach me. But the relationships have to be...they have to be solid or the coalition like we're always under attack. So the coalition can't stand unless there's something underneath it, underpinning it, supporting it. And that's how we feel in community.

Colette: You know, I think this was a great question. And I appreciate how you bring it in terms of what happens when there's not a challenging time because I will name for myself being trans and queer that my first relationship to community building was actually harm and trauma, in the violence inflicted on trans and queer bodies. And it's actually taken quite a few

years to understand what that looks like from a healthy, grounded, anti-colonial, very liberated lens. And I think some of it happens outside of higher education. I think what feeds into you is to be able to continue building relationships and connections with people who are going to be your co-conspirators in the work. And for me, that's the group of trans community and folks that I engage with outside of higher education that help me feel human outside of a title, outside of the role. Outside of what I do for parents, for families, for students, or whatever.

I also think about, and this was a question when I got to meet journalist Erin Reed in Colorado, State representative, Brianna Titone, who are both trans, and somebody in the room asked like, what does it mean for the trans community when it comes to telling your stories in a way that doesn't see us in that deficit? So when I think of coalition building, I think, how much do you have to model something for other people through storytelling? Because that's the only relationship out to it. Because seeing this happen tangibly, at least where I'm from in Colorado. That doesn't happen in one time for folks that are new to social justice work to understand what this looks like because it is deeply complex and very history, and social justice work is multi-generational. So I think who are you and what are you outside of higher education feeds into this question for me just as much as it does: what are those professional relationships look like? But also how might, Erin, to your point, building that outside of just the professional courtesy of what looks nice on paper, and let's go have a coffee. Making it more meaningful than that, I think, is crucial. And I think even though resilience is an extremely problematic frame in higher education, I think grounding is a better frame to take in terms of making this like a long term affair, in terms of coalition building. Well, at least that's how I see it.

Z: Again, I mean, y'all just yeah, we could do this for hours and hours and hours, right. You know, one of the things that I think was so enlightening for me to hear last week was, Erin when you and other folks that we were hanging out with in Oklahoma were talking about red state coalition building around reproductive justice. I was like, my gosh, I didn't even know that community existed largely because I grew up in a, I mean, I currently live in a red state, but I grew up in blue states. So it was a very different kind of political context. And it's yeah, it's amazing to think about how those communities can be cultivated and maintained in deep and abiding ways. I think a lot about Grace Lee Boggs, right, when she says that the most radical thing I did was stay put, rather than trying to think that there are other utopic sites that we should seek and desire to be in. Because I think, Vanessa, as you're talking about like New York City, is often heralded as one of those sites. And it ain't all great there either, right? So...

Vanessa: No it's not.

Z: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I appreciate that. Erin, would you grace us with your question?

Erin: Absolutely. One of the things that we talk a lot about with our students from Oklahoma is, yes, it is...it is bad out there, but what are the sites and things of joy that we can also concentrate on? So I'd love to know what's bringing you joy right now or always or what's the joyful parts?

Vanessa: Two things come to my mind. I think one is friends and chosen family. Some are in this work, some are not in this work. And they're the folks that I can call after a really rough, icky day. I'm not sure if we can curse, so I'm not going to.

Z: Why can't you? It's all, yeah, we'll curse on this pod.

Alex: We'll put an explicit label here.

[Co-hostess laughter]

Vanessa: So let me not be that girl.

Z: Feel your oats, girl.

Vanessa: No, well, after you have a really shitty meeting and you just need to talk to somebody who knows you so deeply that you don't really have to explain how you're feeling. You just got to tell them what happened, and they are able to help you process. Yeah, that is so invaluable in this work. Like it's so needed, and I think folks outside of the work too to kind of snap you out of that higher ed bubble is really important when you're doing this work. You meet a lot of people at conferences and a lot of your social life kind of becomes very higher ed-y, which is not a bad thing. I personally live for it, but you also have to have folks outside of the bubble so that not every conversation is work. Not everything is...sometimes I just wanna talk about housewives.

Colette: Absolutely.

Vanessa: Sometimes I want to...I watched the World Cup. I want to talk about Morocco and the fact that they advance as well as they do. And I want to talk to somebody because it gets me out of my head of everything that is going on. The next thing is actually my cat, Baby. She's sleeping right now, so you cannot see her. But as someone who lives alone, having a cat, her name is Baby. Just being here and snuggling on me during meetings and just having those moments with her is very grounding for me. So those are the things that bring me joy.

Colette: We stan cats in this household too. We have two. I think, Vanessa, much to what you were saying, for me, it is that those found family. It is those friendships. It is those connections where you can text somebody—I'm also going to curse. Look at this unhinged shit that I just had to put up with because a family member called me about their student who was struggling with finances and suddenly they want to log into their accounts, like with the instructor or like, whatever. But, I think, and this came up too when I was at this event where I got to meet Aaron Reed and the state representative where trans people do a lot of cool shit, historically.

Vanessa: Always.

Colette: Nothing to do with social justice. And nobody ever tells those stories ever.

Erin: Absolutely.

Colette: About the lives that we live outside of the pain that is inflicted. So for me, a lot of joy also comes from art. So I managed to work in a lot of my art into some of higher education. into what I do, but also it's my way of being tactile and doing something that isn't attached to technology or thinking or using my brain too much, which for real, is kind of nice in the climate that we live in that demands constant focus on trauma and violence that is being put on people. And there's some privilege, absolutely, in being able to get away from some of that. But I also think if you can make space for that in your life, to hold in something creative, something artistic, something that allows you to express your humanity in a way that people don't always get to see is really what is bringing me joy right now.

Erin: I love that. Thank you.

Z: What about you, Erin? What's bringing you joy?

Erin: My favorite job in my whole life is to be the world's greatest aunt, constantly striving. I understand that that's an ever moving target. But it's hanging out with the small people that call me Erin and then getting to listen to their absolutely ridiculous and yet somehow hilarious and wise musings on the world and the way that it works. And yeah, I just, I really love that. That's where all my time and all the money goes through being Aunt Erin.

Z: Yeah, and you are fantastic at it.

Erin: Thank you.

Z: Those kids are lucky. And you're lucky to have those kids too, right? So, Alex, I'm curious to hear from you too, Alex. What brings you joy these days?

Alex: What brings me joy these days. I am a CBS reality TV girl, so I am currently in the midst of Survivor and Big Brother and.

Erin: Is that season 97 of survivor? Where are we at with that?

[Z laughing]

Alex: I believe it is season 45, Survivor stans don't come for me. And then we're on Big Brother 25. But I've only watched the last few seasons of Big Brother, and then I got into Survivor during the pandemic. But like, I think it's back to what Colette was saying, it's just the escape. The practice of escape for a bit has been great. I also re-found my love of poetry when I was working on my doc program, both writing and reading. And so I try and read one poetry book a month. And I finished an [Andrea Gibson](#) collection about a month ago, and then I've been working on Mary—

Z: Oh, I think Alex may have froze. First freeze of the pod.

Vanessa: I was going to say, we've been on a great track record so far.

Z: I feel the same.

[Co-hostess and panelists cross-talk]

Z: I think maybe Alex was about to talk about [Mary Oliver](#).

Erin: That's what it felt like.

Z: Yeah. Which also feels very gay and very appropriate given the conversation. I similarly have been enjoying some poetry. I try to read one or two poems by [Mary Oliver](#) every morning. My mother was a very big fan of [Mary Oliver](#) so I've been dipping into some of her work lately and my therapist has encouraged me to find some things that I can be a beginner at. So I've been beginning crocheting. I'm not very good at it, But it's a very enjoyable, very delightful practice. So yeah.

Erin: I'm very much looking forward to a doily of some sort.

Z: That will be, I will be working on that for you. You will be one of the first, Erin. Ask and you shall receive a really busted little doily. Yeah, I think that this is such a good moment and place just to end our conversation. You know, usually we invite our guests to share one or two pieces that you regularly go back to in thinking about your work around equity. I think what we might do is if you folks want to send Alex and I those, we'll put them in the show notes so that people who are listening can still yet learn with you around some of those pieces that you go back to. But I think that yeah, ending with joy and with us being together is a nice place to sign off on this episode. So thank you so so much for all of you coming, enjoying, chatting, laughing and just sharing all of the brilliant insights that you have. We appreciate it.

Alex: All right. Time for the credits. Thanks to the folks who pulled this all together, including our fantastic season one guests.

Z: 'Round About Campus is audio engineered by the incredible tech team in the College of Education at the University of Arizona, including Jason Aragón, Erica Lmuth, and Michael Griffith.

Alex: Mary Ellen Wade designed our logo. Thanks also to my fantastic and fabulous co-host, Z.

Z: Thanks to you, too, Alex. We'll look forward to being with you 'round about campus soon.