

‘Round About Campus Episode Transcript
Interview with Susana Muñoz and Amanda Tachine (Season 3, Episode 4)

Alex: Z, why don't readers have extra time?

Z: Wait wait, wait, I got it, I got it, I got it. Because they're booked.

Alex: They are booked, indeed.

[Co-hostess laughter]

Alex: I'm Alex.

Z: And I'm Z. And this is the ‘Round About Campus podcast, bringing our scholarly magazine to your ears.

Alex: In this season of the podcast, we're talking about educational praxis through the lens of Ashley Neese's book, [*Permission to Rest: Revolutionary Practices for Healing, Empowerment, and Collective Care*](#). And today I feel like we've got a great pair of folks to chat with.

Z: Absolutely. We're talking with Amanda Tachine and Susana Muñoz about rest, sabbaticals, and the long haul of the work in higher education.

Alex: Z, what is a sabbatical? You're on one right now, so I feel like you're really well equipped to answer this question.

Z: Sabbaticals are brilliant is what sabbaticals are. I mean, it's a period of time where you get to kind of remove yourself from day to day responsibilities. There are projects that people do during their sabbatical. So actually, this podcast is one of the projects that I'm doing on my sabbatical. But, I'm not going into the office every day. I'm not even going into the office every week. Sometimes, not every month. I am retreating from email, from administrative tasks, from all that kind of stuff, from teaching, from service work. Yeah, and I think the main kind of goal of sabbatical is to take a break, is to be restful. So usually you get a sabbatical, after or you're eligible for a sabbatical after your sixth year at an institution. So, this is technically my 10th year, my decade year of being a faculty member, a tenure track faculty member. But because I was at a previous institution for three years, I lost that time. So, yeah, my seventh year at Arizona, my 10th year overall. So...I don't know. Is that like a decent explanation?

Alex: It is. But you've also been a professor for a decade. How does that feel?

Z: Oh my gosh, it feels weird. Interesting, weird. You know, all the things. I will say too, I mean, I think that, while we're talking about sabbaticals, I will just say, it is not a privilege that is lost on me at all as a faculty member. And I do think that everyone—faculty, staff should also have sabbaticals, right? As well as tenure track and career track folks who are faculty members. So, it's one of those things that I think is really helpful. I do know that some staff do get sabbaticals. They can build in sabbaticals, you know, depending on the institution and

supervisors and all that kind of stuff. But it is, yeah, it's just been nice to take a pause and basically get off the, get off the work train, you know, so...

Alex: Yeah, I think, our career track faculty here only got a course release, and they still have to say what kind of project they're going to do with their course release. And it's like, girl, just give them a little bit of a break.

Z: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think the reality is that I feel, I mean...I even told my partner a couple of weeks ago, I feel more vibrant, more creative, more able to kind of be present in some different sorts of ways. And so it's not, it is, well I should say it is both indulgent and lovely and also, I think, is deeply beneficial to the overall project of the academy. You know, so, but before we get too much into our conversation, let's do our little quick segment that we call "Take a Round," shall we? This is the...this is a segment where we each take a round to talk about something related to our season theme or the individual episode. And, for today, let's take a round about a lesson you've learned through a prolonged period of rest. What do you got, Alex?

Alex: A lesson from a prolonged period of rest. So, this past summer, the summer of 2024, I did sort of like a 12 day trip-ish, I believe it was. I went to Florida to see friends and family. I went up to then DC after. I had a little bit of work there, but I mostly like relaxed and chilled afterward. And it was great. So I got to hang out with my college roommate and his wife and their brand new baby, and one of the things that was awesome was I got to meet a lot of their friends while I was there. And one of the things that they all talked about, like, it just became common conversation was like, what everyone was reading. And I was like, girl, what do you mean by reading? I'm reading emails. That's what I'm reading. And so for me, it was a moment of like: oh, actually, I would love to engage in this conversation. I do actually like reading a lot, and it just has not come back into my practice of being a faculty member, particularly this calendar year. And so I, like as soon as I got back, there were like three books I've been wanting to read on my bookshelf. I read the first one, I think, in like two days, and I was like, you know, that's the one end of the extreme of this spectrum. But the other was like, no, I actually want to incorporate this, read things I like again. I read a bunch of stuff every day, but it's not necessarily stuff I think that engages my mind very differently. So that was one lesson I definitely learned this past summer. It's like I need to re-integrate reading fiction and poetry again into my daily routine.

Z: Yeah, yeah, I have read a lot of fiction over the last few months and it has been really, really, I mean, enjoyable, but also I think, yeah, just a little bit of a shift for my brain. And kind of a shift in terms of, yeah, how I then think about going in and approaching the work. So, yeah, I'm currently in the fifth book of the Sarah Maas series. I've gotten into that kind of fairy fiction, fantasy sort of series. So, yeah, that's been fun. And the books are like, real long, but you flip the pages quick, right? You know, if we're thinking about lessons, you know, the thing that I think I've learned and, and I think we'll talk about this with our guests in the episode, too, it's the least for me, it's been really helpful to be intentional about my prolonged break. There's this moment where I thought, like: oh, I can just not plan anything. But then I think stuff kind of goes off the rails, right? At least for me. And so it's been helpful to think about, not only just what I want to do on this break, but also what do not want to do. How do I want to think about my schedule, not in terms of putting in lots of appointments, but how do I want to really slate

time on my schedule? Like if I see a block of time that's like: hey, this is reading time. Or hey, this is you're going to walk with the dog time or go to the botanical gardens or whatever. That's actually, those are helpful reminders for me, and it makes me feel like I'm able to really take advantage of my resting time. So I think being intentional has been really helpful. And, I think also, yeah, like giving myself grace to just not. Like not feel like I need to accomplish things. Not feel like I need to, you know, do all of the hyper productive stuff that I think we've been taught and trained to do. So I've... I almost feel like I've been kind of retraining myself to be okay with taking naps. I know that seems really weird, but, like, I used to take naps, obviously when I was younger. And I think when I started working, I was like, I can't take a nap because I need to write this manuscript and submit it, you know, I see you shaking your head, like, yeah, you get it. So yeah, I think being intentional, and really being planful about how to use my time off, has been really helpful.

Alex: Yeah, I, whenever I look at some of the young people in my life in the face and they're like, who, like, resists naps. And I'm like, girl, stop resisting. Because at some point you're going to want these naps and you just won't feel like you can take them. So yes, I understand deeply.

Z: I will also say there's scientific evidence that suggests that taking naps is good for your heart health. So if you ever need a rationale, dear listeners, do it for your heart. You know.

Alex: Love that.

Z: So, all right. That's a lot from us. We've just been chit chatting away. Let's get out of the way and bring Amanda and Susana into this conversation. Today, we are talking with Drs. Amanda Tachine and Susana Muñoz. [Dr. Amanda R. Tachine](#) is Navajo from Ganado, Arizona. She is Náneesht'ézhí Táchii'nii (Zuni Red Running into Water) born for Tł'ízi lání (Many Goats). She is an [Assistant Professor in Educational Studies](#) at the University of Oregon. Amanda's research explores the relationship between systemic and structural histories of settler colonialism, and the ongoing erasure of Indigenous presence and belonging in college settings using qualitative Indigenous methodologies. I highly, highly, highly recommend her work.

Amanda: Ahhh, thank you for that generous intro. Good to see you. Hear your voice.

Z: And you.

Alex: Dr. [Susana M. Muñoz](#) is Associate Professor in the [Higher Education Leadership \(HEL\) Program](#), in the School of Education at Colorado State University (CSU). And my two doors down neighbor in the School of Education building. Her scholarly interests center on the experiences of minoritized populations in higher education. Specifically, she focuses her research on issues of equity, identity, and campus climate for undocumented Latinx students while employing perspectives such as legal violence, racist nativism, Chicana feminist epistemology, to identify and dismantle power oppression, and inequities experienced by these populations. Amanda, Susana, welcome to the 'Round About Campus podcast.

Susana: Happy to be here. Thanks for inviting us.

Z: These are, these are those moments where I wish we could all do this in person. Because you both are lovely and a joy and we've had, yeah, I think longer relationships with you all than some of our other guests, which is, you know, a little partially why we invited you for this particular episode. Because we know that you've been kind of engaging in restful practices as well. You know, Amanda, first, I think we want to start with you. You actually are the person that put this book on my radar. So, how did you come across this book? And what prompted you to read it and to share it?

Amanda: Yeah, well, I just want to say thank you to this podcast, and thank you for the generosity and allowing us to dive into such a gift of a book, right? It's such a gift of a practice. And I wish I had, like a story that was like, captivating of how I came across this book but to be straight up, I was at a bookstore and lingering around and saw this on the stack of books. And quite to be honest with you, I picked it up. And I'm sometimes skeptical when it comes to books around wellbeing, you know, whose? Where are they coming from, right. And so I remember looking at the author and just thinking, you know, I haven't. I don't know this person and started looking a little bit in the references and kind of like sift through some of the pages. And there was, you know, when you read the book, there's these like standalone pages with really strong statements that resonated with me. And I think one of them was about, something about productivity will change the season of my life, and that's okay. And that, like, those words just like melted in my heart. Because I have been in a season where my productivity is changing, and I'm in a different season. And I love that. And this writer was resonating with my heart. And so I actually picked up two copies and the reason why I picked up two is actually, Z, you were on my mind, because you're one of the very few people who I can really share abundantly about practice of rest and regeneration and about healing. You know, we both have gone through some really tough times, even within since Covid-19 and after and prior and being able to look arms and hearts with you over some of these sentiments. And I feel like I've learned a lot, honestly, from you around your restful nature. And so I knew, like, you would resonate with this book. And I'm...one of my love languages is to give gifts, especially about books. So when you all were talking about reading and as a way of practice, I love that because I'm that girl who loves to bear herself in a book. And so what I like to do then is to give gifts of books and literature to friends. And so I picked it up, and I was thinking of Z when I wanted to offer this book. And so here we are today and such a beautiful turn around. So thank you.

Alex: You know, Susana, we asked you in many ways to engage with this book, thinking about, because you also think deeply about rest. I feel like I in many ways have come to rely upon you as an accountability body in terms of productivity and work and like saying no more often than I say yes. So before you open the book, what did you think it was going to be about? And did your experience of the book match that assumption?

Susana: First of all, I really appreciate that, you know, you found this book, Mandy, because I almost feel like maybe the book found you. Right? And you know in that moment, and it's something that you, we needed. You needed and thus we all needed to read it. And so I actually thought it was...and I am one of these people that is very deep in like the self-help genre, you know. So, you know, [The Mountain is You](#), you know, and other self-help books that help me understand sort of myself in complex ways. And so I was excited when I received this book,

and I took it with me to Oaxaca, first opened it up on a beach. And I took a picture of myself because it's like: oh, I feel like I'm in alignment with everything. And then when I started to read, it actually made me a little uncomfortable because it was dropping a lot of truth bombs in this book where I had to just sit with it for a little bit. And I'm one of those people that, you know, I've talked about my own sabbatical and how that process was difficult for me to just pause and to make pausing a normal part of my practice. My body was even rejecting it, you know, and I was like: why am I crying for no reason, right? And, when I want to pause. And so it took me back to that moment, and this I think what, what I didn't expect is for me to further intellectualize why our bodies are wired the way they are around rest and how we've been socialized in this field. So, to be honest with me, I was like, I'm going to read this, you know, front to back on the beach. That's my goal. And it took me a while to finish because there were so many parts of this book that really hit home in a very, like, deep, emotional, heart sensing way where I had to walk away and just be with my feelings about what was coming up. And so, this book was such a gift. And, I mean, it's still...I'm still processing and resonating with some of the messages, like, you know, urgency shouldn't be our baseline, right? You know. And just even like how I am approaching email? I'm more conscious about: am I holding my breath? Am I relaxed? Am I, what are my shoulders doing? So I'm so much more cognizant of what my body is doing in this process of really, sort of embracing rest as not sort of an appendage of myself, but central to myself. Right? So it was, it was a gift for sure, yeah, for me to read this.

Z: Yeah. That, oh my gosh, that passage about email I think was mind blowing for me. I was like: oh my gosh, I do hold my breath when I'm emailing and I do, I feel like this constriction of my body when I'm doing that, right. And so there have been these moments. and I'm sure for you, too, where I'm emailing and in my mind I'm like: please remember to take breaths as you're doing this. Please remember to breathe. It has really been kind of a fundamental shift. The other...one of the other things I think you mentioned, Susana and Amanda, , you also kind of hinted at this as like, this is a quote unquote short book. Like, you could read it fast, but that's not the point, right. And so there are these...for folks who haven't read the book, it's a very interesting and different layout and style for a book that I think really pushes readers to move slower and to literally just be present with certain passages, you know. Those pages, Amanda, where you're talking about those like big, bold passages that are like one sentence or maybe even like less than ten words. They do...I found some of them to be really arresting, right. And so you just have to kind of stop and really think about and take stock of that. I'm thinking a little bit about how the author encourages us to think about rest in the way that she's talking about. It is fundamentally different than notions of self-care, that self-care has become commodified and commercialized in particular ways. And, and I guess I'm just wondering, like, how are you thinking differently about rest through this book? Or are there particular practices of rest through this book that you found really illuminating? Yeah. How has the book kind of helped you deepen your idea and your practice of rest, I guess?

Susana: Yeah. No, I think what it's done for me is and again, like, we talk about this self-care. And I mean, when I talk about truth telling, I'm like, I feel like she's actually talking to me as like, I love to Netflix and chill. Like, that's my vibe, right? Is to Netflix and Chill and without, you know, really understanding that, that is a distraction from ourselves, right. You know, it's a distraction to not building sort of this holistic relationship with ourselves. But I also really resonated with sort of the practice of this rest is part of your healing. And a lot of our, like, rest

is a way to unearth a lot of our traumas. And so, I think the questions that I've been asking myself and how they're different from that self-care and, what I think is, what I initially thought was sort of this notion of rest. And just being able to just, you know, immerse myself in either favorite books or...but also like, how am I silent with myself? What are the fears that I have when I am silent and just present with my thoughts. And that? That was I think the biggest truth is that: am I using social media? Am I using Netflix? Am I using other...all of these other things to really distract myself from being with myself? And so that for me was like the biggest aha moment in how I needed to shift my practice. And really thinking about rest as part of healing, healing past traumas, healing what's in me. And so some of the exercises of just even visualizing, you know, some of the pain and fear and hurt like. It elicits a release for me, I know, and I think that's been one of the things that I've found very healing about this book is that it's allowed me to give myself permission to heal, you know. And so, so, yeah, this was a lot. It was like, I didn't expect it to be like a book that profoundly gets at the root, not just, you know, at the symptoms, but at the root of why I haven't, I've been uncomfortable with rest. Yeah.

Z: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think it's a, yeah, a powerful book. And I think if you approach it in kind of a framework of curiosity, right, that also is really powerful. This idea about using things to kind of, be a distraction from yourself. Like that was a big moment for me. I cried multiple times reading this book, doing some of the activities and moving through it in a way that I did not think that I was going to, right. Amanda, what about you? How is the book helping you think differently about rest, self-care? All that kind of stuff?

Amanda: Ahhh, thank you for the question, and thanks, Susana, for your connection to the read. It's really beautiful to hear you reflect upon it. I, honestly, when I was reading through it, there's definitely some aspects that are different that I find...and I also want to acknowledge that there are really so many things in there that resonate from how I was raised being in nature, you know, like having these resting practices with music. And it really reminds me of my grandmother, as a little girl growing up and how much I was reflecting a lot of my, actually my grandparents in reading it. Because I rarely saw my grandparents stressed and hustling around. Like I can't even remember a moment. Now, that doesn't mean that they were not doing a lot of community work because they were there traveling all over the Navajo Nation, delivering food, taking care of families, you know. And I remember I was a little girl, my grandparents helped raise me because my mom was a single parent mom, and she had to work. So I was lucky to get dropped off at my grandparents' house. So I was on the road with them a lot. I was around them a lot, and their teachings really instilled in me so much of the slowness. And I remember too, I remember when I was like, when I was learning how to drive, I was then becoming their driver. And I remember my grandpa would sit in the back, and I'd be on the driver's seat. He's like: okay, Mandy, don't drive too slow, but don't drive too fast. And that like, I carry that because there's so much teaching on that. I don't drive too slow, but don't drive too fast. And that's kind of the ways in which I feel like my grandparents instilled in me of just this, like, having this right rhythm, this cadence of style, and knowing when and when you're exerting yourself, when your heart palpitations occur, when you know that the tenseness in your body is being that separation of self and being is occurring. And so I give a lot of acknowledgement to them because I treasure that. And actually when I go home, home home, at home, I already feel at

ease. And so I love the language she had around just the landscape and the place and how it changes, in which the way you see the world and move in your body.

Because I definitely feel like academe is definitely a different rhythm, right. And it's definitely a different place. And, and, and there's moments where I feel like I've been stirred up in that and following that. But it's been really good to have my husband who's grounded not in academe, who would say, like, why are you stressing over that? Like he's like: slow down, like. And he...it used to annoy me a lot, but he was speaking to those teachings we have of, of why are you working yourself in such a fuss over something like that? You know. And so I would say that this book was just a really good affirmation and has a really good memoryscape for me to joy and to the memories of growing up and then the ways in which I do cultivate rest, even in the hustle and bustle. There's moments, I still do, even in the, even when all of the like monsters are at play, I am still grateful that I have some of those teachings where I can still like, maneuver through and and do some of the practices that she has talked about and that has carried me through those temporal aspects of life that is really, really challenging. So, it was really beautiful to return to this book and remind myself that I do have those teachings and that I have been utilizing those practices.

And then there were new ones that she taught. You know, the self-assessment questions were very beautiful. I wrote down like phrases of what rest looks like for me, and that was such a really good place for me to think about, like, I feel rested when I'm fully present with the people around. And I can feel it in my body, I can feel in my throat where I'm, like, excited. Like I leave meetings because I'm sore. Because I'm smiling so much. Because I can feel that. And that's when I feel like I'm most rested, is when I can give that full pleasure of being with somebody and listening. And so, it was really beautiful for me to like, remember those aspects, of, when I feel rested and the reflecting questions, because we all are curious people and I think the...I think what I want to learn to do more is to be curious with myself as I grow older about, you know, what does rest look like for me in this age? It's going to change in a couple of years, maybe next month. And so, like having curiosity of myself at this larger world is really something I know I need to strengthen. And these questions in here are those types of questions that allow us to do that self-discovery. Self-care, you know, I know that there's a lot of language around that, and I actually feel like, however, people find some elements of self-care and the way they do it. And so, you know, I've read [Nap Ministry](#) too, and I appreciate her language around capitalism and the ways that self-care has been bombarded through the capitalist...but I also recognize that I do pleasure myself in massages and doing retreats. And so I think it's having a healthy balance on how ways we can, you know, support each other and how they're taking care of each other. And it's different for everybody. And I think as long as we are trying to achieve a level of resting, however we embody and see that, we can be a more healthier society as she writes about. And take care of our planet and our Earth, our Mother Earth. I can keep going on and on, so I better stop.

Susana: I love that, yeah. I think one of the things that resonates with me that thank you for reminding me, too, is sort of like the teachings of our ancestors and those that, you know, have come before us and created this pathway for us, is, you know...I don't necessarily remember like, my grandparents or my sort of like, they were always present, right. And so they're always, you know, teaching us to care for ourselves. But I think this hustle culture, right, is in academia,

has in a lot of ways, the way that we've been socialized in our doctoral program sometimes, and the way that we've been socialized as professors is that, this durable wheel that I call that we have to sustain and that durable wheel was nothing that our ancestors constructed. It wasn't something that they envisioned for us. And I think, thank you, you're such a great reminder of just taking it back to this notion of being present, right. And just, allowing ourselves to just be and feeling comfortable being. And I think that's what... I think that's what is, that was what was envisioned for us, you know. Not this hustle culture. So I appreciate that so much. Thank you.

Alex: Yeah, and I'm really resonating with the idea that everyone sort of got to find their own balance and blend in this work. Amanda, when you were sharing that lovely story about traveling with your grandparents, right. I was thinking about even when I was being trained to drive, there's a lesson from my dad I took away from that, which was, you know. You often think of the two pedals of a car being gas and the brakes. And one thing my dad taught me when I was learning how to drive was, if you're approaching a place where you have to stop, just take your foot off the gas further away. So you actually just naturally slow down to actually when you need your brakes to not have to slam them so hard. And that has been a lesson I have really thought about beyond that context. A lot of like, rather than thinking of the work as being go go go. Stop really hard. Go go go. Stop really hard. Of like where do I go and just coast a little bit and just naturally slow down versus trying to in some ways even force rest to happen as quickly as possible too. And you know, I say that as someone who's still a recovering perfectionist. Still feel like I hold on to a lot of things from my PhD experience about how to be the correct or right way of being an academic in quotes, whatever the heck those things mean. So I'm loving this conversation clearly. So, you know what I feel like a true gift today is I have a front row seat to three people: one, all of whom I admire deeply. But two, who I think all have had some sustained levels of breaks, either recently or currently. You know, Amanda, you've had this somewhat of a break from teaching. Susana, you've had your sabbatical in the past. Z, you are currently on your sabbatical. And I'm not asking this question for optimization. I'm not asking this for like, what's the best way to do this thing, right? Like, that's not where I'm coming from. But I'm wondering, like, what did you think those breaks would be? And what have they turned out to be? Or how did they turn out as you process them? And Susana, I want to start with you on this one, with your sabbatical first.

Susana: Yeah, no, I think there's that balance there because, you know, as you mentioned, it's, you know. You have to abide by these institutional norms of what sabbatical is supposed to be like. Yes, it's supposed to be rest. But yes, I have to decide on a project. And so I knew my sabbatical was going to be research, and I was fortunate enough to take a year and spend it at the University of Arizona in Tucson. I mean, I really have to say that there's something about Tucson that makes you just stop and take in sort of a lot of the beauty there. But also, I was, what was also very surprising for me is, I felt like I was listening to sounds of my childhood. And so I think one of the things... and I've talked about this a lot was that, you know, it was a challenge for me to pause, and it was a challenge for me to just be because sabbatical forced me sort of to slow down. And so it really brought me back into my body in ways that it needed to. I was able to heal. And so one of the ways that I was able to heal was that I started to be present with the noises of the birds. There was a bird in Arizona that took me back to my childhood. And when I listened to it and I sat in, you know, the hammock in Judy Kiyama's backyard. It

brought me so much peace. It was like waves of peace. It was very nourishing. It was very therapeutic. And, in many ways, it was the sounds and the noises and the smells of Tucson that helped me go, you know, helped me, lead me back to my heart and lead me back into a place of my childhood. And I think that was an unexpected outcome of the sabbatical, because I think there's that balance of, yes, you have this research project. But even, you know, living with, you know, my BFF at that time and having her say: I think you're doing too much. I think you're doing too much, and having sort of that reminder of like that accountability of like: this is supposed to be for you. Don't let, don't let the institution take away what is yours, what you need, what you need to be feeling nourished. And so, and I think part of, what sabbatical did is like I reentered in the academy a different person. Because I was able to sort of heal, because I was able to sort of readjust sort of how I want to reengage with the academy in terms of this grind culture, because I did sort of use rest as a way to be more productive in the future. If I rested, that allows me to get back into my writing and produce more. If I rested, that allows me to place more attention on my students, but I never put myself in that equation. And I think that is what fundamentally the sabbatical did for me. It was...one, a very good wake up call that I needed to focus on myself, my healing, my heart. And to really unpack a lot of what grief and trauma was coming up for me as I was going through that process. So, it was a gift for sure to go through that process.

Alex: Z, I'm wondering for you, what's your sabbatical been like? What do you expect from it? Those kinds of pieces?

Z: Well, I mean, I will say...I have had a couple of very good what I would call sabbatical role models, one of them being Susana, mainly because I got a good front row seat to your sabbatical with our time together in Tucson. But also, [Dan Tillapaugh](#) took a sabbatical a couple of years ago that I think was really instructive for me to think about, like: oh, how can you actually do this, and reconnect to pleasure. I mean, Amanda, I'm really thinking about what you offered around this idea of rest being a portal to pleasure in a way that, yes, is indulgent and also to connect with what you've been talking about, Susana, is a mode of healing, right? I think that there are many ways that we are taught and socialized to forget about ourselves. To forget about our bodies. To forget about our emotions. To forget about anything connected to our well-being for this job. Certainly there are the kind of, there's the institutional structure of promotion and tenure.

But also I think that, I was just thinking that probably all of us on this call have been targeted in different ways for who we are and what we do. And I think that that targeting comes in lots of different modes. Like, I think a lot about, yeah, I mean, I'll just share, right. Like, some of the death threats that I've gotten via email, some of the bullying that I've dealt with over the last couple of years. Some of the people who place undue expectations that I will solve all of the things for them. That's hard fucking work, and that's really weighty. And it...so I think there's this moment where I think about like, yes, I have loads of privilege as a now tenured faculty member. I totally am not trying to eschew or kind of get around that. And also, there's a heftiness to this work, that I think I had gotten used to because just like Alex, you were talking about coasting to a stop. That train that I was on, that all of us are on, just kept on picking up speed. And I just thought, oh, this is like usual, right? Like, everyone gets death threats. Everyone gets shitty emails and phone calls from the public. Everyone is told these kinds of

things. So I should...it should be fine. I should be able to handle that it's okay, right? And it's not until I stepped off the train...because that institutional train is still moving. I'm just not on it right now. It's not until I stepped off the train that I was like: oh, some of that shit is actually not okay. And some of that stuff we might experience collectively, but it's still not okay to experience that, right. So I think that it's been really helpful to take this break and to really reconnect with pleasure, reconnect with my body and to do that, like massive healing work. I think that you've been talking about Susana a couple of times. There's this quote that I was reminded of, by Rabbi Alan Lew, when you were talking. And the quote is that: every soul needs to express itself. Every heart needs to crack itself open. And I really feel like that's what the last kind of 6-8 months has been like for me around kind of taking that break. Working through some stuff and also, yeah, just remembering that, like, I'm worthy of that time to engage in pleasure. I don't know if that really answers your question. It was maybe a roundabout way, but yeah.

Alex: You totally answered the question. And I just deeply appreciate you sharing all of that, particularly as you've been able to sort of...as maybe my therapist would call it, like breathe some space in between you and the things that we think are us but actually are not us. I think a lot about how when I used to be an entry level staff member or even a student, how like, I would often sacrifice rest for a quote unquote greater good. And I've come more and more and more to the belief that rest is required on our way to a greater good. Or else we're all just kind of like fry ourselves out, and like, not be here to get to the work that we're trying to sort of push forward in many ways. So I'm just really grateful for you sharing that. Amanda, you know, you've had sort of this break from teaching for a bit now. How has that been? How have you been able to sort of maybe, capitalize feels like a weird word to use, but like, augment your rest practice, perhaps is a better word to use during this time.

Amanda: Yeah, lovely. Gosh, I feel like we could talk about this topic. We need to talk about this topic and more, more elaborately, more abundantly. I, as you were both sharing, I was just thinking about how I can build upon your thinking, and I just got so immersed in your comment Susana, and Z. I'm just so grateful to have inspiration like you both because I haven't had, you know, academic sabbatical yet. So I'm really looking forward to being able to do that. And just thank you for sharing how you've both healed and, Z, you're working through that right now. It's awesome. I feel like what I have been doing lately is...I'm grateful I haven't taught in almost a year actually. I didn't teach in the spring, and I didn't teach this summer, and I'm grateful I don't have any teaching classes in the fall. I've also, though, recognize that, you know, my book, [Native Presence and Sovereignty](#), has been such a beautiful gift that I didn't know and realize has taken up across the nation. And so I've been really blessed to be able to visit places, and do talks about the book, which is another line of like, weariness that I have been never encountered, the traveling. And I had tension around that because, you know, it's really...it feels in some way wrong, I don't know if that's the right language, to feel weary when you know this work is great. And I'm grateful to be able to go and have meals with people and learn and talk about things that I love to talk about, while at the same time feeling the weariness of it. You know, it's like two conflicting feelings operating at the same time of gratitude and really exhaustion. And because, you know, when you travel, you get...your rhythm is off. You know, I'm not eating as well as I want to. I'm not exercising. All those things that usually sustain me, and I'm away from my babies and family, and I'm missing them. My heart is hurting for that.

You know, all those things. And then you're just behind when it comes to email. And I've been constantly behind over a year now. And having to, like, work my way to feel okay about that. Not to, not to... I feel like something I'm still working through.

So all that to say is I'm getting to a place now where I'm feeling like I really need to cultivate regenerative times. And so I really purposely did, regenerative, I called it my cocoon time. And it was actually the end of July, the 25th. I remember it, July 25th was my last trip that I took. It was a lovely trip. I was grateful, and I was happy to be home and knew that I didn't have any next travel for the next couple months that I actually made sure of and honored. And then I cocooned myself, and I was off of social media. I was not feeling the urgencies on email. And I really, really honored myself in that sabbatical time, regenerative cocoon time, to get back into a rhythm with my body and my spirit and my family. And so some of those things, then, I, you know, for me, the mornings are the sweetest time. It's my sweet time. That's where I'm, like, sharper. And when I was writing the book, that was my writing time. And I would... and because I knew I wanted to get the book out, so I would write. Yeah, I'm not writing as urgently now, but I'm reading urgently and I'm taking care of my body more urgently. And so now my morning time is working out time. It's prayer and meditation time. It is actually my first thing I do when I wake up. I pray, I meditate, and then I orient myself with coffee, do my rhythm, and I read, and I love to read. And so I pleasure myself in reading before my day starts. And then, and so I feel like that regenerative spirit. And now, like I'm able to show up today, if you had asked me like in July, probably would not have been able to be where I'm at today. And so it's like really like having those months of like cocoon time, of really being deliberate.

I was really deliberate. It was a discipline. It's a discipline to really be deliberate and conscious about: I'm precious, my life is precious. And I want to take care of my heart that's in here beating, and my body that keeps moving. Because in Navajo philosophy, to live a long and beautiful life is what we are. That's our philosophy. Hózhó, which translates into something like: to live a long and beautiful life in harmony and balance. And so my goal is that I want to be able to, when I'm 90 years old, to put my socks on by myself. Now, that may sound, you know, like that's real. To be able to put your socks on by yourself when you're 90, that's my goal. And if I want to do that, that means I need to take care of myself today. It's right now. And so that means then, I think I've always had one foot in academia and one foot out. It's just who I am. I feel I've been good about like not consuming and institutional norms because I can feel I can always leave. And I've publicly said tenure is not my journey. I feel like that's short sighted. I think academia gives us short sightedness in the way we think. And I feel like I'm thinking, no, I'm not running toward tenure. I'm running toward futures. So my challenge is, my challenges is I get weary in wanting to do so much for my community. You know, I'm wanting to do so much there, and that's where I need to, like, recharge and regenerate back. I feel like I'm pretty confident in not getting caught up in institutional stuff. I'm good about like: it's okay. Let them have their thing. And it doesn't mean that I'm not engaged. I am engaged, but I feel pretty confident in knowing that I have a foot in and foot out, and I think that's okay to be that way. It's okay to have different viewpoints. I'm not, there's no judgment. Some of us who are really engaged in institution, that's good. There's people who are that way, and then there's people like me and so that's, that what makes this livelihood so abundant. We have different ways of coming into this.

So I feel like it's important. I would suggest those who are listening, if you haven't already, is to create a rhythm of yourself for regeneration. And for me, it was getting into this cocoon space, and I really felt so much bigger in it. I'm a big believer in creativity. I love, I know I have a gift of creativity, and I know though, that when I'm tired, my creativity, it's gone. I like, I can't have the capacity to dream, and that's where I feel like I get scared, like no, I want a dream. I want a vision. I want to...I want to be creative to people who ask me for ideas. I love it, I want to share. But when I'm tired, I can't do that. And I felt that a few months ago, and I couldn't...and then I knew myself, okay, you need to recharge. And so I'm still in the regenerative stage, but I feel like I'm getting more vigor, and my vitality is returning. I feel stronger, I can do a push up now. I couldn't even do a push up. And I was telling my husband the other day, like I could do a push up! So like, this time for myself has really been good. And I'm, I'm just feeling that, all of that right now. So take care of your time and your spirit when you can. And this, and you can do a sabbatical then any time. Don't allow the institution to tell you when your sabbatical is. You can have a sabbatical any time. But it takes hard and disciplined work to schedule that in for yourself. But you're precious. And I think getting around that thinking was really important for me. Like, I'm precious and worthy to take care of myself because I want to live a long life and put socks on when I'm in my 90s.

Susana: Yes. Let's all strive to put our socks on when we're in our 90s. So, yeah, I love that, Amanda, thank you for sharing that. And thank you also for reminding me that it's okay to have like, one foot out and one foot in within the academy. I think that's...I think that's healthy. I really do too. I think it is. The way that we get nourished, sometimes, many of us don't find that in the academy. So it's okay to have one foot out. Thank you for that reminder.

Alex: I think this is a gorgeous place to end our conversation that could go on for another two hours in many ways. But thank you both so much. I am, yeah, I'm sitting with a lot right now and thinking for myself, even, the implications of this conversation. So I appreciate your time with us today so much.

Susana: Absolutely. Thank you.

[Music outro]

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

Z: Mary Ellen Wade designed our logo. Roman Christiaens helps us pull together the show notes and transcript. And, you know, big thanks to Amanda and Susana for spending time with us today. There are so many little gems that were dropped through that episode in thinking about restful practice as a mode of healing, rest as a portal to pleasure. I think probably the biggest takeaway that I would...that I'm still thinking about, still practicing, encourage others to practice, is recognizing one's own worthiness to do restful practices. Like I think that that sometimes becomes a really big barrier, especially Alex, as you were talking about this idea of constantly needing to kind of like give and give and give of oneself for other people. Particularly students, I think, in our work, right. That becomes kind of the conversation as I

need to do this for students. I need to do this for students, right? And so that's something that I'm, yeah, just really appreciative of. As always, I'm Z, and I'm recording today from the ancestral and current lands of the Tohono O'odham Nation, home to the Tohono O'odham and Pascua Yaqui peoples.

Alex: I'm Alex recording today from the ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute nations and peoples.

Z: You can send questions or reflections about this episode to us via email at aboutcampusmag@gmail.com. You know, this is the end of season three. So, congratulations, Alex. We did it. Another season in the bag. We made it. And so we'll see you 'round for another episode and another season soon.

Alex: Bye y'all!