

Women&Academia-COVID_yt_1

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SPEAKERS

RoSusan Bartee, Megan Haught, Leandra Preston, Nesselte Falu, Linda Walters, Amelia Lyons

M Megan Haught 00:04
Hi, everyone, I am Megan Haught. I am with UCF Libraries, Student Learning & Engagement, and Research & Information Services departments. I handle a lot of the diversity related programming through the Libraries as well as their social media accounts. And I thank you for coming to Women & Academia in the Time of COVID. This panel originally was going to be just a Woman & Academia panel last year. But it was scheduled for a week after we ended up going remote. So we have revamped it, to be able to have a broader discussion about what our experiences have been during the pandemic and remote learning and remote schooling. So thank you for joining us. As part of the general housekeeping for the panel, I'd like to have everybody remain muted. And then if you have a question you would like to be brought forward at the during the question and answer period. Please put it into the chat and I will make sure it gets asked. And as we get started now we're going to go in alphabetical order for our panelists to introduce themselves. We have Dr. RoSusan Bartee with Educational Leadership and Higher Education.

R RoSusan Bartee 01:13
Hello, everyone. And I'm so excited about being here today. And I look forward to a robust a robust conversation.

M Megan Haught 01:29
Would you like to share any additional information about yourself that people might find interesting and like,

R RoSusan Bartee 01:34
Oh, yeah,

M Megan Haught 01:35
and what you do.

R RoSusan Bartee 01:36
Of course, again, I am RoSusan Bartee and I serve as the chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education. I am completed my third year here in the department and I came here from the University of Mississippi by way of Washington, DC and, and Illinois. And so I'm excited about the work that I get to do here in the department, with faculty and staff and students. And, again, I look forward to having this conversation a little fun fact about me that piano that's in the background actually goes get played. I'm a class trained classical pianist, and I enjoy being able to tickle those ivories during my more creative moments.

M Megan Haught 02:19
Thank you. Nessette Falu from Anthropology.

N Nessette Falu 02:26
Afternoon. Hello, everybody. Thanks for joining us. And thank you so much for this invitation. Megan Haught from last year, kind of returning back to this full circle. Um, and yeah, I'm an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology. Here UCF. We're all we're all here from UCF. I am in my fourth year. My work focuses on Brazilian black lesbians experiences with gynecology. I think intersections of prejudice, race, gender, sexuality, and other things. And I I am from New York City, I identify as a black queer feminist, then I love ocean rivers and lakes.

M Megan Haught 03:22

Thank you. And I should mention that every one of these fantastic and amazing women who will be speaking today all have their doctoral degrees. And next is Amelia Lyons with History.

A

Amelia Lyons 03:34

Thanks so much. Yeah, I am a specialist of modern France, and in particular, gender, race, immigration, colonization, decolonization and the welfare state. And I look at the intersections of those in particular, by studying Algerian family migration to France in the middle of the 20th century, in the last decades of French colonial control of Algeria, and in the early post colonial era. I also run our history M.A. program, and that certainly that keeps me very busy with all of our graduate students. And I guess fun fact, if you watch Spectrum 13 news today, you'll see me do a little in depth, which I think is about five minutes, interview on the history of Women's History Month so you know, multiple things apparently for Women's History Month going on just today.

M

Megan Haught 04:34

Thank you. Next we have Leandra Preston who is with Women and Gender Studies.

L

Leandra Preston 04:41

Hello I am as a senior lecturer with Women's and Gender Studies I've been at UCF for almost 20 years. I was in English originally, but I am now teaching various and many different classes and Women's and Gender Studies, mostly online even before COVID. I also do much of my research focused around body technologies, gender and body technologies and virtual communities related to bodies and, you know, material bodies. And I, I do a lot of other things. I started a nonprofit that fosters pets for people in domestic violence shelters in 2007, I believe. So I've been wearing many hats. And now I'm wearing solo parent hat. And I have told some of them earlier that I am sitting in the parking lot of the playground near my daughter's school. So I apologize for any interruptions in advance, but it was appropriate for the topic today. So that's not why I did it, but it just interfered with school pickup. So thank you all very much for coming today.

M

Megan Haught 05:55

And, of course, Dr. Linda Walters from Biology.

L

Linda Walters 06:00

Hi, everybody, welcome. Thank you all for coming. It's nice to see some faces I haven't seen in a while that just makes me really happy on a Friday. I can say that my research field is conservation and restoration biology, and my focus is on the east coast of Florida. And we are currently looking for some community volunteers to come help us stabilize some shorelines. So please let me know. We lost most of our volunteer pool with COVID, used to not be an issue, getting people to help now. We're just trying to regain our footing. Fun fact, I am writing my 10th children's book right now, we have given over given out over 85,000 copies of our marine conservation books for free. So if you come help me, I can give you some books. And I am thrilled to be here. We've been celebrating Women's History Month at UCF for a long time now. Lots of women have been celebrated. That also makes me really happy. So I'm going to pass it back to you, Megan,

M

Megan Haught 07:05

Alright, thank you, and we do have a few questions that we've already put together to ask our panelists. The first one goes to RoSusan. And while faculty have had some flexibility in work hours and time spent on campus, pre pandemic, staffing administrators have not necessarily had this same option is something you see changing now that remote work was available during the pandemic, building related closures. And it is it's something you think that will be fully feasible for UCF.

R

RoSusan Bartee 07:37

Thank you, Megan, for that question. And I think is one that is very important, given the fact of the matter that COVID does not care if you are a faculty member, if you are a student, or if you own administrator, it does not discriminate. And so with that in mind, regarding the work of an administrator, we have had some degree of flexibility with regards to how we are required to be on campus and the number of days that we are on campus. And so it is good that the university recognizes that COVID does not discriminate. And we too deserve and should have some level of flexibility. One of the things within our College of Community Innovation and Education, perhaps like in other colleges, we have determine which of our department chairs in our suites would be coming onto campus, so that we would not exceed the number of persons that can be in a respective place, given those dimensions of that place. And so that has worked out well, our my colleagues and I we have been able to alternate schedules and some days I may not be able to go in in the day, on the day that I said I was going to go in then they will go in on that day. And so it has worked out very well where we have been able to have that kind of flexibility. And so in terms of what will happen in the future, I'm not certain as to whether or not that type of schedule will be maintained. But what I will say is that for all of

us, I think it is important whether administrator or not that we come to see COVID as in many ways, trying to show us a different way of living and what that means and so I don't think we should go back to business as usual. After having gone through this or continuing to go through it. There's some lessons to be learned. But there has been flexibility allowed with administrators just as there have been there has been flexibility allow for students and staff and and other stakeholders.

M

Megan Haught 09:53

Thank you out any other other panelists like to add any other comments or or statements

L

Leandra Preston 10:03

I wanted to add that it's, uh, you know, it's been a really terrible way to make things more accessible for people who maybe didn't, you know, have that. And for various reasons, you know, I'm thinking I mean, just even as a parent like to have more things available via zoom has been really beneficial for me personally, as I'm able to do so much more. And I feel that maybe the past though, you know, or at least, making that an option, you know, always having a zoom component or something. And, you know, campus events would be really it's, I mean, if possible, you know, but I think that these are questions we obviously should have been asking a long time ago. So other you know, people outside of COVID, who need access for other reasons, benefit.

M

Megan Haught 10:55

That's very true. And I understand what that since I've got an autoimmune disease and multiple other chronic illnesses. Being able to work from home has made such an impact on my energy levels, and the amount of pain I'm in on any given day. And it is something I'd like to have continue as an option for not being required to be in the building just to be in the building. With the next question, both Amelia and Leandra have asked to be able to talk about this, but personal lives and work have interacted and overlapped more since the start of remote work and schooling. How do you decide when to give more attention to one thing over the other. And if you're a parent, how has having your children at home for remote learning, impacted your own teaching and work?

L

Leandra Preston 11:43

I will start as I'm you know, doing basically, this is how I made it work by you know, just, I'm just doing what I have to do. I really feel like sometimes I'm flying by the seat of my pants, but because I don't have another parent I'm the only parent I'm so I have sole custody.

And so I don't I do have a community but during COVID, that community has been taken out from under us as well in many ways, because you can't just send your children to people's houses during, you know, when especially you know, during the pandemic, so I don't think I've ever been more grateful for my phone, because I can use every spare moment, you know, take her to the playground and do my work as much as I can on the phone. Flexibility, being able to I mean, being a night owl has worked to my benefit as well because you know, I'm able to do things. And when everything is quiet because when she was home doing elearning, she's in kindergarten now she's in first grade, but she started elearning in kindergarten. So it was incredibly challenging. I could not, she wasn't self sufficient at all. And so I literally cannot in her, her year started when my semester started our semester starting. And I was teaching you know, these four classes online different classes online with, you know, a kindergartener, and it was, it was much more impossible than I could have ever imagined. And I don't know if it was coincidence, but I do not believe it was a coincidence that I got a my evaluation suffered. I could not that I was going up a down escalator, I could not. I just couldn't keep it all going. And I was trying, I mean, I did what I needed to do, but it wasn't what I wanted to do. And, you know, I got low evaluations, which was hard, because, you know, I know consistently I have quality evaluations, you know, we all know you're gonna have, you know, highs and lows, but, um, there was so many immense challenges, and then dealing with students emotional, and their own struggles, you know, I really humanized myself as much as I put to them, I, you know, reminded them that I was also in this pandemic, and that I respected where they were, and I tried to connect with them in that way, so that they knew that, you know, there we are people too, and I told them what I was dealing with, and that I did have a kindergartener and so if I did respond more at night, then perhaps, you know, that was just to be expected, you may get a lot of communication at night. And I had a student complain that I was being too personal and sharing my personal like, basically making excuses. Because I was telling them, it was in advance. So it really wasn't an excuse, but it was just very challenging, you know, trying to strike that balance and being critiqued regardless, I felt that if I just didn't respond, you know, until later in the evening, maybe I just what was right to do, you know, to tell them or not, and I chose to be, you know, share my experiences and you know, some students didn't like it and many students appreciated it very much, but it's I think women find themselves caught between these kind of, you know, the old saying rock and a hard place kind of thing. Like, you're when I read the question, and it says, you know, when do you choose to focus on one over the other, I mean, it's literally just out of sheer necessity. You know, like, when I have to go pick her up from school, I had to go, realizing it was going to conflict with this meeting. And so I decided, you know, this is how we're gonna make it work and just figured it out. And so I'm ready for it to change, you know, even them being back in school, it's still you're dealing with some of the emotional issues a lot less play time for them with peers, and things like that. So it's it's definitely a challenge that I always would be open to speaking with other

people about just even share, because it's really thrown my personally my life for quite a loop, when I know everybody else feeling that. So I know Amelia has a lot to say about this as well.

A

Amelia Lyons 15:56

Sure I can I can jump in I, you know, I started thinking about this question ahead of time, in the sense of, you know, work life balance. And I think the struggle of work life balance is not a new struggle. But I do think COVID has heightened it. And I started thinking back to an article by Helen Lewis in the Atlantic that I read sort of at the start of all this, I think it appeared almost exactly a year ago. And she made this really interesting point, based on research done about the Ebola Zika and several of the SARS outbreaks. And, and, and argue, right, that these crises that we've had, in the last decade or so, and work down on them have shown that they've had a deep and lasting effect on gender equality, right? We know now, as well as in those cases that, you know, women lose income they lose their jobs at higher rates have to stay at home right there, they have that kind of issues that we're talking about. And that in all of those cases, and the studies done on all those other cases that after the crisis ended men's income return to pre-crisis levels, and oftentimes women's took either longer or never really recovered. And those are just the sort of tangible things we can measure, not all of the intangible things that we're not measuring, really. And I think, you know, when when we talk about this, we also have to keep in mind that this, that race compounds these issues, right? We know from our experience in the last year, and I from studying the pandemic a century ago, and 1918 and 1990, that marginalized communities and communities of color have have suffered at an exponentially larger rate. And, you know, one of our students in our program, he finished his undergraduate honors thesis in spring of 2020, and has had a couple of articles in the Sentinel and that, and he did this amazing work, studying how in the American South and in particular, in Florida, while white and black Floridians got the flu at about the same rate, mortality rates among African Americans are significantly higher. For all of this reasons. We know, right? The systemic and structural reasons, Jim Crow made the pandemic more deadly. And I, you know, we're obviously seeing that in the present as well. And we've had, you know, a lot of change since then. And I don't know, I was I was thinking about you know, I wanted to brown what I want at my comments. But I also wanted to ground them in the sense that whatever troubles I've had, I don't think I want to feel comfortable ever comparing them to what frontline workers what low wage workers have suffered. I have job security. And even with all of the times I've you know, sat in front of my computer and cried because I can't I can't keep it all going. Ah, I feel like I am, I'm lucky, right. I'm very aware of my own privilege through all this. And the balancing act, you know, has been increasingly difficult. I think, I run our M.A. program, as I said, and so then the amount of time I'm spending with, with those students, not even the ones in my

classes, has increased exponentially, right, their needs, and I'll talk about this a little bit more later, have increased a whole lot and, and I feel like I've had almost no time to do anything related to my research. And I have two boys and middle schooler, eighth grader 14, and a second grader 7. Both have done remote schooling this whole year and our you know, like just today had one of those moments where he's my seven year old called for me I was in the middle of something I came into the his office where he is because I'm, of course the Nomad, I go from the dining room table to the office out here and kind of move around depending on what I'm doing. So I can keep an eye on them. And I said, Well, why did you call me if you don't really need me and I heard the teacher say, Mark, you're not on mute. Not using the kind of patient Mom-voice that I would have liked to have been using. So you know, we all we all have those moments. And when the folks asked me, I say, well, this year, in addition to what I usually do, I'm also the TA at home, and I'm the lunch lady and I and I feel that, right, that balance. And I think I'm like Leandra at the beginning of the school year, when my seven year old didn't know how to navigate anything on his computer, I really was at a point of exasperation, I thought, how am I going to do this, I'm not going to be able to do this. And thank goodness, he has a great teacher, thank goodness, he can figure it out. And there are still times that he needs me to help him with things when he needs multiple things open at the same time. Or if they go to a new place. He definitely needs help. But at least I have, I think gotten more used to tuning out or all that kind of parent, you know, when you have little ones where even when you're sleeping, you know when you have to wake up. And I think my work has kind of shifted in that way. Where I know with the 14 year old If I hear giggling he's no longer in class and he's watching a YouTube video. And I know what the seven year old If I hear lots of noises and moving around and he's gotten up. And he's gone to the other side of the office where we have a table with Legos on it for him when he takes a break. And he's at the Lego table and not in class. And so I still have to kind of always be thinking about the two of them even while I'm working. I even have my my work day. In fact, I specifically requested classes from three o'clock on so that I can be with my kids working in the house and kind of paying attention and then try to do most of my things from three o'clock on when thankfully, I have a babysitter who is a great help. And who did for long periods did remote babysitting on the iPad with my seven year old, which was the most amazing thing ever. Destiny Johnson. She's a UCF student, she's going to be graduating soon. And she's was just so creative with getting my son enrolled engaged with her, and not having him looking at the screen all last summer and a big chunk of the school year this year. So



Leandra Preston 23:12

thank you, I want to make a comment to some I thank you so much for everything you said. But you made a couple important points, you know, primarily was that regardless of

you know, how challenging it was managing to balance work with everything else was being you know, grateful to have work when so many people were out of work, more people and you know, people of color have been dealing with so many of these inequity issues for such a long time that, you know, I think some of us got a piece of what people have been dealing with for so very long and trying to you know, do it all. But also, I wanted to comment that you know, when you were talking about the rooms and where you go, it's, you know, space is such an important piece of this as well that, you know, I was I was grateful to have an upstairs and downstairs. I have quite a small townhouse. But at least we had two floors. And so there are many people you know, whether it's in cities or you know, multifamily homes, you know, that they don't have that access to even space to do the things that they needed to do. So I was also grateful to have those things and then the children they've been very adaptable. Yeah. First grade was a whole different ballgame. You know, she was a little pro by then. So, um, but yeah, I appreciate you made a lot of important points. So thank you.

M

Megan Haught 24:40

Yes, thank you, both of you, for your comments on this. And Sandy and a few others have added in that having to be all the things plus their jobs about how difficult that's been. Nessette, how do they change in job duties and responsibilities because they do keep changing all the time now that we're remote, how do they affect how you're evaluated and how you're doing your job?

N

Nessette Falu 25:11

Thank you, Megan. And I am really, really positive, which is just a sign of the times of how important in this space is right to kind of one ability that, you know, that we kind of exposing here, in just tapping into how much we swallowed, right, in the last year, just to keep moving. I'll say I have a a few points, a few comments. Um, I mean, my department department of anthropology has protected me significantly, not because of COVID, but as a pre tenure track funds from significant service, and I'm very grateful for that. But I have seen both chair administrators, you know, faculty staff, just obviously, as you've all experienced, the kind of increase exponentially in service, right, that's, that's required. And, you know, I, as I watch, and as I prepare to become, you know, take on a lot of that service after, you know, tenure. How thinking about that in COVID, right, I'm just reminded of the kind of conversations that were had prior to COVID but also grew exponentially, but not enough about the ongoing labor effect right of on on the body on the mind, of all of those people, fatigue, depression, that also included men, right, and, you know, and, and, and in, at the university, losing family members, so forth and so on, but particularly women, people of color, right, that have take on, you know, the take on significant service as, as a

result of COVID and all the changes that will require to be made quickly and ongoingly. And, and the kind of social fatigue, right, as a result of COVID social politically and the other kind of state violence that that, you know, that were very palpable last year, like any other year, but, but and even ongoing now, right, as we know, from Atlanta and Colorado, but nonetheless, so, but I will say, I mean teaching and, and, and publication just briefly, like I think about changes in duties with teaching and how we talk about measuring evaluation with with what becomes our duty, right, you know, in COVID, what what became new duties and COVID were teaching needed to be different, right, connecting to students needs to be different making that kind of environment and platform, you know, a learning and still kind of breathing environment and vigorous and giving space and all that and how, on one hand teaching is our duty and our job but how other things became new duties, right, a result of needing to create that both pedagogically and kind of care, right, that you can impromptu or think about and give to students along the way. And, and still a kind of given boundary CSL right because the wear and tear on on on on on us, students feel bad, right? Um, and, and so I think about that, and so and I and I think about also, you know, not having gone through, you know, wants to pay post COVID you know, what it what it would mean moving forward to really write that in into how we write and evaluate ourselves, right, you know, this kind of hidden duties, and the kind of shapings that, that, um, students, you know, cannot and we cannot, it's hard to measure the kind of student gratitude, right into student engagement, that, that that, you know, students demonstrate, especially for me in anthropology, where I'm teaching heavy classes on social issues, medical anthropology, and [] racism, I mean, teaching those two classes smack middle of COVID. And, you know, what, became a big anti racist movement, you know, was was really quite an undertaking, but, but then again, you know, making room to really, you know, as bell hooks to say, you know, transgressed the space, you know, was really kind of a shift in what is my duty, right as a as a teacher in this moment. And I just don't think right that the rubrics right for, you know, for that that I use to measure it is it's really Is this ever been enough? And certainly not at this time, it can kind of like, you know, narrating, like what is the human impact on students, not based on what they've said in an email or thinking email or some other commentary. But truly the kind of trust that's required of the experience of how the faculty describe their experience, right, you know, and kind of like and what that is generating in the classroom. And then I mean, the other thing, I mean, I'm gonna teach me right now, it kind of, you know, my contract negotiations. And I'm also grateful that but last year, I, I smack in the middle of it all, I got book reviews, my first round of book reviews for my manuscript. And it was critical for me to get that manuscript really get up and going. And you know, there's a kind of myth around really is, you know, that's me single, no, children live alone have a lot of freedom, and I can undertake everything and do everything, right, and everything is going to be fine, as opposed to someone, and I'm really sensitive to people who did not have that kind of be able to make the choices of free choices with how they spend their time. But, you

know, a publishing for me really deserves a whole nother conference like this. On what it what what it really, how do we measure the kind of depth that is that it took to, you know, to get everything out the door at the quality level, right through the kind of mental fatigue that was going on last year. And the last thing I would just say is that what it reminds me of is the only thing that got me through to resubmitting my manuscript and getting an article out, and all these other things, was really the kind of gratitude about, you know, just, you know, we're the kind of work that I do, right, which is, again, the kind of rally that we want from, from the university about, you know, our work, right, you know, and so, a reengagement of how we evaluate myself was really what saved the day for me. And maybe that would be the case for others.

M

Megan Haught 32:11

I would any other panelists like to add the other comments for this. I'm trying to give slightly longer pauses, because I know what always takes a moment to unmute, and for it to completely process in the system. And our service, duties even on like, the staff, and with me, has changed so dramatically. When we first went remote, I handle the licensing for one of our streaming video vendors. And it used to be I would have maybe an hour a day for two weeks around the start of the semester each year, like across the three semesters, and it became four to five hours a day, for a significant period of time. And we went through three years of licenses in seven months as part of this, and just the load of making sure everything's processed, everything set up for our faculty as they're teaching online. But it does help yes, like you've said, with like the gratitude that they've shown for thank you for helping me get this worked out. Thank you for showing me how to use this feature online. I've never had to teach that way before. So it has been a fantastic thing, even though it's also been a massive mental load to carry as well. RoSusan, we've talked some with this, how hallway conversations can be both positive or negative, but they've always been a major part of accomplishing goals in academia. How is it different now? And what adjustments have you made to accommodate the lack of casual interactions that we used to have?

R

RoSusan Bartee 33:58

Yes, I tell you that that's a big one. Because communication conversations are very much so a part of our lives and not being able to engage in them in the ways that we have before has required an adjustment. I am on the phone more. I have once I realized that seemingly COVID was not going away. I have now incorporated zooming as a part of the way in which I have conversations. I am now even more tuned into sort of the non verbals of the conversations before it seemingly was conversations for the sake of conversations are not giving a whole lot of thought to what was not being said or what

the tone was not communicating. And so now my antennas are up in a very different way. And that that's the only interactions that we have are the conversations that are more now. warmer lies in that we don't have the informal interactions that being on campus can provide for. And so I found myself being more intentional about responding to what was not said, as opposed to what was said. And realizing that it's more in that in terms of what is being communicated and less in the spoken word. And so I think when we lose one sense, for, as a comparative, we think about our five senses, another set seemingly becomes more heightened. And I think that we COVID we have lost that, that that that physical distance, but we don't really have to be socially distant, we don't really have to be socially distant, of course, we need to be physically distant. But we don't have to be socially distanced, because there are a number of technological platforms that we're able to use to maintain that. And I think we've been able to access them in very important ways. But the the conversational piece is is key. And just figuring out and listening, listening more intently, as opposed to talking more intently, listening more intently to what is really not being said, based upon what is verbal being verbalized. And so I think that has been an important part of it that it has has taught me to do, in terms of adjusting to what this new reality is, because I don't I don't think it's going to totally go back to where it was before. And I really don't think it should go back to totally where it was before. Because this has been life altering, and we won't be the same. We won't enter the interactions that we have before in the same way than we do now during and then one day post COVID. So I think that's, that's what I have come to understand about the the the conversations and how we deal both from the formal and the informal, but it's, it's tough. It's tough, and I'm steadily evolving in this process. But I would like to believe I'm trending forward, onward and upward.

M

Megan Haught 37:30

Thank you, as anybody else want to add any other comments over this pause because I can see people on mic where they move into unmute themselves. Um Linda, with everything that's different now. How do you track your own goals and evaluating if you're actually even just accomplishing anything? How have you readjusted your own priorities and mindset on how you view your work and your personal life?

L

Linda Walters 38:04

Thanks, Megan. I can say that I've been a mess. I'm better now. But there are months when I was working at the weirdest hours and I would like miss nights cuz I would just cycle through further and further. Because I am a late night person like Leandra, and also, I realize crap it's six in the morning, and I didn't go to bed and I still have yesterday's pajamas on. Um, but I am I am a little bit better now. But what I realized about myself as I

was very intentional about my, what I did on campus and what I did not on campus, and I really tried to do about 90% of my work on campus. And I would go in on Saturdays or Sundays if I needed to. But I really liked the structure of my office, I loved my office, and I knew where everything was, and it just worked for me when I was at school, I worked when I was at home, I would do some work, but I would be really good about doing only work I really loved. So something related to my research or writing something, you know, writing a kid's book or getting ready for some community event, that kind of thing that I didn't consider that work. So I was okay with that. I will also say I have a son but he's 24 and working on his own PhD so I have honestly no idea how I would have dealt with Josh if he was in elementary or middle school and I really give anybody and everybody kudos who homeschool their kids over the long haul. But I lost my balancing position which is being able to go to campus. So what I realized I am my goals. I am a list maker, I have the the semester list, the monthly list, the weekly list and the daily list. I have more all right in front of me. So I can check off as many things as possible. But what I really In that I'm getting all working through on my list, I had nothing on them that had to do with anything that wasn't work. And I am 75 steps away from my bed whenever I chose to go to bed. So there were no exercise happening. And I used to park really far from my office. So I would get some some exercise in or walking to all the various meetings on campus. I've sat in this seat that I'm in right now in my dining room for about seven hours today on Zoom meetings. And that's really bad. So what I'm trying to get better and better about doing is putting on my list, things that actually aren't work so that I have, I can cross them off. But I've gone shopping for an Easter present for my mother-in-law, or actually taking a walk around the neighborhood. And if I put them on the list, I'll do them. But if I don't, I just it the time just passes and Zoom has changed that, um, a lot of people just want to talk or make the social connection like versus and sad. And I don't pay attention to time well enough to know that I really should have cut that off, especially with students. So I think I think I'll stop there.

M

Megan Haught 41:18

I hear you on the lists, I've got like a notebook next to me that's like broken out like a page is a week. And here's like things I need to check off and remember to do. But to be able to do non-work things, I had to start putting 15 minute breaks on my calendar with like, reminders, that pop up. So I'd be like, Okay, I'm going to do a quick workout. And I've been doing like, Lilly Sabri workouts on YouTube, which are like five to seven minutes, most of them. So you can do a quick short, like ab workout or something, because I did an ab workout this morning through part of that, because I'm trying to do abs on Mondays and Fridays. And it just without that reminder popping up up, you need to get up and go do something, it's not happening. Without it. I'm just literally sitting at this exact same spot for eight straight hours. It's tough.



Leandra Preston 42:12

I like the idea of the list, oh, like putting those types of self care things, I mean, elevating them to the importance that they should be given. You know, and I'm not saying that I do that, but we should I should get? It's really important. Because if we're not, well, then we can't do all of these things. So we really need to think about ourselves. And I need to think about myself. So thank you. I like that idea a lot.



Megan Haught 42:45

And Amelia, we I know we've addressed this some already, but a lot of students, faculty and staff has started hitting the pandemic wall and feeling like they've just been in crisis mode for so long. They're losing the ability to cope. What have you been doing to help them? And how does it differ between co workers and students?



Amelia Lyons 43:09

So really, right away in March of last year, I started to think about some of the ways that we could keep students engaged, you know, some are more formal. But but also even in the way we were talking about a few minutes ago, with the comments RoSusan made about the kind of, you know, informal conversations, the water cooler kind of moments. And so since March, and we were continuing to do to stay, we've we have Zoom dropping meetings every week for the students in our M.A. program. We changed when they were, you know, in the spring 2020. And then summer fall, and now we've kind of I think, had new ideas about them at first, they're just I would have a Zoom meeting once a week. And any student could come I would just remind them every week, the day of, because everybody's in front of that screen as we know. So they'd remember to come and it was, it was a really in the first you know, between three and six months, a place where for a lot of students, this was one of the few kinds of interactions they were having with other people during the week. I did some of that as well with other faculty. And similarly, wanting to make sure that faculty I knew who were living by themselves were having regular interactions. We had sort of a coffee one that was Friday mornings all last summer, had others that were more or happy hour in nature. And that and I think the ones for the students now the way we're doing them a little bit differently is that twice a month. They are completely student led, we had, of course, all female students who volunteered to run them. And, and that way they can talk to each other without a faculty member in the room. And I think that's really important as well. You know, they, they, you know, we are trying to approximate the guy's moments at the end of class where our students can come up and talk to you. But you also need to have those moments where they talk to each other where you're not around, and particularly this year that we have new students in the program who haven't really known our normal face to face master's program. I think

that's been really important. And then the other thing we added in was it not only is it just me, or or Dr. French, our, our director of public history, who hosts them, but we have a guest faculty member, because that way each time we have one of the meetings with the faculty, there's a different person that students who maybe are nervous about reaching out to or talking to have a chance to sort of meet them and can then set up another kind of meeting. So I've been doing that kind of thing. You know, we at the beginning of the year, we usually have a welcome and welcome back, depending if they're new students are in their, their second year of the program. And you know, we couldn't do pizza, obviously, or or other, any other kinds of refreshments. But we did a Kahoot, right, one of these quizzes that you might be familiar with, and we asked faculty in advance to send a piece of trivia about themselves that nobody would know. Or a childhood picture. And it was really fun, you know, the faculty and the staff and the students all participated. It created a nice space for those kinds of things. Of course, as I'm sure you all are, as well, we're dealing with and helping students who are in crisis much more often right then than we were before, even if, you know, I certainly hadn't worked with, you know, places like Cares, or the Knights Pantry or the other UCF services before, you know, I have done a Student of Concern, or welfare checks before, but I've been involved in many more of them this year. And so I think I'm also much more proactive about making sure students are aware of those kinds of services, if they need them. I also realized one of my colleagues had done this when she was teaching in the summer, last year, that she just stayed in the Zoom meeting, after until the last student laughed. And I realized that that also really gives them that chance to talk one on one or just a couple of students in a way that approximates that activity at the end of a classroom in a face to face setting. And in my grad class, which I taught in the fall, at the end of each class, I transferred the hosting status to one of the students at the end of class every week. And so they could stay in it without me and again, talk to each other, you know, because for the last several, several years as grad director in our kind of Cornerstone historiography class, I would always invite a panel of more advanced students to talk to students about their experience, and to give them advice and that and then I would encourage them to take them over to Lazy Moon Pizza so that they could, you know, have that conviviality and, and collegiality. And so this gave a little bit of a chance of that, you know, they're, they're masters students, they're all you know, at home and of age, and if they wanted to, you know, have an adult beverage with their classmates at 9:30 at night after class, I thought that, why not give them that space to do it and make it easy for them to do it. And like this event, right, which was supposed to happen last year, and a face to face setting. We've been doing a whole lot of different things. You know, we we transferred some events and last spring, like things for UCF Celebrates the Arts got transferred into a virtual setting. In July, we did a Black Lives, virtual teach in with a number of my colleagues across the campus. You know, we've done our workshops, you know, how to get into grad school workshop with the grad fair all virtually. So I think a lot of these things make a big difference. And in some cases,

when it's really a subject that has a lot of residents resonance, we end up with a really large audience, so the Black Lives virtual teaching last July, or between Zoom, and I think it was either YouTube Live or Facebook Live, there were over 500 people who watched it live. And you know, I haven't even checked recently to see how many 1000 have seen it since. So I think, you know that we've talked about this a little bit already, that these kinds of the kind of flexibility this allows, not only gives more people the chance to participate, but you know, allows them to come from a much wider area, if we do our advertising well. And they and they can be seen later. Because we can keep them in these repositories, we can archive them. Right. And so I think that's helpful. And I think we'll probably go back to something that's maybe more hybrid, where we do have the live event, but that we might maybe more have the ability and the the know how to simulcast, right to have it on Zoom and in the room, because it, I would feel bad if every speaker we invited to UCF in the future, you know, was was doing their talk from wherever they're their office in whatever university they're in. And we never got anyone to come to campus, because that does, I think matter. And the same way that you know, it's great if you can do a virtual conference, but it's not the same as really being there and doing a conference for lots of intangible reasons. Anyway.

M

Megan Haught 51:43

And actually, I'm in a grad program as well, and actually an Educational Leadership. And one of my faculty members over the summer did just like a couple of random open Zoom conversations. And she's like, I'll be here to talk as long as anybody wants. And most of the class showed up, and we just we chatted about the program, we chatted up where we were, what, who had taken what classes and talked about the experience of those classes, because it, it was a fully online program even before COVID and just talked and joked and being able to have that experience made the class so much better. That's something I wish more faculty members did. I can see both Linda and Leandra unmuted, did you have something else you wanted to add with that?

L

Leandra Preston 52:34

Well, it kind of blends into the, you know, the what I was going to talk about a little bit which I may or may not have time to, but that I really appreciate that in my own meetings and things and how well it's been going and just connecting with people that I have been thinking a lot about integrating that into my classes, and actually a graduate student yesterday was saying, you know, I Gosh, I wish we could have the, you know, in class conversation about this book, because it's really kind of complex. And it's, you know, it's more challenging, and it's just, I can host the Zoom meetings, but they're not required. And so but then we can record them, but then, you know, it's just, but I'm wondering if, you

know, maybe they can start doing like a mediated, Zoom mediated class, you know, what I mean, something cool like that, where it's like, they have to be on once a week for a Zoom meeting, and then they can connect with each other. But there are a lot of really, you know, just creative things that have been implemented that I would like to see, you know, continue and us to integrate. And it's good to hear that from you, Megan, because that that encourages me more to do that. For my students.

A

Amelia Lyons 53:39

Mine are it is required, right? It's a my classes are the ones I'm talking about are not online classes. They're what we are been calling this year V1, right? So they're, they're the the remote equivalent to face to face. So that's, oh, god, it's there synchronous, or just synchronous here instead of in on campus.

L

Leandra Preston 54:02

Like that, personally, I think that would be cool.

A

Amelia Lyons 54:08

One, especially a mixed mode one.

L

Leandra Preston 54:11

Yes. And you know, I'm in Cocoa Beach. So it's always nice if I don't make to be in the car for two hours for an hour long meeting or for you know, an hour 15 minute long class. It's kind of nice to not have to drive over there.

R

RoSusan Bartee 54:25

One of the things to to further the conversation that we did in my department was we recently had a retreat, and I call that retreat reimagined. And this reimagining of a retreat involves all of our faculty and staff receiving a gift box that had been prepared for them. And they were to open the gift box at a particular time on the day that we all convene around the lunch hour. And that was a way to have us to think outside the box where I encouraged both mindfulness and mindlessness. So whatever that meant for that day was what we were going to do. And it was no it, they had food items, and they had games. But wherever that led us to, was the place that we were going to journey, I didn't really have any expectations. But it showed a different way of trying to relate because I thought that was very important to do that. And then we would have some monthly check ins to just

have an opportunity to talk about what was going on. And I humanized myself, I said, you know, it's tough, right? This is tough, even. It's tough, irrespective, again, COVID does not discriminate, it does not care, who you are, what position you hold nothing. And so, because that, that becomes a commonality that all of us share, that we are all subject to this, and in many ways, but yeah, just being able to think outside the box, in more creative facets, to connect with people has been very important and, and give them my role and and feel like responsibility. I had to, I had to get, I had to get over myself, I had to get through myself, because still there were folks in my department that needed to be served. And so that part too, I think, made me come to realize the the great responsibility that in spite of that we have and also the great privilege to that we have because we could all shelter in at our homes, shelter in our homes. And so that too, was a point where I realized that, you know, even in the midst of there still, there's still so much to be thankful for.

M

Megan Haught 57:00

And we are pushing up on four o'clock. But as long as people are willing to stick around for a little while, we've got a couple more questions go over. And then if anybody wants to add any questions in through the chat, that'd be great, too. I can easily flex my hours. And that's been one of the great things about working remote is I can flex my hours as needed for this, but we do have a couple more questions we had planned to address. Linda, with the announced "return to normal" for the fall 2021 semester, how do you feel about returning to campus? Will be old normal come back? Or do we have a new normal going forward?

L

Linda Walters 57:41

Um, my answer on that keeps evolving. I and if you were to ask me six weeks ago about is everybody going back to campus in August, you know, I don't want to, I don't want to be around people, a bunch of people can make me sick. But yeah, everybody's getting vaccinated. Now I actually feel pretty comfortable saying that by August, every person who wants a vaccine will have gotten it and we won't be going back to normal. But we're going to go back to better. I need the energy of campus. I hate my dining room now. And I used to love my dining room. Because it is you know, it's just this area where I just work by myself and my husband kind of Peters through occasionally. But the energy of campus and the being able to be a part of something that you weren't expecting to be a part of while walking across campus seeing. Yeah, I don't know, bunch of people playing music or dancing or something going on in the puddle or whatever. I thrive on that. And I have not thrived on not having to deal with it. So I'm super excited. I am fully expecting every class to have a Zoom component. They're supposed to be putting in all that equipment right now. That's what they said at Faculty Senate yesterday. So every room, I mean, I know it's

not really going to happen. But right now I can, I can at least think that every room is going to be Zoom or something compatible. There are a whole bunch of competitors out there for Zoom right now that are more geared toward education. So maybe we'll have that. There have been some questions about things like Creative School going back to normal and Mike Johnson did say he's the provost, he did say that it's gonna be one of his top priorities right now. He didn't know what was going on there but faculty have become really concerned including Bridget and I don't blame you that they're not back to full hours, but we're expecting faculty to do full hours. So some of that should be changing on that day to day better, better plan. So I also expect that we will have hand sanitizer everywhere for the rest of our time. We probably won't hug people as much as we used to which is kind of sad, but I don't know, I guess that's okay. Um, and a few other things like that. But, you know, some faculty in my department have had major life changes this year, and I just missed it. And, again, that just kind of makes me sad or makes me feel stupid, or I don't, I don't know what it makes me feel. But I feel out of it. And I don't like being out of it. I mean, campus is a way of life. That's why we all became academics, and we need it again.

M

Megan Haught 1:00:32

So I did enjoy enjoy missing Spirit Splash this year, because, and the library with all the music in front of the building. It's a lot for an afternoon and I was had a Zoom meeting with one of my student workers going over something for display. And you could hear the thumping in the background and she's like, sorry, Spirit Splash is happening. I'm like, Okay, at least it's quieter this year,

L

Linda Walters 1:00:56

I love a good Spirit Splash. But it doesn't impact me that much in biology, my, my building doesn't shake. I will say I need to go off to another Zoom meeting now. So I think it's been wonderful seeing you all and hearing your stories and that we are all, we are all in this together, I guess, slightly different tweaks on how it all works. And the energy of August is soon upon us. So thank you for organizing it. Megan,

M

Megan Haught 1:01:22

you're very welcome. Thank you for joining us, it's been such a great chance to be able to see other people's faces and put faces to the names because I've been emailing with most of you for years now.



Linda Walters 1:01:33

Alright, take care Have a good weekend, everybody.



Megan Haught 1:01:40

Leandra if you still got some time, do you would you like to talk about what changes you'd like to see higher education make in general for the future? And any short term changes that we've made for the pandemic that you'd like to see stay on?



Leandra Preston 1:01:54

Yeah, I spoke to it a little bit actually already, because I found Okay, so I wanted to mention that I feel like I adapted in a sense, I went through this, you know, on a much nicer scale. When I started teaching online, I felt so disconnected, I felt so you know, all of these different things like, how, how do I do this? If I'm not there, you know, how do I do this for not meeting and I so I was, so I felt quite prepared to make these adjustments. In that sense, and I feel I've adapted a bit, to kind of the isolation that I was feeling, and that it doesn't, I don't mind that as much, I just feel I'm so busy all the time. And, you know, I get this great emotional fulfillment, of course, from my small child, but, um, it's I really like the Zoom component, I would like to see courses that are fully web based with integrated, you know, mediated Zoom or online component, like where we are actually having discussions for Women's and Gender Studies, that would be invaluable, it's really challenging to do some of what I do, and keep maintain what we get in the classroom. So I really hope that we continue integrating and exploring, you know, changing some core structures to, you know, integrate some of these technologies, that's probably my number one thing that I'm hoping and I'm, like I mentioned before, I really hope that I can continue having my meetings from Zoom, because it just saves me so much time. And you know, and then I like, I will come to campus for my office hours and my teaching and whatnot. But I just really, for my, you know, managing my schedule, it's been immensely helpful to save a two hour drive for a one hour meeting, you know, once a month or twice or three times a month. I mean, you know, just for my faculty meeting, so just those things, and I think a lot of it has to do with accessibility, you know, it's about making it and keeping it accessible for everyone. You know, some people the accessibility issue lies in the technology, some people the accessibility issue lies in going to campus, you know, whether it's a time management or an ability issue. And so I think by meeting all, you know, providing all of these options when possible, now that we've been forced to do it, we should continue doing it. And so that's really my number one answer to that question. So

M

Megan Haught 1:04:25

Thank you. And I know a number of people have had to step off. But while we still have us here, as we're recording, I just like to ask the final question of what are you doing to keep yourself healthy, mentally and physically, and this is for everybody still in the room.

R

RoSusan Bartee 1:04:39

I'm an avid exerciser. So I walk an hour a day. And that keeps me physically engaged in terms of dealing with my physical health. And so I think it impacts my mental health as well. And so the exercise, meditation, Bible reading, praying, those are all part of the things that I do is it's the variety of things talking on the phone agent with my family, my friends.

A

Amelia Lyons 1:05:16

At the start of it, my neighbor who had been away and her brothers to receive leukemia treatment moved home. So she had been gone for almost a year. And she arrived about the right about the middle of March and back at her house. And she has a beautiful dog. And so I volunteered to walk her dog every morning. And so until up from March till August, I walked her dog every morning, it was just like ritual it was it was great. And so I felt like I was getting exactly what you were just talking about. And then the semester started. And it kind of fell right off a cliff for me, and I wasn't really getting any of that kind of exercise. It wasn't going. I mean, obviously since March haven't on to the Y to work out those kinds of things kind of disappeared, and, and that and with all the other demands. And so it was really again this semester, because I put on weight that I've started really focusing in and I have a cousin and an aunt and uncle, and we're all kind of helping each other to stay on on track and lost out 14 pounds since January, just by really saying no more of this. No, we're not, we're not going in this direction anymore. We're gonna go in this direction. And, you know, as you were saying, right, or Susan, when you when you when you do that your energy levels increased your ability to focus, you know, you're just not as I don't know, it, I'm, yes, I still binge watch television. Sometimes I still just need that at a certain hour in the evening on certain nights. But, um, and you know, you've got to kind of search a little more, because you've watched a lot more things than you would have expected you would have anyway. But I feel like that's not my go to way to relax only anymore. And I think, you know, for me, one of the other things in terms of the kind of activities with my kids has been reading aloud. You know, like my oldest, certainly, I had not been reading out loud to him for quite a long time and my seven year old, he was really able to read pretty well on his own by first grade and so we've kind of petered out the bedtime story of like, Oh, this is the end. So I had proposed to him right before COVID that maybe we could read the Harry Potter books together since like, I've never read them, kind of wanted to read them. I thought I'm never going to read them unless we

read them aloud. And my older one wanted to read them on his own. He was not interested in me reading them when he was that age. So we started reading them and we read them all between basically February and October of 2020, all seven of the books and after we would read the book, we would watch the movie. And now we're we're all the way through the third book on our second time around. And we've added in other stuff, right, we're reading the Percy Jackson books on the Olympians, and some other things too. And so I think that we're even at lunch, where I will give the boys their lunch, grab something for myself. And then there there's about 20 minutes of their lunch periods that overlap and so we'll get 20 minutes in and they'll sit and read aloud and it's just that that is the kind of thing I feel like eventually I will miss you know there are a lot of things we're gonna miss about COVID [laughs] but I for me, you know, clearly I will forever associate Harry Potter with COVID in a good way



Leandra Preston 1:09:15

That's amazing that you've read all those books like that that is so incredible. I have been I'm not an avid exerciser anymore I need to be I used to be I probably always joke I haven't really exercised since I got pregnant my daughter seven so it's kind of time to I'm very active. I'm not like super sedentary but I mean I do but my my peace in Zen is been gardening and you know I really I've always had an outside garden and love gardening outside but with the quarantine in the pandemic when we were on lockdown type deal. I ramped it up and went a slightly overboard I tend to do things like that. I don't. I've never been accused of you know, doing things halfway. So, yeah, I have a whole lot of plants. But it's really enjoyed so much, it's peaceful and I ended up and now I've got an Instagram a plant with only my plants and I've got like 2300 followers already, I just, it's amazing. So I've got this whole new little world I've created and it's been really fun night. So I enjoy photography, you know, doing the photographs in the plants and and then they get the community out of it too. So that's been really nice to do and



Amelia Lyons 1:10:29

We did last year and this year, we did a butterfly garden and we have all of these caterpillars. You know, they've already know the milkweed and now they're forming their chrysalis is around. That was one that's now in a chrysalis. But we have I think six of them hanging from the pots where I had the milkweed. So yeah, that's fine. I mean, they look terrible,



Leandra Preston 1:10:56

right because it's really cool when they open up though we have to and I tried to do in my

yard, mostly Florida native plants and I really tried to do a lot of butterfly you know attractors to it's really caterpillar attractor I should say. Nice. So the right kind of caterpillars though. Thank you all so much. I almost I'm gonna go as well. But I enjoyed this conversation. Thank you Megan for putting it together. Your faces. I haven't seen a lot of any of you all in a while. So it's good to see you.



Megan Haught 1:11:27

Good to see everyone. Thank you for joining us. And this recording will be added both to the library's YouTube page and to STARS. Wonderful. Thank you.



Leandra Preston 1:11:37

Thank you



Amelia Lyons 1:11:38

Have a nice weekend, ladies.



RoSusan Bartee 1:11:40

Thank you.



Megan Haught 1:11:40

Bye, everyone.