# Health and Human Science Matters Season 1, Episode 1: Dr. Lise Youngblade

Lise Youngblade: The experiences I had and the people that I met, I think just solidified for me. I want to have as many options always open to me as possible. The one way to get there, and I would say this now, and I didn't appreciate it then, but I think I had a gut feeling about it, was education. That opens doors. It opens doors that are sometimes incredibly hard or maybe even impossible in some ways to open without that. I don't just mean a degree. I mean it's the thought process, the skills that you learn, the ways to see things from different perspectives, the different people that you meet in your classes and that teach classes that maybe you agree with and don't agree with, but it helps you grow.

Avery Martin: Welcome to Health and Human Science Matters, a podcast by Colorado State University's College of Health and Human Sciences. I'm your co-host and digital media strategist Avery Martin.

Matt Hickey: And I'm Matt Hickey, associate dean for research and graduate studies. In our college, we make it our mission to optimize human health and wellbeing through discovery and innovation, but don't just take our work for it. Each episode, we sit down with people who fulfill that mission, our college faculty and staff. Today, we're really excited to have the dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences, Lise Youngblade with us. Lise, welcome.

Lise Youngblade: Thank you. I'm so happy to be here today.

Matt Hickey: We are really glad to have you. We're looking forward to our conversation today.

Lise Youngblade: Me too.

Matt Hickey: One of our missions in this podcast is to get to know people as more than scholars, more than academics. Who are you? What's the pathway that brought you here? I want to start with that very journey. If you can tell us a little about you and your family, maybe some significant early memories you'd like to share with us, that would be really wonderful.

Lise Youngblade: Yeah. Oh gosh. Well, that's a daunting task. I'll maybe start with the end and then go back to the beginning. So happy to be here at CSU as dean. I've been here for 15 years. Hard to believe it's that long. It's gone fast, but came to CSU in 2006 as department head of human development and family studies. Had the opportunity to serve in a couple of associate dean roles as associate dean for research and graduate programs. Matt, your role. Then also as associate dean for strategic initiatives right before I became dean. I've had just this really great opportunity to get to know CSU, to get to know our faculty and staff in the college, our programs, and just could not be more excited about how I had the great fortune to land here at CSU and the even better fortune to be in a leadership position in this wonderful college.

Yes, how'd I get here? I think back to when I was a kid, I wouldn't have known this would've been my job or even a career path or anything of interest. I was born in the sixties in Brooklyn, New York to two parents who never went to college. I think the earliest conversations I can remember were very practical jobs like being a stewardess in the sixties. That was a very glamorous occupation. Certainly thinking about having a family and being a wife and mother, maybe being a teacher and maybe being a nurse. My mom was a public health nurse and didn't really think much about college though, or what this would look like. My dad died when I was 10. My mom when I was 13. We moved across the country to Portland, Oregon. Moved in with an aunt and uncle, both of whom were PhDs, both of whom had been first gen themselves but worked their way through school.

My uncle was a professor of economics and just had a very different vision of what life could look like. You ask... Or probably, you will ask or are thinking about important people in your lives. I think for me, just having the access... All the family stuff, of course important, but just the access to understanding what education could be, that was a pivotal thing that I think about all the time. I miss my parents desperately, but I would never have had the opportunity to think about college or graduate school or being a professor, doing research, any of those things without the opportunity that my aunt and uncle gave to me. Very grateful for that.

Matt Hickey: That's really something. These hinge moments in our lives, you don't see them coming, you don't plan for them and in your case, to emerge from terrible tragedy and loss like that and have an enduring influence that you can talk about years later, that's really quite something. I wonder if you can share some extracurricular interest with us as well. What gets your heart beating outside the academy? Things that you're interested in, passionate about.

Lise Youngblade: Three things maybe I'll highlight and anybody that's read any of my emails or things that I share across the college, probably none of these are a surprise. I love to read. Books are amazing. I love all types of books. I love biographies. I love fiction. I love books that are sentinel in our discipline. Reading is really important to me and I try and find at least a little bit of time. Sometimes it's a page before I fall asleep, but really dedicated to thinking about reading as being an important thing each day.

I love the outdoors. Again, good fortune to live in an unbelievable place like Colorado. Really try and take advantage of it, again, every day. Spending time outside, going for a walk, weekends, love to be up in the mountains when we can and so on. That just outside... Just advocation, whatever that looks like. Sometimes it's just sitting and being-

Matt Hickey: Hear, hear. Hear, hear.

Lise Youngblade: ... in this gorgeous space. Then the third thing is music. I love music. Again, all kinds of music. Some I love more than others, but I love listening to other people. I love playing instruments. I love singing. Other people maybe don't love that as much. Kids definitely ridicule that all the time, but music is a great thing. It's a mood changer. It's a mood lifter. It's profound and it's just so creative. Music, outside and reading. I will add a fourth one. Love cooking too.

Matt Hickey: Well, fantastic.

Avery Martin: Nice.

Matt Hickey: That's great. Thanks for sharing. Once you started this journey into college, even as an undergraduate, again, I'm interested in moments and mentors that really were formative for you as you think about your pathway.

Lise Youngblade: Yeah. So again, interesting. In high school, probably like most kids, you're thinking about what your next steps are after graduation. In my family with my aunt and uncle, it was expected that you go to college. It wasn't really a conversation, but they were sure that myself, my brother and my three cousins, this was your next step and less important about where you were going and what you were going to study, but that you were going to further your education. There wasn't a question about that. I grew up in Oregon and the two main colleges are University of Oregon and Oregon State. I had no idea what land grants were. Oregon State's land grant.

University of Oregon, it was the ducks. My aunt had got her PhD there. That was the family school. I went to college not really knowing what college would lead to. I was thinking teaching as a secondary social studies history teacher because I loved those subjects in high school, and so, pursued that pathway and took a lot of history classes. What I loved about histories was stories. The part that was captivating that is you cannot think about history without a story of something that leads to another story of something that leads to another story of something. The part about that that really captured me was the story part.

Then I had to take a psychology class because it was in the degree plan as one of the required electives. I walked into this class that Dr. Beverly Fagot was teaching. She was a developmental psychologist. Her area of research was infants and toddlers and how they learn about gender and gender socialization, but I walked in. Within 10 minutes, I had changed my major because she was a storyteller. I realized the part about what I loved [inaudible 00:08:00] was doing was stories, but they were sociological stories, they were big stories.

What I found most fascinating were individual stories and that's what psychology was. Mostly about children and how children then get set on one journey or another journey where they have opportunity to create their own journey, where they don't and how all those things coincide. In that one 10 minute moment, I fell in love with developmental psychology and then that set me on the rest of a career path of trying to understand that big picture.

Matt Hickey: It's so interesting to me because I so often hear this same vignette in varied forms when I see students who I had in class 20 years ago and they share memories. It's never content. It's always a story that was told in class in some way, shape or form. The influence is powerful, isn't it? Because it transcends the discipline in some ways. It roots it in things that are outside textbooks and PowerPoint slides and all these things. It's great. Was there a moment when the... "I think I can do this PhD thing," emerged?

Lise Youngblade: Yeah, although I'd say that was a harder... I can't say that was a moment. I'd say it was more of a process. Switched my major. Another important milestone for me was right before I took that class, I took a gap year right after my sophomore year. Loved history but I just wasn't sure and I thought I just want to go work. Moved to Alaska, did a lot of different things. Worked in canneries, worked on a fishing boat, number of different things and at the end, decided I really need an education for a job that I want to do that is just going to be, to me, more meaningful.

Went back. That's when I took the class and then in the context of taking that class, I went in to talk to her, and I think students do this too. You gravitate towards a professor that gets your attention and you show up for their office hours and then you show up for their next office hours. All of a sudden, you're caught into their research. She was starting this incredibly interesting big research project. It was a very big NIH grant. I didn't know anything about NIH grants but she was hiring students to go out and do observations in homes and work in the research lab.

I had this opportunity because I knew her. She asked if I was interested in the job and I had a work study position. She's like, "You can do it work study, but then I will pay you on top of it and for more hours," and so, all these things coincided and I started thinking about, "Well, what could research look like? What could a job doing what she's doing look like?" That started the idea of graduate school. Up till that point, thought I would graduate with a psychology degree, I would find something interesting to do with it. I hadn't thought about masters or a PhD and it was the process of being engaged with the research process, seeing families, coding data, thinking about questions.

She was great because she involved undergraduates and graduates as well in this process because the graduate students in her lab hung out with graduate students in other labs, the undergraduates got to know them socially a little bit but then find out what other work was. It was all amazing. It blew my mind how interesting the work was. Then that made me think, "Well, okay, maybe I could do this." Of course, I have an uncle who's a professor and as I would be talking to him, he'd be like, "I don't know why you're not going to get your PhD. You should get your PhD," and so, there was a lot of support for it from multiple angles.

But it still took a little while to think, "Okay, it's a big endeavor and unknown and which program do you pick and who do you work with and how do you decide?" It was a process but ultimately led me to Penn State. I had the good fortune to be accepted there. You think back about things that nobody mentors you on. I remember on the application for Penn State, there was a question that said do you need funding to be able to attend grad school? I was like, "Oh no, I can work my way through it because I worked my way through undergraduate," so I marked no.

Somebody who was looking over my application said, "Are you insane? Yes, you need funding. You're going to be doing your work. You need support here." I think about that all the time, just as what a responsibility we have to our students to support them in mentoring but also in really ensuring that we give them the resources to be able to complete what they're doing. They're working hard at their studies. We should help them be able to do that.

Matt Hickey: So well said. I want to interrupt because I have a couple of follow-up questions about your undergraduate pathway because I really think many listeners will find this fruitful. Can you talk a little bit about that gap year and what it did for you in terms of maturity? Because so often, we get the pressure to have this linear pathway with no branches, which is totally unrealistic for most of us. I'm just wondering if you could share a little bit more about advantages upon reflection of that gap year.

Lise Youngblade: Yeah, I'll start with the advantages and say that I didn't take a gap year thinking, "Oh can I mature and-"

Matt Hickey: Long-term strategic planning.

Lise Youngblade: Yeah. There was for zero long-term strategic planning. I just wasn't 100% sure I was ready to commit to being in this one pathway with history, and although I loved it, I just could not see the vision. It's interesting because I told you in 10 minutes, I saw the vision in that class that just lit me on fire. The advantages I think for me personally was that it was a bit of a reflection time of what do I really want to do? I so appreciate every single opportunity I had in that gap year to work in some really hard jobs and work with people who that was their career and they did jobs like this their whole life and just think, this is what education affords you, is the option that this isn't your only pathway without working in a cannery or...

I can tell you a million stories about that one. Maybe a whole other podcast, but the experiences I had and the people that I met just solidified for me. I want to have as many options always open to me as possible. The one way to get there, and I would say this now and I didn't appreciate it then, but I think I had a gut feeling about it, was education. That opens doors. It opens doors that are sometimes incredibly hard or maybe even impossible in some ways to open without that. I don't just mean a degree. I mean it's the thought process, the skills that you learn, the ways to see things from different perspectives, the different people that you meet in your classes and they teach classes that maybe you agree with and don't agree with, but it helps you grow. Without that experience, I think you start to foreclose-

Matt Hickey: Yeah, well said.

Lise Youngblade: ... potential options.

Matt Hickey: That's great. So you come back and another question I think is really germane to so many of our undergraduates, you entered into an NIH-funded research operation team if you will. We understand that not all are going to be NIH funded. There's a variety of ways in which we pursue our scholarship, but how did you make that happen? Was your mentor looking for people? Did you go knock on doors? How did that connection start?

Lise Youngblade: Yeah, I think it was both. I had already been on her radar because I loved her class and I was trying to take every possible class that she taught. She was just an incredibly interesting person. She also really loved music. We'd have these great conversations that were just beyond the psychology discipline too. She was a fabulous, wonderful, awesome person. I just liked spending time with her. I was already on her radar, maybe more than she wanted, but I always found an opportunity to be able to go see her.

I was a good student. I think I had a reputation as a good student in classes in that department. When the grant happened, I'd already been a psychology major by then for a year. I'd volunteered time in her lab, taken a number of classes from her, so when she was looking for people, it was just a pretty easy conversation. She approached me. Did I want to work more hours, would I want to be on the grant? I didn't understand what a grant was. All I heard was, "Do you want to work more hours and get paid?" I was like, "Okay." It was doing research.

I, at that point, had no clue what a grant would do. I learned about it, learned about how you get them, how you write them. She made us all read them. I remember that being a daunting thing because it was 300 pages long with all the appendixes and it was back in the day where it wasn't electronic, so she handed out these books to everybody and I was like, "We have to read this? Are we going to have a test?" But just seeing that, I couldn't understand probably a third of it maybe. That's as much as I understood.

But anyway, that's how I got involved and then learned about what NIH was, started to learn about grants, started to learn about thinking about going to grad school and aligning with a mentor who had an active research program. Again, maybe it's funded by NIH, maybe funded somewhere else, maybe potentially not even funded, but they have a very active set of scholarship and research questions and things that light them on fire and they can't discover enough about it. That was a light bulb for me to think about. Okay, so this is really a pursuit of ideas as well as skills and training. You get to do that as a graduate student in a different way than as an undergraduate.

Matt Hickey: That's really neat. When I think of themes here, you had an early influence of somebody who was a storyteller excited about what they were doing and the details of what does that all entail come later, but the excitement came early on in the classroom setting. Then I'm struck again by the importance of mentors who let you see that they are more than Professor X. Her interest in music. I'm multifaceted. I have interest beyond what really excites me in the classroom, what got you excited to begin with? I think these are pieces of this puzzle about how we thrive in the academy and sometimes we catch it. Again, if we're early on in our career, later, we reflect on these are some of the elements of what I want to be and do as a mentor. You go on to get your PhD and then what?

Lise Youngblade: Yeah, again, I think my life has had crisscrossing strands. In graduate school, I met who would become my husband Dr. Manfred Diehl, who was here at CSU and HDFS as a university distinguished professor, studies adult development and aging. We met in graduate school. I got my PhD and then it was the question of how do you balance work and life? I defended my PhD a year before Manfred did. He was an international student.

We had all kinds of green card issues and visa issues to deal with and weren't married at that time, but thinking it's a life choice we probably are going to make, so I took my first job at the University of Texas at Dallas, so did the very traditional thing of applying for tenure track positions, had a couple of different offers that ended up being the best fit for me.

We thought, "Oh, Dallas would be a great place," and he might be able to find a position there. The context for us though was in the early nineties, the academic job market was horrible. It was really tough to get jobs. There weren't very many and there were a lot of students on the market, and so, being in the same discipline-

Matt Hickey: [inaudible 00:19:35], yes.

Lise Youngblade: ... at the same time, an international student, it just was really, really difficult to find a dual job. He found a position at SUNY Albany, and so, I took a leave from University of Texas at Dallas, we got married and then decided we wanted to start a family, so I resigned being a tenure track professor and took a position as postdoc, which again, I had done a postdoc first, but it gave me an opportunity to delve into some new research, working with a new team of folks. Again, around a core set of interests that I had, but a different discipline, a different way of thinking about it.

He was doing a postdoc as well. We knew it wasn't going to be permanent. We left from there, went to the University of Michigan and Wayne State. We did another set of postdocs again because the job market was so terrible and trying to find two positions, so we'd apply and get a hit here or there, but couldn't find anything that was drivablely commutable, and by then, we had our oldest son and just wanted us to be a family, so we made the decision to do another set of postdocs. He did a postdoc at Wayne State. I went to the University of Michigan and we were there for a couple of years and did postdocs.

Again, new set of lenses, new thoughts. It's continuing this education in this really great way. We've been a lot of places. He at that point then got an offer from the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. They were really building up their aging area and thought his skills would be a great fit and his research and it was in Colorado, which I have to tell you, of any state maybe other than Oregon that I want to live in, it's Colorado. Ever since learning about John Denver in seventh grade, Colorado's been high on my list.

But anyway, the opportunity to move to Colorado then was really appealing and they had a non-tenure track position but a way I could continue my career at UCCS. We were there for four years. It was really great. Then he got a recruitment call from the University of Florida, which this ended up being a game changer for us because up to that point, I always thought I would be a professor and I would just really be content doing research, teaching classes. I loved it. Just again, could not vision what beyond that would look like, and although I knew department heads and people that were in administration, I never put myself in those shoes and thought... I never even tried them on. What would that look like? I just was all about the work I was doing.

We went to Florida and the position that was available to me was in the College of Medicine in the Department of Pediatrics working in the Institute for Child Health Policy. I've never been in a college of medicine, never had been in that kind of a setting that was so high paced. The expectations were really, really high. It wasn't the more... I don't want to say that expectations aren't high in other disciplines, but things just move at a quicker pace and there's just a lot more energy, and that was a very top performing college of medicine and that institute was just going gang busters and growing.

In a very short period of time, I had the opportunity to go from an assistant professor to an associate professor and associate director of that institute in an area I knew absolutely nothing about, but because I'd had all these crazy experiences along the way of thinking from... I was trained in a psychology then interdisciplinary human development family studies, then at Texas was in psychology program, but then in New York and Michigan, different focuses, so I had learned skills to think about research a little bit more broadly and a little bit more interdisciplinary.

I had to learn some new content, but some of those basic skills transferred, but in the position of being associate director, you got a real taste for what leadership could look like and what the joy you get from building and supporting other people. It wasn't just your team anymore. It was the health of the institute and it was 100% funded on soft money. Our salaries, even though we had tenure... We had always joked, "Well, we have jobs, but we don't have salaries guaranteed with those jobs," because you had to go out and earn the money on grants and so on.

For a long haul. I don't know that I would've enjoyed a career with that amount of pressure, because that's really what you're on. You're on a treadmill to really produce grant funding at really, really high and growing levels. There wasn't much teaching involved in that, but it did give me really the taste for... I love administration, I love watching other people thrive. I love the joy that comes from being part of building the infrastructure that allows them to do that. I love the big picture visioning that you get to do when you can pull people together and help set a course.

All of those things, I never knew that before Florida. We were at Florida for six years and got a taste for that. Then I remember, one day I saw a flyer for a department head at Colorado State University and I brought the flyer home and I told Manfred, "This is where we're going next." He's like, "What?" I'm like, "I know it. This is where we're going next." He laughed and said, "Okay, if you want to play, that's fine." Went, interviewed, came back, said, "This is where we're going next," and luckily, it worked out that we could come here. Grateful ever since.

Matt Hickey: Well, for those of us that are very fond of both of you and your leadership, it's a big moment.

Avery Martin: Yes, yes. We're glad to have you two.

Matt Hickey: A great day in the history of the college for sure. We're glad you're here.

Lise Youngblade: Thank you.

Matt Hickey: You're a few years into your deanship and of course, they've been unusual years to put it mildly. I wonder if we could ask you to reflect on the time you've served as dean, so a little bit of retrospective piece here, but then look forward to us. You just talked about visioning, so cast some vision for us as a college. Where are we headed? What do we aspire to?

Lise Youngblade: Yeah, I will, again, put this in context. Of course, nobody saw COVID coming. We had a whopping semester before it where I was busy getting to meet people, learn about the other colleges, really step into the shoes of the world of a dean, and then we shut down pretty quickly. Although, I am again unbelievably grateful that we got our first research day under our belts before we had to shut down, but maybe a month after we shut down, the provost then, Rick Miranda asked me, Jan Nerger, the dean from the College of Natural Sciences, and Ben Withers, dean from the College of Liberal Arts, because we have the biggest undergraduate enrolled colleges on campus, to be part of a committee with Kelly Long, our vice provost for undergraduate affairs, to figure out how to get our campus quickly offline but then back and what does that future look like?

So had an opportunity I think you wouldn't get normally as an incoming dean to really get involved in the nuts and bolts and just details of thousands of sections of courses, thousands of students, thousands of instructors, and trying to fit together this incredibly intense jigsaw puzzle under very extraordinary circumstances. Spent a good chunk of, I would say, from March until December, really immersed in that experience. What I've learned from that I think is going to help us going forward as a college just to understand a bit more of the landscape, the different innovations different colleges are doing, how we responded to COVID, but even in the context of talking about COVID, people shared what they would do normally and what they were doing new. All great learning.

I'm excited about bringing some of those innovations back as we start to think about our different majors in the college and our student success goals and innovative curriculum, academic master planning activities that we're doing right now as part of the courageous strategic transformation. Super excited about where our programs are going. I set out some goals when I started as dean and I'll just highlight a couple of these. I think in reflection, we've started to work on some of them, and then in forecasting, I think these are our big ticket items.

Before I even say any of this, we have, again, one of the greatest colleges. We're so diverse, but that's our strength. We all wrap around such interesting disciplines of human functioning and human wellbeing from how we develop physically, how we think about mental and social supports, how we think about built environments, our education systems, our social services that we provide as a society. All of these things give us great opportunity to think creatively and outside the box. One of my biggest goals is to find the ways that these eight wonderful disciplines can come together at the next higher order of intellectual discovery through curriculum, through research, through structure maybe.

But that we find the places where our total is that much greater than the sum of our parts, that really, what we're doing and that's our impact. Some things that have bubbled up so far are thinking about what are assets in design and build? Are there ways to put together those foundational components in some sort of a structure that helps everybody's programs and research programs grow because of collaboration in that space.

Another space might be mental and behavioral health. We have a lot of activity across our college and actually across the university. Actually in both those spaces. Not only can we build in our college, but can we then connect across disciplines in colleges outside our college. Health is both a single word, but then this just incredibly huge concept, and what's been interesting to me having been here for 15 years is having watched health become a bigger concept on campus.

A few years ago, when deans were doing their... "Here's our strategic plans," the word health was in our college, it was in veterinary medicine but you didn't necessarily hear it in liberal arts or business or whatever, and the last time we all did our strategic plans, we all have health as a centering concept. Again, looking for those places where there's... It's grassroots, it's organic, so you know it's a real commitment. Where do we intersect and how do we do that? I think reflecting but also forecasting and looking to the future is thinking about that. How do we align in those really big questions?

Education is another one. How do we think about education not just from public school sectors but also here on campus? What are best strategies around that? How does what we are learning and discovering and doing research about, how does that really drive what we're teaching and how do we think about serving students to the best possibility? Maybe busting open some of our degree programs a little bit and thinking what's the new innovation that we really want to think about?

I'll just give you one example just maybe so it's concrete. We train a lot of students in clinical areas in this college and on campus and we train them usually in an accredited discipline. The accreditation body says these are the skills you need to have, and so, we train within those within the discipline and then students graduate and they move into an interdisciplinary team oriented work environment and we have not trained them that way. How do we do that?

Matt Hickey: That's a great point.

Lise Youngblade: How do we think about that? That is one example and there are many across our college and across the university where I think if we step back, think outside the box a little bit, maybe a lot, I don't know, but get a little bit creative and think, "Well, okay, we've done it this way for a long time. How do we do this going forward?"

Matt Hickey: I've got a couple more questions and if you'll permit me, one of them is off script, but I'm interested and I suspect others will be interested as well. Your tenure here, you've been in leadership the whole time, a department head and now a dean. I think there's a misapprehension by many of us. It would've been the case for me early career that people in that position no longer need mentors. I wonder if you could talk for a moment about people who have mentored you as a leader at CSU.

Lise Youngblade: Yeah, I think that is such a misapprehension and the type of mentorship changes and for different questions, you go to different people. I will say there are a couple of groups of people maybe that I would put in a mentorship category. I think every dean that I've worked with has been a mentor starting in Florida. I didn't work very closely with the dean in my job as assistant director, but I also served on the faculty council for the College of Medicine, was the vice president. I had the opportunity to work at a different level with that dean and learned things that he did well that I'm like, "Oh my gosh, these are great things I want to take forward," and there were things that forced me to think, "Okay, that's not the leader I want to be."

That was mentorship too, the push to help define yourself and absolutely true of the three deans I worked under here in the college and other deans. Again, when you're here for a while, you get to know people, you start to know other people outside your immediate surrounds, and so, very grateful for other long-term deans here at CSU that have taken some time to spend time with me and answer questions. I would say that's one category. Folks above. Think you learn something from the provost that you work with and all of that.

Another set of mentors though, and this I valued so much, is the other unit heads in this college and it changed over time. When I first came, one of the mentors for me was Dr. Chris Melby. He was the department head of food science and human nutrition. He was just always gracious and patient with... He never made me feel like my questions were bad and always safe to ask them.

Matt Hickey: Yep. That's Dr. Melby for sure.

Avery Martin: Yes. Absolutely.

Lise Youngblade: Dr. Melby for sure. There was another unit head who over time became one of my closest colleagues, but at the first, he would push back and Dr. Israel, he mentored me in a different way by honing a little bit more of a tough skin I would say and just being willing to push back a little bit more, but then that morphed over time as I got more experience being a department head and new department heads came on and then you end up being a little bit more in the mentor role. That's still mentorship to you because you're learning how you help other people develop skills.

There's some mentorship even from a mentee. I think we never recognize or don't talk about, celebrate as much as we probably should, but then just getting together with the unit heads. I think what was so lovely about here, and this has always been our culture, is that this is a team that works together. They're not at each other's throats, they're not like, "Trying to get what's best for me is at the expense of you."

Everything helps our college rise. They're so gracious with time, talent, sometimes even treasure and to helping each other be their best selves, and then that trickles down to our faculty staff and students and that culture is incredibly important to me, so again, reflecting, so grateful to be part of this college and the burden and responsibility and great opportunity and I take this very seriously that that continues to grow in the next years.

Matt Hickey: One of my favorite parts about being in the academy, it's my only profession. Other than summer jobs or something, is this chance to both mentor and be mentored never really ends.

Lise Youngblade: No, it doesn't.

Matt Hickey: No matter where you're at or what you're doing. It could be a one-on-one, it could be a larger group setting. You could be in the upper echelons of leadership and there are still opportunities to learn and to turn around and to pour into others what's been poured into you. That's really fun. I love that part of it. A natural follow-on question and I'm back on script now. What's your favorite part about being in this college?

Lise Youngblade: Favorite part about being in this college. Whoa. This is going to sound so trite, but I'm just going to say it summatively. Being in this college is my most favorite part about being in this college. I can't think of another college that I would rather be in. I think there're several layers to that, so maybe I'll unpack that just a little bit. I already touched on one of them, which is just the diversity of the fields that we're in. There's constantly great ideas and new interesting things to think about because we're not doing a version, all of us, of the same basic thing.

All of our units come at the same problem with such different lenses, histories, experiences, and thoughts that going forward, there's always going to be a new creation because it has to be with this many great minds. I've never been tired or bored or I don't even know what the word is. I've always been inspired by just the breadth of disciplines and thought in the college. That's one level. The other thing that our college does so incredibly well is living the land grant mission. Again, I told you earlier in this conversation that I didn't understand when I went to school what a land grant was.

I went to Penn State, another major land grant. I didn't know it was a land grant, I just went there because I liked the program. Was at Florida, that was a land grant. I didn't even know they were land grant until I got to Colorado State and somebody told me that that was the Florida land grant, because that was Florida State, not University of Florida. I couldn't tell you why University of Florida was the land grant until I got to Colorado State and started to really learn what it means to think about access, what it means to think about the connection between community and the academy and how we work together to solve problems.

How we don't think about the smart people doing outreach, but it's really engagement and that we're doing this all in the service of making life better for people in this college. I know other colleges focus on animals and the climate and the world and so on, but we all have the same basic DNA of just being excited and passionate about what a land grant is. The fact that we do it so well around people in this college in this university that does it so well as a university, I can't think of a better place to be.

Matt Hickey: You anticipated my final question and beautifully tied together who we are as a college and how do we fit into this land grant mission. I won't ask that question because it was so elegantly stated there. As we think about wrapping up, I just wonder if you have any final thoughts you'd like to share with the college and our listeners?

Lise Youngblade: I think for me, you think about this a lot, like motivations for going to work every day and what gets us moving, not just for me, but for our students, for our faculty. I hope that as dean, I can do whatever I need to do to help those days be so meaningful for everybody, that we are providing the best curriculum for our students so that they come to CSU and just are lit on fire. In that same 10 minute thing, this is what I want to do, and if they're not, that we help them find what it is that lights them on fire, that we are so committed to our students and their educational journey and we're likewise so committed to each other as faculty and staff.

We are here because we have students, but we are also here because ideas light us up too. So how do we support that? How do we grow our research mission? What can I do to help support that? I was waiting for the question you might ask me to tell me about your research and my research is the college's research and I'm excited about that. The words that are important to me, the vision that's important to me is that we are intentional about what we do.

We're always thoughtful, creative, innovative, that we're respectful to each other and engaging of each other and supportive of each other, that we are a college with multiple different sub-units in it and disciplines that help us be the College of Health and Human Science. The end of the day, we're all after the same mission and all working together, and that we do that with integrity, excitement, with excellence, with support and enthusiasm. If I can help, and then I guess at the end of the day, if we do that with gratitude for the opportunity to do it, then we've had a good day.

Matt Hickey: So well said. In the spirit of gratitude, I'll say thank you as one who gets the privilege of working with you and enjoys your leadership and the privilege of being mentored by you. Thanks for your leadership. Thanks for your friendship and thanks for the way you go about setting a vision and leading by example. We appreciate it.

Lise Youngblade: Oh, and thank you, and thank you, Avery.

Avery Martin: Of course.

Lise Youngblade: Pleasure to work with both of you and so excited about this podcast. My own personal plug is listen to the upcoming ones. You get to hear firsthand the greatness in this college.

Avery Martin: That's our show. Thank you for tuning in to Health and Human Science Matters. If you want to learn more about our CSU College of Health and Human Sciences, go to chhs.colostate.edu.

Matt Hickey: Hear, hear.