# Health and Human Science Matters Season 3, Episode 9: Kristen Morris

Kristen Morris: Where I see my biggest impact is with the students that I teach every day. Because I have the flexibility and capability in my senior product development capstone, to hopefully challenge their ideas about design, challenge their ideas about ableism, challenge their ideas about gender identity, on and on and on and on. So we have conversations every day in the classroom. Our senior capstone project is centered around adaptive apparel. So I go in saying, ""Whatever you wanted to design and whatever you wanted to showcase coming into this class, we're going to do that. But we're also going to make sure that we are making it inclusive."

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. Don't just take our word for it. Each episode, we sit down with people who fulfill that mission, our college faculty and staff.

And today we're lucky enough to have a friend and colleague from the Department of Design and Merchandising, Dr. Kristen Morris. Kristen, welcome.

Kristen Morris: Thank you. Thanks for having me. It's such a wonderful opportunity.

Matt Hickey: Wow, we're delighted and we're looking forward to a conversation. We of course, had a chance to get to know one another a little bit over the last few years, and I look forward to hearing some surprises today.

Kristen Morris: I'll try my best.

Matt Hickey: It's always fun to learn a little bit more. And as we were just talking about it, we remind our listeners, we want to get to know you as a scholar of course. But all of us are so much more than our CVs. We're much more than what we do in the lab or the classroom, so we'll do a little bit of both. So we want to start by asking you to tell us a little bit about the big problems or big ideas that inform your research as a scholar here at CSU.

Kristen Morris: Yeah, so my background is in apparel design and product development. And the thing that really lights my fire these past few years is working on big apparel design solutions that are more inclusive of a greater variety of users. And so specifically, I've been honing in on designing for the disability community, and making sure that the apparel products that we are producing doesn't at least exclude people from using, enjoying, wearing them. That's my passion point these days, is we call that adaptive apparel.

Matt Hickey: Can you tell us a little bit more about how that interest emerged? Where did it come from?

Kristen Morris: That's a great question. Some people who get into this line of work, my other colleagues at different universities, they'll often have a personal familial story that they share. I have thought on this a lot, and I do recall there was one time when I was young, and my dad and grandmother and I, we were all out at Perkins, probably Perkins, having dinner. And my grandma, she had to wear oxygen, so she always had to bring around a heavy pack.

And I do recall once my dad being like, "You know, you should really design something for that." And just being given a specific point or direction for design. Over the years, I wouldn't say that was what launched me into this path, but all of the things we do circle back on each other. And so I can pinpoint that as being a moment of being like, I could use my skills and abilities to actually help with design. So other than that, I've just met some pretty amazing people along the way, both collaborators and people in the community, that have really inspired me and basically fill my well to move forward in this area.

Matt Hickey: That's great. A follow one again, if I may. When we think about designing for individuals with disabilities, talk to us a little bit about, are we talking about the cut? The traditional things we're thinking about, are we talking about the fabrics, some characteristics of the fabrics?

Kristen Morris: Yeah. It depends on the individuals that we're working with at that given time. But a lot of it has to do with being able to put on and take off the garments more easily, to be able to maintain independence in dressing longer. And so that can be things as simple as relocating different closures, trying a different closure instead of buttons. Maybe we try zippers or magnets. And then it does go into the level of even the fabrics that we use can either cause friction or reduce friction, so we can make sure that we can take things on and put things off easier than maybe a garment that doesn't have the same considerations. And then if you want to get really nerdy about it-

Avery Martin: Yes, that's the point of the podcast. Let's do it.

Kristen Morris: Okay. We have a model that we share in the apparel field, and I just introduced it to my undergraduates the other day in class, and it's called the Functional, Expressive and Aesthetic Needs Model. And so the two things that we just talked about, features and fabrics fall under function. But when we design, hopefully when we design apparel products, we're also considering people's aesthetic needs. So how you want to look, the colors that you like, the graphic prints that you wear. And then the expressive needs are what I'm communicating about myself to you in the clothing that I wear.

So a good designer would address those functional needs, and that's a natural progression when you think about design for disability, is the functional part of it. But the aesthetics and the expressiveness are equal in that tri-part way to address design. We very much so emphasize in our labs, and then in the classroom, and in my research, making sure that it's on trend with the current farmers that we see out there in ready to wear retail environments. And then we very much so make sure that it is communicating positive aspects to others about the person that's wearing it. Can I give you an example?

Matt Hickey: Yeah, I was just about to ask.

Avery Martin: Yes.

Kristen Morris: I saw it in your eyes. Where I've been doing a lot of work is kind of the crossover between physical activity and disability. So this means designing active wear garments that are intended for, let's say people with differences in mobility. And so in these cases, one aspect of my research is design output. And so what I try really hard to do, is to make sure that we are making positive claims that challenge people's notion about disability. So oftentimes people might think, oh, because I have a mobility difference, I might not be capable of participating in x, Y, Z sport. And that's not the case at all. Some of the design work that I do, it's as functional as active wear, as it is beautiful, as it is addressing some of the other needs. And that's explicitly, intentionally because I want to make the statement and challenge people's notions of what people with mobility differences, cognitive differences can and cannot do in this world.

Matt Hickey: That's cool.

Avery Martin: That's powerful.

Kristen Morris: Yeah. Active wear, love it.

Matt Hickey: So products like this already in the market, I think I heard you... so they can be found.

Kristen Morris: Yes.

Matt Hickey: And of course we think retail anymore, usually they're not going in the door. We're logging on somewhere. Are they easy to find?

Kristen Morris: Not exactly. And so when we talk about adaptive apparel, there will always be a subset of consumers that need custom designed clothing, because it's basically not appropriate to try to do even mass market or adaptive products. So if you think about the next tier down in that adaptive space, there are more and more on the market. I would say we've seen an uptick in design in the space around 2015. Big player, Tommy Hilfiger came out with a Tommy Adaptive line. And they were one of the first, Target was actually the first in their kids' Cat & Jack line. But when Tommy Adaptive came on, it was like cool, Tommy, preppy, and it was made for adults.

So in 2015, after they launched in other retailers, other brands were kind of like, oh, maybe we can be competitive in this space. Maybe there are people out there who need it. So there's always been some mom and pop shops, and of course online purchasing garments and being able to find people's websites online has connected people more than it ever has before. But as far as manufacturers taking it seriously in our field, it was around 2015 is when we started to see an uptick in this space. And since then, I wish I could say... there are more and more brands that are coming on. I just wish there were more that were focused on adults, or focused on sport, or focused on this, that and the other. So we are definitely seeing huge strides in this area, but there could be more of course. And that's what we focus on in my research and in the graduate students that I work with.

Matt Hickey: In the spirit of being a nerd. I have one more question. Are there special needs or interests for individuals with visual disabilities?

Kristen Morris: Yeah. This was before I was at CSU, when I was a professor at Missouri. We did a research study with women who identified as having visual impairments. And so, the visual component of it is obviously very powerful and can be designed too as well. There were some really fascinating preliminary information that came out of our interviews and focus groups. And so things like being able to coordinate colors, being able to know that your outfit looks put together, without either not being able to see full range of colors or not being able to see at all. And then it even went down to things like how can we make it easier to launder? So people who identify with visual impairments, you don't have to necessarily iron your shirt as much or have to iron your slacks as much to make sure you're looking presentable.

So it's from all perspectives, from the visual, how I'm presenting myself, all the way down to those care things that you have to really think about. All of that can be designed for with different fabrics and textile finishes that we can add to it. And then I've had a few students, they're interested in this area too. They explore things like 3D printing braille tags that can go onto the inside of the garment, so it says like, navy blue blazer with, I don't know, a detail on the sleeve. And so you can see it or feel it, read it, and then make sure it coordinates with the bottom.

Matt Hickey: Wow.

Avery Martin: That is so cool.

Kristen Morris: But I have to say, not everybody knows braille. So depending on what time of life you may have lost your vision, Braille from what I understand is a whole new language. And so some people pick up Braille, others don't. So it's not only just like, oh, Braille's the answer, but finding other intuitive ways to communicate what your dress looks like as you're dressing.

Avery Martin: That's awesome.

Matt Hickey: We use the word flourishing a lot, we take it seriously. This is a great example of the breadth of the work across the college that tends to allowing people to flourish.

Avery Martin: Absolutely.

Matt Hickey: Really cool.

Kristen Morris: Yeah. Thank you.

Matt Hickey: So I want to talk about your journey. So tell us a little bit about, again, early influences. Of course, you shared a story about your dad and your grandmother, but the educational influences, mentors, the pathway.

Kristen Morris: I don't know if you all know this, but I am a two time CSU alumni.

Matt Hickey: Oh, awesome.

Kristen Morris: I think it's kind of an interesting story actually, because I hope it speaks to listeners who are maybe in the same position that I was. I grew up in a rural community in Northeastern Colorado.

Matt Hickey: Are we allowed to say where?

Kristen Morris: Yeah, Fort Morgan.

Matt Hickey: It could be where most of our listeners will come from this season.

Kristen Morris: Fort Morgan, Colorado. And so, I came to CSU initially because it was the only state university that offered a fashion design program. There were private schools in the Denver area at the time, and I wanted explicitly to come to a four year institution, so if this fashion thing didn't work out for me, I would have well-rounded educational background to be able to lean on. So I came to CSU, I got accepted into the apparel design side of the program. And I had phenomenal instructors along the way, many of whom have left CSU or are retired now, but Diane Sparks was a huge influence in my life. And then Yolanda Sanders before she left, and Ajoy Sakkar.

So I came and I learned and I ate everything up, and I was pretty active at CSU as an undergraduate, so I had a phenomenal experience here. Then when my advisor at the time, Ajoy, he was asking, "Have you thought about doing a master's degree in graduate school?" And I was like, "No, I am not doing that. I'm done. I am out." I just hit that moment of I'm ready to see what the world has to offer. And so, I graduated and my first job out of college was a graphic design position at a sporting goods company down in Denver. So it was a fake it until you make it. I wasn't trained in graphic design, and probably people who are, would cringe at the story. But I did imprint graphics. I had a background a little bit in knowing how to work an embroidery machine from my high school work. And so, I did all of the local high school sports, or the club, football, soccer, whatever tournaments were happening.

And at that job I met a woman who had an apparel business. And so, I was over here doing art for her products, but she and I got to chatting and she learned that I had an apparel background. And so she said to me, she said, "Hey, we need a designer. We're a super small business. Can I hire you as freelance?" And I was like, "Oh yeah, I could do that. Sure, bring it on." And so I started working with her company, still exists today, it is called Born Fit, but she at that time was doing maternity active wear. So of course that I guess is another seminal story of how I got interested in niche markets. So again, designing for a very specific problem, active wear that's comfortable while your body is changing very rapidly as you are pregnant. And then transitioning after pregnancy into if you so desire, getting back into your pre-pregnancy body conditions. I kept on working with her for seven years.

So I got bored, I got bored at the sporting goods company. I got promoted fairly quickly, and I just am a person that needs that next goal to work towards. And so, my parents at the time were like, "You know, you should think about going back to grad school." I'm like, "No, no, no, no." And then one day-

Avery Martin: Still against it.

Kristen Morris: Yeah. No, one day, I was like, you know what? I should think about going back to grad school. You could just hear the audible eye rolls. It had to be my idea, of course. So I came back to CSU and got my masters. And then from here I had amazing people that pushed me to do things that I never thought I was capable of, and one of those was applying to Cornell University for my PhD. I never would've thought that I would be in that, I don't know, group of people that could get there. And so, they wrote me apparently really great letters of recommendation.

Then I went master's to PhD, and it's a four year program, so I was out in Ithaca at Cornell for four years, and met amazing people. Trained under Susan Ashdown, who's considered the preeminent scholar when it comes to 3D body scanning. So I was able to work with her and learn that before leaving. And then my first academic position was at the University of Missouri, so I was there for four years, and then a position opened up here at CSU. And I was, should I do it, should I not? I was afraid to tell my partner, Chad, about the open position, because I was really nervous that I wouldn't get it, and it would just be heartbreak all around. But he's very supportive in that capacity too. And so, we applied for the position and interviewed, and the rest is history. Four years, I think now.

Matt Hickey: You blink your eyes.

Kristen Morris: Just got tenure, so-

Avery Martin: That's awesome. Congrats.

Kristen Morris: Yeah, it's super fun. And it's a huge relief, honestly.

Avery Martin: Yeah, I'm sure.

Matt Hickey: Share just a little bit more about your memories of Cornell. I ask somewhat pointedly, I grew up in upstate New York, and just bumped into an old friend and colleague who reminded me that he spent some time at Cornell as well. And he referred to it as the place where the sunshine goes to die.

Kristen Morris: It's true, it's true. I grew up here in Colorado, so-

Matt Hickey: Must have been quite a shock for you, right?

Kristen Morris: Used to... yes, the majority of the days having at least some kind of sunshine. And then in Ithaca, the day that it sunk in for me was we were watching the local news. And they, we use partly cloudy, they use the opposite out there. You might have a little bit of sunshine today, but by and large it's going to be cloudy. So yeah, in that capacity, the winters, it's kind of funny because it's a small town. When the springtime comes, basically there's a sense of comradery, like we survived another winter. But the summers are beautiful too, it's so lush and green and every day is cool at night. There's lots of outdoor things to do. We lived a little bit out of town, but you could literally go a half mile and be on this trail network that's just going through the gorges, and there's not a lot of people comparatively there as compared to here. So you would run into maybe one or two people at most on these trails. So yeah, it was really phenomenal.

Matt Hickey: So you spent some time at Missouri?

Kristen Morris: We did, yeah.

Matt Hickey: And then somehow the opportunity at CSU came across your radar screen. Were you looking, or did a colleague say hey?

Kristen Morris: Through our professional organization, most of the open positions get emailed out. That's a feature that you can use. So it came across and I had butterflies in my stomach. I was like, oh, this might be the opportunity that we're waiting for. So it got distributed to the professional network. And it's such a bittersweet thing, because the people that I met there, one person in particular, Carrie Migby Black, she started me down this adaptive apparel path. And so, I'm eternally grateful for her. She had a background in politics, and trained as an apparel designer. So she was in the department basically looking at it from a policy perspective, so how sometimes dress codes and uniforms are conducive to people with disabilities. And so, she was really interested in policy, and so I was over here in design making these connections as we went.

So it was super bittersweet to leave Mizzou, because the people, but obviously we still collaborate today, every day. We have a conference coming up, and so we basically have a longstanding panel at the conference that is about adaptive apparel. And we bring in different industry experts and researchers, and we promote research that's happening in this area among all the universities. So I learned a lot at Mizzou, and I'm grateful for that. And I think having had that experience made me a better professor, better teacher coming into CSU.

Avery Martin: That's awesome.

Matt Hickey: And having networks of professional friends is always important, and fun too. It makes going to these meetings even more special to reconnect a little bit. So, we got lucky enough to recruit you out here.

Kristen Morris: I guess.

Matt Hickey: Talk to us... yeah, I mean that quite sincerely. So a day in the life of Kristen Morris and her team. What does that look like?

Kristen Morris: Yeah. I guess a day in the life would be, I don't know how candid I can be here. Crap, what am I teaching today? First and foremost, I would say being perfectly honest, teaching comes first in my worldview. So making sure that I'm having really a great dynamic experience for students inside the classroom. But then usually we are trying to think about either the data set that we've collected, and now we need to move forward into publication, or are we collecting new data? And how to manage all of that at the same time. Right now, I'm in both of those stages. I have a ton of data that I've been sitting on for quite a while actually. They're qualitative interviews that focus specifically on outdoor product design for people with paralysis. So focusing in on a specific disability, a mobility difference.

And then being here in Colorado, we have such a rich outdoor industry, and we have a ton of brands that are producing outdoor apparel product. And so, I think there's a lot of opportunity to maybe pitch some of these adaptive or inclusive design ideas to them as they're developing product. And so with that project, it basically asks about, it's more than just apparel. It asks about what stops you from being active outdoors from an environmental standpoint, from a place, a specific place standpoint, and from a product or gear standpoint? And I just met a gentleman, I think this is going to be interesting to move forward with, in natural resources, who is interested in the outdoor economy. I don't know too much about him just yet, but I think we could honestly share and collaborate around this data, to be able to understand from an environmental place perspective and then from a gear and product perspective as well.

Matt Hickey: That's great.

Kristen Morris: Yeah. So working on those ideas, trying to get them out. And then with Jen Ogle in the department, we just started collecting data, interview data that's centered on people who are non-binary. So interviewing people who identify as trans and non-binary about positive body image. Jen Ogle is the positive body image guru, super well known in our field internationally. And she brought me on because she's interested from a design perspective, and I have a little bit of research that I did with collaborators at Mizzou in public health, specifically health implications of chest binding. So we are collecting new data, this one is a little more theoretical, it's a little more heady, which is why Jen's the expert. I'm definitely the applied type of person in the project. It'll be great to be able to combine some theory into eventually the design that we might come out with, or ideas about what designs could be and look like.

Matt Hickey: That's awesome. You got a lot going on.

Avery Martin: Absolutely.

Kristen Morris: Yeah. So we're at both ends, so just need to keep it all moving forward.

Matt Hickey: Good for you.

Avery Martin: That's great. I'm interested in learning more about, when you said you're pitching ideas to existing companies and businesses. Can you speak to anyone that you've collaborated with? Are there any NDAs or anything like that?

Kristen Morris: No, there's not. And I wish I could say more about, right now I think right at the cusp of being able to do that. So being here for four years in the middle of a pandemic slowed us a little bit, as far as being able to communicate directly with the brands. They were trying to figure out how to survive on a day-to-day basis. But inside the classroom and outside of the classroom, our department has really good relationships with a bunch of these brands. And so I think there's opportunity, it's just I need to harness that opportunity.

Avery Martin: For sure. Well, brands that are listening right now, there's a great consulting opportunity, right?

Kristen Morris: You got it. Thanks, Avery.

Avery Martin: Yeah, of course.

Kristen Morris: No, I think it's important because it's not that the brands have to produce adaptive apparel. They don't have to do what Tommy did per se, and develop a specific adaptive line. That would be awesome, and that would be first of its kind, particularly in the outdoor apparel market. But they can definitely think about design a little bit differently, and make sure that it's more inclusive of a wider range of users instead of doing things that are same old, same old. And just not knowing or not being aware that if we just put this a little bit over here or change this closure out, we would be able to have more people in North Face jackets. Hint, hint. I have heard, although I cannot find anything about it online, supposedly they did a adaptive rock climbing capsule. But there's no longevity, it's not online or anything yet. So maybe they are thinking in these spaces, but I don't know why we can't find it. Yeah, little teasers. It would be...

Matt Hickey: For sure. Yeah, yeah. I want to talk a little bit about impact. We started with stories about big problems with bigger ideas, and I'd like you to give an honest sense of your assessment of your impact thus far. Don't be shy. But then also project, "I aspire that 10, 15 years down the road, we have moved the conversation in the following ways."

Kristen Morris: Yeah. I think that's happening. It's hard to say concretely with numbers. Where I see my biggest impact is with the students that I teach every day, because I have the flexibility and capability in my senior product development capstone, to hopefully challenge their ideas about design, challenge their ideas about ableism, challenge their ideas about gender identity, on and on and on and on. So we have conversations every day in the classroom. Our senior capstone project is centered around adaptive apparel. So I go in saying, "Whatever you wanted to design and whatever you wanted to showcase coming into this class, we're going to do that. But we're also going to make sure that we are making it inclusive." And so, having those more in depth conversations.

And then what I truly do believe is that in doing that, that's 20 to 25 students at a time every year that are now leaving CSU, going into entry level positions in whatever field, apparel or not, we don't know, it's not always the case. But at least they've had this immersive experience of thinking about others in a different way. Assuming that they themselves don't identify as having a disability. That's probably pretty impactful.

And then what I've seen lately, and I think this is a great thing, is at our professional conference, we have the ability to produce design, which we call creative scholarship here, or design scholarship. And so I try to participate in the design conversation, by producing actual garments and products and submitting them to this conference every year. So more so than ever before, because I've acted as a reviewer, I've helped put together the catalog. There's all these things that you do as service to the organization. Seen more and more and more emphasis on not only functional clothing interests, but also in adaptive apparel research.

And so, I would say one of my major contributions in this space is giving other scholars, whether they're graduate students, undergraduates, peers, a framework to do good design-based research, and then have the product-based outcomes. Every product that I produce has a rich research component behind it, whether it's interviews, focus groups, surveys, surveys coupled with interviews, I'm more of a qualitative researcher. Everything that I produce has some kind of significant research project associated with it. And then what I hope to give to the research and design community is a framework by which to do that for future designs that they might want to do. So instead of just, I designed this because it's beautiful, or I was inspired by trees, it's getting down to the users, having conversations with the users about what they need, and then translating that into beautiful, inspired things. So I think in those two places I've made some contributions.

Avery Martin: I definitely think so.

Kristen Morris: Everybody... stand on the shoulder of giants, so you're just moving the needle forward of mentors and stuff that I've had in the past.

Matt Hickey: And I want to run with that theme of standing on the shoulders, because there's a legacy piece here for you. You trained here, and you've already shared with some passion, the influence, the mentors you had as an undergrad student here. And if you were to think about the legacy you're leaving for students that are going out into the field, or maybe the occasional one who, you pitched the master's degree and they go, "Yes," instead of, "No way."

Kristen Morris: I keep trying, yeah.

Matt Hickey: If you were to distill just a couple of key things you hope they leave with, we often use the metaphor here, fingerprints that our students... Ours, our fingerprints. Talk to us a little bit about things you hope that they take with them, regardless of what they end up doing professionally.

Kristen Morris: Yeah. I don't know how to articulate this well, but I hope that when they leave here, they are thinking about design as a tool for social justice, for something that they feel passionate about. Because at the end of the day, design can be looked at as frivolous, even I would passionately and respectfully disagree with that. But giving them basically the vocabulary, the confidence to be able to use their background knowledge in design to be able to pursue whatever they're passionate about. I think it's really important that they have that, the students that I interact with have that kind of, I guess, confidence. I can't think of a lot better word, but they have the confidence when they leave here that my degree isn't just to design pretty things, but what I do can actually make a big impact on the world.

We try to drive that point home a lot in my classes, but that would be one thing that I would hope they would be like, "Oh yeah, I had her as a professor, and she was really great because we looked at design differently than we had in any of our prior classes." The other thing that I try really, really hard to do is to provide experiences for students in the classroom. And so by nature of what we do, we're not just in a lecture, and it's not just me up at the podium with some kind of invisible barrier between us.

We try to make sure that we have really great classroom experiences, whether it's show and tell, bring in a lot of show and tell. We go to places like the Avenir to look at things from historical perspective. We bring in actual users that designing for, with some startup monies. Thank you very much, we purchased a wheelchair. And so I had a whole list of activities that small teams went over to the art building to take a picture of upcoming graphic design showcases, or go over to the Gifford Building and purchase a drink from the vending machine, give them a couple dollars. Because I think it's in those really experiential activities, that's where we're actually able to make the most contributions in their day-to-day lives. So I think that I would hope that the other kind of thumbprint, as far as the teaching perspective goes, is that, "Oh yeah, that was a fun class. It was great. I learned so much." And by doing, we kind of sneak in the learning.

Avery Martin: And in addition to the Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising, what are some other great resources that the parallel merchandising students have? The Nancy Richardson Design Center, all the amazing technology. Can you speak to that a little bit?

Kristen Morris: Yes. So the Nancy Richardson Design Center was, I would've come back to CSU regardless, but since that had happened, I was all in, this needs to happen. Because there, another big aspect of my research is incorporating advanced prototyping technologies. And so with the Prototyping Lab and the RDC, we're able to expose students to laser cutting, and 3D printing, and digital fabric printing, and screen printing is all there. And so being able to incorporate that into the classroom has been phenomenal. We actually added a course in the curriculum, it's called Prototyping and Testing for Product Development. And we spend the entire semester in the Richardson Design Center. And so we do look at critically, how can 3D printed plastic objects be applied and useful for apparel products? How can we push that technology further? Laser cutting's cool, but what are the implications of degradating the fabric like that? And so we kind of look at that perspective, and then by the time they get to Capstone with me, they've had that experience. They can bring all of that kind of technological knowledge into their projects as they see fit.

Avery Martin: That's so cool.

Kristen Morris: Another cool thing, if I can share it-

Avery Martin: Please do.

Kristen Morris: Is one of your questions asked about funding. That's a good goal, yes, to get one of these big ass NIH grants. But where I've had success is finding industry funding. And that has been from Cotton Incorporated, and so we've been able to fund student projects and basically support them in their capstone projects. And that helps me bring in speakers, it helps me bring in users, and it also helps me be able to supplement their material and prototyping costs. So at the end of the day, the funds that we get from organizations like this make it a level playing field. So no one person has to be like, "Oh, I wish I could do this if only I had this." And so, these funds basically make it possible that whatever you want to do, whatever knowledge from past classes you want to bring in and use, we are able to do that. And that project, we just got approved for another round, just found out yesterday.

Avery Martin: Nice. Congrats.

Kristen Morris: Thank you. We also were able to provide some judging and some financial awards at the end of the semester, so there's a little bit of friendly competition. It just elevates the work that's going on in the class, but obviously we're still very collaborative and close. So that's been a cool thing, that started getting that line of funding at when I was at Missouri and have been able to continue it here.

Matt Hickey: I have to ask you, what do you do for fun when you're not on campus?

Avery Martin: The seven minutes a day you're...

Kristen Morris: Well, there's lots of fun things that have just happened. Just got married on Thursday.

Avery Martin: Oh, my goodness. Congratulations. Chad and I have been together since prior to Cornell. He was one of the main influences, he was like, "Yes, I will support you, and we will go there together." We did, I guess, I don't know. It's been 14 years, so we just decided that fall, the first day of fall would be a great day to just finally [inaudible 00:38:16]. And then we bought a house this summer, and we're are renovating a house. A 1976 split level fixer upper in Loveland. So, that's taking a ton of time. And then we have Nelson, he's a four year old Cattle Dog, Australian Shepherd mix. Very intelligent, very active, and so he takes a lot of-

Matt Hickey: He takes you for walks?

Kristen Morris: Mm-hmm, and then he lets us know we're not taking him for enough walks. And then the summer's been a little bit of anomaly, because we bought the house and we've been working on that. But I'm a fisher woman.

Matt Hickey: Tell me more.

Kristen Morris: Rod and reel. Yeah, trout fishing. When we lived outside of Colorado, it was harder to do some of those outdoor recreation things. So we'll do tent camping and fishing trips. I'm pretty good at catching my fair share of the fish. Usually we catch and release, so that's fun.

Matt Hickey: Do you have a favorite spot, or is that a top secret stuff?

Kristen Morris: Well, I'll tell you, but you have to be pretty committed to getting there. It's a seven mile hike. This last time we did it, I was like, why are we doing this? I don't know. But it's Lake Percy, so it's up past Walden area. And then we actually go out to Buford, Colorado, which is West Northwestern Colorado, about six hours from Fort Collins here. And it's beautiful out there, and there's not a lot of foot traffic, not a lot of tourists get all the way out there. So yeah, there's pretty good fishing out there.

Matt Hickey: That's great.

Kristen Morris: Yeah. I've done that all my life and continue to do it.

Matt Hickey: Two more questions before we reluctantly let you go. And it's related to the environmental context in which we find ourselves. So the first one is CSU, we take this land grant mission quite seriously. It's not just lip service. And so I want you to share with our listeners, what does that mean for you, the land grant mission and vision?

Kristen Morris: Yeah. So for me, and what I try to embody is giving back. So making sure that the things that we do just don't stay in the academic community itself. There's been times where it's been more successful than others in my research, I would say, but making sure that we are connecting with community members. And in my capacity so far, a lot of it has been research, and pulling people from the community to interview and participate in research, and then following up with afterwards. And then that filters into classroom experiences, where those same people come into the classroom and share their ideas with students, and go that route.

But I could see a day, and we've done this in the past, where basically honing in on some expertise that we have in the department and myself, to holding larger community facing panels about how to alter... this is an idea that is brewing, is how to alter outdoor apparel to suit your needs if you have a mobility difference or a caretaker for somebody who is. And so, I think we could have some public facing workshops and things like that in the future, where myself, the graduate students, whoever else wants to participate, even some of the undergraduate students in other classes, we could at least contribute in that capacity. So even if you can't buy the perfect ski jacket all ready for you, we can take this and alter in such ways, so it's your favorite ski jacket that performs how you need it.

So for me, that's what being at a land grant does. And then it also provides opportunity, like we talked earlier, about connecting with different entities across campus and then linking into those networks. We are applying for different funding mechanisms to be able to align the different outdoor product, outdoor activities that we're doing here at CSU, and then hopefully linking in the Northern Colorado community, like the local fish shops, and the local gear shops and whatever, about what they need as far as product, and promotion, and communication and stuff like that. So with a couple collaborators, we're trying to basically suss out the seedlings of these types of projects as well. That'll be super cool to just bring in the guide shop.

Matt Hickey: Yeah, especially for you.

Kristen Morris: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. I was like, "Could we get..."

Matt Hickey: Exactly, priorities. That's great. The second layer, of course, is this eclectic and vibrant college that we are lucky enough to work in. So talk just a little bit about what it means to be a faculty member, not just at CSU, but in the college [inaudible 00:43:34].

Kristen Morris: Yeah, in the college. I think it's interesting, some people don't quite understand the vibrancy of the College of Health and Human Sciences, and different colleges like them across different institutions. So I think this is the perfect place for a person like me, because at the end of the day, we're all people focused. And so I think that's the through line that connects all of our different departments within the college, is we are really interested in helping people maintain their wellbeing, improve their wellbeing, whatever that might be. And so, my contributions to that are obviously in the apparel side of things, but what that means is when we have that shared interest and knowledge, we can come up with really creative ideas and collaborate across campus. So the human performance... I don't know what it's called.

Avery Martin: He knows all about that.

Kristen Morris: HPC, Human Performance Clinical lab.

Matt Hickey: Clinical Research Lab.

Kristen Morris: Clinical Research lab. I do see some things in the near feature in using that resource that is within our college, but not necessarily design, to be able to test some of these products now that we are producing. I think basically at the end of the day, we're all interested in humans and how we perform and interact. And so from an apparel perspective, what you put on your body every day, that's where we kind of factor in.

Matt Hickey: Yeah, that's cool.

Avery Martin: Very well said.

Kristen Morris: It's awesome. Yeah.

Matt Hickey: Well, thanks for giving us a few minutes of your time. As so often is the case, an hour disappears and where did it go? So thanks for the conversation, we really appreciate it.

Avery Martin: Yeah, this was a blast.

Kristen Morris: Thank you. Thank you all for letting me talk. We don't get an opportunity to talk about what's going on in our day-to-day lives, so it's nice just to be able to sit down and reflect with an audience about what are the cool things that are happening in our everyday activities.

Matt Hickey: We love it.

Kristen Morris: Yeah, thank you.

Matt Hickey: Another great interview is in the books. Thank you for listening to this episode of Health and Human Science Matters.

Avery Martin: Stay tuned for the next episode, it's on the way. In the meantime, go listen to our episodes from seasons one and two. And if you want to learn more about our College of Health and Human Sciences at CSU, go to www.chhs.colostate.edu.