# Health and Human Science Matters Season 4, Episode 9: Kari Dockendorff

Kari Dockendorff: We have a lot of really good critical qualitative stories around students, and that definitely shapes people's ideas of what the problem is. But also, people at the policy level also want to see numbers. And so having those skills is, I think, really important for our students. But then teaching them how to think about, are we capturing the data the best ways? Are we missing students by how we've designed our demographic variables and stuff like that? And just not seeing things because they are essentially not existing in our data. And so that's where I really want students to think critically and ask good questions around what is the data that we want and how do we get it for what they need to do.

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 to have a friend and colleague from the School of Education, Kari Dockendorff. Kari, welcome.

Kari Dockendorff: Thank you.

Matt Hickey: We're delighted to have you and looking forward to getting to know you a little bit better.

Kari Dockendorff: Thank you. Happy to be here.

Matt Hickey: So we take two approaches. We want to know Kari the person, and Kari the scholar. And we'll have some questions along both of those lines. But I think they'll blend because of course we are not split into two personalities, one that shows up at work and one that is sort of the rest of life. So we look forward to getting to know you a little bit better.

Kari Dockendorff: Great.

Matt Hickey: Our starting point is to ask you to talk about the kind of big questions and big problems, big challenges that you pursue as a scholar, just as a sort of a backdrop for the rest of our conversation.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah. I think the big questions that my research address is really around how can we serve our students better on college campuses? And the way I do that is through looking at gender and looking at ways we can better serve trans students on our campus. And so, coming up with different ways and better ways to measure gender through survey research, allowing for more opportunity to identify within gender for students and people in general.

Avery Martin: A lot of your research is centered around the theory around queer quantification of data. So what exactly does that mean?

Kari Dockendorff: I don't know. I think for me it means trying to find, if we take queer theory, it's really one way that you can take up queer theory is how do we push against binary limited categorical options or identity, knowing that people are complex and messy. And so identity, trying to measure identity, should also be complex and messy. And from there, instead of just a binary man or woman option of a gender question in a survey, we can ask that in a more expansive way and allow for a sort of fluidity and nuance within that gender designation.

Matt Hickey: Awesome. I want to run with this because I think it's such an important point, the complexity of people and the messiness of people and communities, if we're honest with one another, it can be that way as well. There can be some illusions for our listeners when they think about research that it fits neatly into sort of little boxes and we don't have much of measurement error, whatever kind of measurements we're making, whether that be sort of an analytical tool that somebody spends half a million dollars on or we're trying to interact with a person face to face opposed to an instrument, right? The messiness is there in both cases. And so part of the challenge to research involving people, individuals, central to this idea of the College of Health and Human Sciences is that cookie cutters rarely work well when we're talking about people.

We use the term messiness, but I think there's actually a great interest in not everybody being the same. I've often thought if everybody I bumped into was me, it would be a terribly boring world, right? You want to meet people who haven't walked the same path you have, don't have the same perspective on the world because that's part of how we sort of expand our vision. I think it really fits nicely with both our college mission and land grad mission as well.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah, absolutely.

Matt Hickey: So we want to reel back the tape of your life just a few years, and again, share your journey in terms of, often we're talking about it even prior to that decision, I'm going to college period, let alone I want to pursue a PhD.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah, absolutely. I grew up in a small town in Minnesota along the Mississippi River, five minutes from La Crosse, Wisconsin, to give you perspective. And for me, I was always planning on going to college. I was really excited about science and healthcare. I was planning to go pre-med at the time. ER was my favorite show in the '90s. And I had a chemistry teacher in my high school, junior chemistry, that she really took the time to help me through parts of chemistry. Learned I'm good at biology, but chemistry is maybe why I'm not a medical doctor now. But she spent time and helped me break it down and work through it and showed me different ways, not just to go to medical school, but other ways I could explore chemistry or science in other careers as well. And so, she was a big influencer for me in high school and preparing to go forward into college.

Matt Hickey: Thank God for those teachers who are willing to invest. Right?

Avery Martin: Right.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah.

Matt Hickey: That's great. I have to ask you, just out of curiosity, what was it like growing up on the Mississippi? It's such an iconic kind of water.

Kari Dockendorff: It was wonderful. My parents, I mean, everyone I grew up with had a boat of some sort. And so my parents had a boat and we would spend our weekends just finding little piece of sand along the Mississippi and playing for the day or camping out sometimes.

Matt Hickey: So your undergraduate degree, tell us a little bit about where, what did you study and experiences during that period of time?

Kari Dockendorff: So I went to the University of Wisconsin Green Bay, and I was a human bio major with a chemistry minor. And again, planning to go to medical school. And so, that's early on why I chose that major. And I think maybe towards my junior, early senior year, I was like, okay, I don't know that medical school is happening. And I didn't really know what direction to take that. And I had been involved as an RA my entire time in undergrad. And a mentor of mine at Green Bay was like, well, you could go and get a master's in student affairs and work as a hall director. And then there's all these other career options beyond that. And so that's what I decided to do and that's what led me to the University of Utah.

Matt Hickey: And that had to be a big change, I would expect, moving from the upper Midwest to Utah.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah. Yeah. It was kind of my goal in going to grad school. I was like, I really want to get out of the Midwest for a little bit. And Utah stood out for me because the Olympics had been there just a few years ago, and always excited to watch the Olympics. And it was about as far away from the Midwest as I got into for grad school.

Matt Hickey: Yeah. It's funny because I actually went to the Midwest for graduate school, East Coaster up in Indiana for my PhD. So now, did Utah afford you opportunities? Reading your bio, and I see that you love to run and cycle and all these things, so the great big western skies and the mountains and trails, et cetera.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah, I loved living in the Salt Lake Valley. The ski resorts were 20 minutes away from campus. We had a bus that would come through housing and go directly up to ski resorts. So it would take students all the time. You could ski in the morning and go to class in the afternoon.

Avery Martin: Doesn't get better than that.

Matt Hickey: Yeah, sounds awful, doesn't it?

Kari Dockendorff: It was a good situation.

Avery Martin: Yeah, that's great.

Kari Dockendorff: And running and biking were huge, especially if you like to bike up and down canyons. There's plenty of options and cool bike routes through there. I ran the Salt Lake Marathon, I ran, there was an extreme cross country race down in Moab that I ran. It was a 10 mile race, I think, but ended up being closer to 13. But yeah, such cool opportunities for outdoor activity and all sorts of different kinds of sports in the area.

Matt Hickey: It's a beautiful state.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah, I thoroughly enjoyed my time there.

Matt Hickey: It's great. Now tell us about the academic part. I've stolen some of your time with all the outdoor adventures. So you're pursuing a master's degree in what we here would call Sahi, right?

Kari Dockendorff: Yep.

Matt Hickey: Okay, so tell us more about that.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah. At Utah it was a master's in educational leadership and policy with an emphasis in student affairs. It was a two year program really to help us learn how to support students through undergrad and as they move through their degrees. So some of our classes were around how the university works in finance and law, and then other classes were around counseling skills and how to support students in those tough moments in housing or just being an undergrad, which there's plenty of opportunity to work through things in undergrad. And then also some classes in diversity and social justice so that we were equipped with the skills to have those tough conversations as students are learning to navigate different issues and being out of their parents' houses for the first time and interacting with all sorts of people.

Matt Hickey: You're here. What fun.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah.

Matt Hickey: So you complete this degree. Now again, if I'm remembering your CV right, you worked for a while.

Kari Dockendorff: Mm-hmm.

Matt Hickey: Okay. So tell us again about that.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah, so in our field it's really, before you get a PhD, it's really helpful to have some full-time work experience in the field. And so I graduated with my master's. I was in love with Utah and didn't want to move at that point. And so, I was looking for positions outside of housing. My graduate assistantship was in housing and residential education. And so I kind of pivoted and became an academic advisor. And I was an academic advisor in the school of business where I advised mostly finance students, but then also worked with our honors program within the business school. And so, we would take honors students and introduce them to all the majors by going on company visits and having them interact and figure out what do you actually do with an operations management degree? What do you do with an accounting degree? And maybe you need an undergrad degree, but also what certifications do you also need to be successful in those positions?

So it was a really cool opportunity to, for me, get to know students and then learn. We went all over the United States and then at the end of the year would go on an international trip to introduce the students to different business opportunities.

Avery Martin: Awesome. What were some of those destinations?

Kari Dockendorff: The first year we went to Tokyo and Kyoto in Japan. Then the next two years to various places in Europe, so like Munich, Germany. We had alumni at Amer Sports, which oversees Wilson Sports and Suunto watches and Solomon Skis, and so that's the parent company over that. So Munich is their European headquarters and their North American headquarters is in Utah. So that's how we were connected. Yeah.

Avery Martin: Cool.

Kari Dockendorff: And we've been to London and Paris and Bruge and some other places. Yeah.

Matt Hickey: Talk to us a little bit about the challenges, if I can use this word, and it may not be the right one, but of shepherding students on international trips.

Kari Dockendorff: Well, the biggest challenge is that they're freshmen or at the end of their freshman year, so 18, 19 year olds, and we take them to Europe and they're suddenly of drinking age. And so, helping them make smart decisions while they have, because they had free time and could go do whatever they wanted, but we needed them to be able to show up and not be too miserable while we're meeting the companies that are taking the time to interact with them.

Matt Hickey: So how long did you do this for?

Kari Dockendorff: I did that for four years.

Matt Hickey: And somewhere during that four year period, the light bulb began to go on or somebody was planting seeds or a little bit of both about, okay, so there's this PhD thing that's waiting out there. So talk to us a little bit about that.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah, I think in my role as an academic advisor, I realized that, I mean, I got involved in the business school and helping do some curriculum planning for this program, doing some kind of market research for this honors program and how we can bring in students that are well suited for the program and just getting connected with faculty and wanting to know how to better serve their students. And so, they would use me to help do some research around what are better ways that we can connect students to business as undergrads.

And as I got more involved in that research and curriculum stuff, I was like, I really like this part of my job. I love working with students, but I'm really enjoying the more, instead of just telling students what classes to take, but actually thinking holistically about what their experience on campus looks like. And so, as I got more into that, I was like, a PhD and maybe having the skillset in teaching and doing more rigorous research is really where I would like to go with this. And a lot of the faculty there in the business school supported me in writing letters, helping me get research experience that I could talk about in my PhD application, sort of just whatever I needed to look good on an application as I was applying for a PhD program.

Matt Hickey: That's great. Now we're going to talk about your PhD journey in a minute, but I do want to spend just a moment, because academic success coordinators, as we call them here at CSU, advisors are so important. And again, they can be easily overlooked. I think for John Q Public, they may not even be on their radar screen in some ways. And so, I guess part of this is a word of thanks for being willing to do that because I often think of our academic advisors as Atlas, the whole world on their shoulders in some ways, right? Because you sit at this interface of the institution. And that can trickle down to individual departments or academic units, and then the students that we're here to serve, you guys are right on the front line. So tell us again a little bit about how that experience was particularly formative for you as an educator now.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah. I think for me, becoming an academic advisor, I didn't really have an academic advisor in my undergrad. It's not, Green Bay was a smaller school and they just didn't have that kind of structure. It was more faculty would advise you on what to take as you moved through. And so when I became an academic advisor, I was like, oh, do you know how much this would've helped me if I had this as an undergrad? And so, really approached my strategy in working with students as this is the advice that I wish I had as a student. And also, what are the things that you need to know? How can I connect you to your institution, help you think more broadly about the experiences that you're getting on campus that fit your major and interests? And then you're a little more prepared as you're looking for jobs and stuff like that.

And in that position, you're right, you're kind of in the middle between faculty and what the university wants, but also helping students. And so it was interesting to learn what are the frustrations on the faculty side when they're interacting with students or what is making their lives maybe difficult within the classroom? And maybe it's not getting content material across in certain ways or ways that students are understanding. And so, looking at communicating to them from what I'm hearing from students in ways that they're willing to listen and take feedback on. And then also giving tips to students and be like, here are better strategies when you're in that classroom of what to do and stuff like that.

Matt Hickey: And I imagine it was not infrequent for you to be counseling them on how do I even go talk to that professor? Because there can be some, sometimes probably well earned reputational pieces of the cantankerous old professor, but often none of that's even there. It's just the idea of it's one thing to be in a classroom of 100 other people, but to go knock on their door is, so I think equipping students to be able to do that is an important role as well.

Kari Dockendorff: I mean, even some students would be like, what do I call them? Because in the business school a lot of times they don't necessarily have a PhD. They're coming from the field and coming in and so do I call them professor or doctor? And just talking them through that.

Avery Martin: Yeah, just the smallest pieces that you wouldn't really think about that.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah.

Avery Martin: That's so important.

Matt Hickey: So your PhD training, did you seek out a particular mentor or was it the program first and mentor second? How did that work?

Kari Dockendorff: It was kind of one and the same. So one of my mentors during my masters was still around. I went to Utah, so I didn't change universities from my masters to my PhD. And so, one of my main mentors during the master's program was like, I'm happy to write a letter for you or support you. They speak well during when they're deciding who's getting admitted. And she was really good at talking it up while I was in and finishing my master's and planting the seed for later. And for me, I was like, when I knew I wasn't going to be a medical doctor, I kind of let go of that more advanced degree or that dream. And so hearing her say, "Hey, I really think you could do this," was really motivating for me or helped in my imposter syndrome in feeling I even had a chance to apply to a PhD program. And so that was really crucial and important to me. And then helping me go through the application process, I owe it to her is why I got in.

Matt Hickey: Oh, that's great.

Avery Martin: That's awesome.

Matt Hickey: And so four years or so?

Kari Dockendorff: It was about six.

Matt Hickey: Okay.

Kari Dockendorff: My first year I was going part time. I was still trying to be an academic advisor and a PhD student, and with that program, we were traveling all the time. And so at the end of the year I was like, as much fun as those trips are, I really am not able to spend the time that I want to in my PhD. And so, at that moment, my mentor from my master's was like, hey, I think I've got funding opportunities for you right now.

Matt Hickey: Perfect timing.

Avery Martin: Yes.

Kari Dockendorff: If you really are serious about leaving your job. And so I was able to make that move and had a graduate assistantship immediately. And the first one was working for the assessment office in student affairs. And then from there I started working with who ended up being my advisor in doing research and helping her with her grant funding and stuff like that.

Matt Hickey: Cool. So tell us more about the work you did for your dissertation.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah, so my dissertation, I developed a scale that measures trans inclusivity of student affairs staff and academic advisors in their roles working with trans students. And so it measures trans-inclusive attitudes, knowledge and behavior and how that may show up or indicate inclusive practices or a safer place for trans students to go to get help. For me, I was originally motivated in trying to understand policies around when students are able to change their name or gender on their ID or in their student records. And what I was finding was that there really wasn't too many policies. I think at the time in 2015 there was maybe three or four schools that had any real policy on the books. And so, it became like, okay, so if there isn't a policy, what are those motivating factors for someone to help a trans student trying to navigate that, which led me to then build this instrument that's capable of understanding more of what's going on.

Matt Hickey: Now, does the instrument ask students to talk about the professionals? Is it a self-report from the professionals?

Kari Dockendorff: It's a self-report. And so that is one of the limitations of the survey. I think my goal and long-term goal with this would be to make a similar instrument from the student's perspective to see how they match up and where maybe discrepancies or things that aren't coming through as good practices to these trans students who are navigating the institution.

Matt Hickey: Part of this messiness that we began our conversation with is that all of us, of course, have these blind spots. Sometimes it's willful, again, admittedly, but often it's just-

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah. Don't know. Yeah.

Avery Martin: Yeah.

Matt Hickey: So you complete your PhD at the University of Utah, and then what happened?

Kari Dockendorff: Well, so I had my interview here two weeks before I defended my dissertation.

Matt Hickey: Oh, wow.

Avery Martin: Wow.

Kari Dockendorff: So I feel like after I gave my job talk here, I was like, yeah, what does my committee got? I can definitely do this. And so, had the interview already and successfully defended the dissertation. And then it was kind of a waiting game for a little bit to hear back. It was when there was a president search going on here and so the process was slowed down again a bit, but then I finally got the offer and was one of, I feel like very lucky in that I was a doc student graduating and had a faculty position lined up, which is not common. So was very excited to come here for tenure track position.

Matt Hickey: And for our listeners, you started when exactly at CSU?

Kari Dockendorff: I started fall of 2019.

Matt Hickey: Fall of 2019. And again, for the astute listeners, we had no idea.

Kari Dockendorff: The last semester of the before times.

Avery Martin: Exactly. Yes.

Matt Hickey: So your very first year you run into the campus shutdown, shelter in place orders, et cetera. I think about this often, but I can't really imagine because I think back to 1997, when I first started here, the woes were the normal ones. This was just really unprecedented. And so, talk about your first few years at CSU, and I really do invite you to do both highs and lows as you feel inspired.

Kari Dockendorff: That first year was a whirlwind in a lot of ways. I also upon graduating had a child, and so we moved here with a two-month-old. And so I was starting my faculty position with a newborn at home and trying to navigate that while also trying to figure out how to do this faculty position I landed. And so my first semester I was teaching one class, and so I felt like I was starting to get things, I was sleeping a bit more, starting to get things at least sort of figured out, at least knew what parking lots were the best places to park.

Avery Martin: That's an important piece.

Kari Dockendorff: Right? Finding the things I needed. And I dare say I was hitting a groove in the spring semester and then suddenly the world shut down. I remember I had my very first meeting with the tenure and promotion committee the Friday before spring break, and that was the day things were shutting down. So we were gathering in this room going, I don't know if it's safe for us to be in here, but we got to do this meeting and then it's spring break, so let's do it and get out of here.

And just the eerie feel, I was like, oh, maybe I should stop by and get some groceries on the way home. And just the mad rush in the grocery stores. I think that's when it hit me that something bad was happening or something big was happening.

Avery Martin: Sure, sure. Right.

Kari Dockendorff: And yeah, just understanding how to support our students through this time. I mean, on one hand it was good because our program is an online program anyways, and so we didn't have to pivot. We were already up and running on Zoom and knew how to function on that. I had slides prepared as if I was doing that on Zoom anyways.

Avery Martin: Yeah, ahead of the game a little bit.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah, on that front, I was good. But what became very apparent very quickly is that our students are at the front lines of either Colorado State or at their institution because they're scattered across the country. And some of our students were in housing having to navigate just taking care of the residents in housing, but also staying safe and not knowing what's going on? Are they going to get sick? We didn't know much at that time, even how it was transmitted. And so, teaching really became a space for, okay, how do we process what's happening just in our field right now with COVID? How are we responding?

What's happening at one institution may be a different issue at another institution. One of the cool things about our program with students scattered all over the country is that they have different institutional contexts. And so when we come together in the classroom, we can almost brainstorm different ways to approach a problem based on, oh, one university did it this way, and another student at a university did it another way. And so kind of used that space at the time to just be a resource in navigating what the crap is going on in this. And using that as a space to also give students time to vent and process what's happening in their jobs right now because it was wild.

Matt Hickey: So you just wrapped up your fourth year. Talk to us a little bit about, we use this term very loosely, a day in the life, because people, the cookie cutter doesn't apply to one day at work versus the next. But as you think about your role as a mentor, teacher, scholar. What was a typical day for Kari and your collaborators? What does that look like?

Kari Dockendorff: I would say I think a typical day is, use Tuesdays as an example this semester. Nice thing is that every day kind of has its own groove to it, which is something I appreciate. But Tuesdays, so our classes are in the evenings, so I teach at either five or seven at night. Some of our students are on the East Coast taking classes at seven mountain time and 9:00 PM Eastern Time. And so I don't teach until later in the day. So I use the day to, I start out in the morning, maybe bike or go for a run, occasionally sneak away to ski when it works out to get away to the mountains. And then by late morning, I come to campus. Tuesdays, there's usually a faculty lunch for the adult education and training folks, and then HEL folks have been getting together for lunch.

So a nice time to interact with colleagues. And then I spend my afternoon either in research meetings or meeting with my advisees or students in my class. I've had four students that are working on dissertation proposals and dissertation this spring. And so that's been fun, but also busy and talking them through the anxieties about doing their own research and if they're doing this right and all of that. So yeah, I would structure meetings on Tuesdays with them and then head home around four and take my dog for a walk, relax, eat some food, and then I'd teach class at seven. That's kind of how my Tuesdays went.

Matt Hickey: That's a good day in the life right there.

Avery Martin: Yeah. Broke it down.

Matt Hickey: Now, as we think about your scholarship, talk to our listeners about who are prospective funders of the kind of work that you do? And if you can interject a little bit about the national panel that you served on.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah, absolutely. Right now, I would say main funders, Spencer is a big funder of higher ed research. My colleague, Dr. Munoz, has a Spencer Grant right now. I was just part of one that we submitted or that we've proposed back in April, and so hopefully by the end of the summer should hear something on that. It's cool research, so I'm hoping that we get to do it. And then other funders tend to be the Ford Foundation, sometimes NSF or NIH, depending on what part of education is in those fields. Something that I've been able to get involved with through NASEM, which is the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine. They are a nonprofit, I believe, but speak to NIH and NSF and are a body of scholars related to these fields that also guide practices within NIH and NSF. And so what they were working on, started working on about two years ago, was guidelines around how do we measure gender, specifically in the medical fields, but in science or survey research in general.

And they invited, they had several sociologists who do gender research involved in the actual development of that document. And then they brought on scholars who also do gender research to edit and provide feedback of that document. And so I was invited as one of the scholars to provide feedback and take a look at early drafts of this document that they released. And for me, it was really exciting because who was actually developing that document were people that I go to to cite and I do what I do in my research. So I knew that they were at least tapping into the right areas, or people, from my perspective, who really think critically about how do we measure gender in open and inclusive ways.

And so I got to provide a bit of feedback and see how it was developed and continue to be a part of that editing process. And now it's been released. And so, it's used as hopefully guiding hospitals and other entities associated with the medical field in terms of how do we just capture this data better and then therefore serve, not just trans people better, but really everyone in being seen and being recognized in the medical field.

Matt Hickey: What a unique experience.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah.

Matt Hickey: I mean, so early in your career as well.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah. Super cool. And yeah, I was excited that I was thought of as someone to go to for this work. So I thought it was really cool.

Matt Hickey: That's great. You talked about four PhD students that you're here mentoring this spring. I want to think a little bit about legacies. And so, if you were to cast your eyes five, 10, 20 years into the future, you think about the kind of legacy you want to leave. And again, I think first year on the students, there's the department, the institution as well. But I think that's in the background. What kind of fingerprints do we want to leave on our students that we have the opportunity to work with? So talk to us a little bit about that.

Kari Dockendorff: The legacy I want to leave for my students?

Matt Hickey: Yes.

Kari Dockendorff: I think for me, I want my students to do the research that is most exciting to them. I teach quant, and in my field, quant, or at least in a lot of our programs, quant is not our student's favorite subject. We're much stronger on the qualitative side. And so, my goal has been to convince and show students that there are actually really good ways that they can leverage quant skills within their research. And so, some of that is I take up my counseling skills that I learned in my masters to help work through fears of math and the anxieties around quantitative methods and doing that kind of research. And so, I want to show them that it's not just, oh, I do qualitative research and that's the only thing I'm going to do. I want them to have the skills that are going to allow them to collect the best data to answer their research questions.

And so sometimes that's qualitative and sometimes that's quant and sometimes that's mixed. And I think for me, I want them to be prepared to have conversations with the upper administration of their university or policymakers and people involved with providing funding for universities or other things, and be able to show in numbers, if that's what's needed, what is happening and how, who's being served, or where areas that maybe need more attention by the university or a different policy or whatnot to move forward.

And so, I think we have a lot of really good critical qualitative stories around students. And that definitely shapes people's ideas of what the problem is. But also, people at the policy level also want to see numbers. And so having those skills is, I think, really important for our students. But then teaching them how to maybe think about, are we capturing the data in the best ways? Are we missing students by how we've designed our demographic variables and stuff like that? And just not seeing things because they are essentially not existing in our data. And so that's where I really want students to think critically and ask good questions around what is the data that we want and how do we get it for what they need to do?

Matt Hickey: Well said. Yeah. So couple questions related to this institutional environment, which we find ourselves. And first of all, the college. And so I'm interested in your reflections on what you like best about being a faculty member in the College of Health and Human Sciences.

Kari Dockendorff: I think for me, it's weird. This college is a interesting mix of majors or there's no other one like it. And for me, I do gender research and I focus on higher ed, but gender is beyond higher ed. And so I find that there's different ways to partner with different areas and fields because I do gender research. And in higher ed, I feel like our program is also set up to help train people to help support the other programs as well. And so I see a bunch of different opportunities for both, just for me to partner with other people, but also to help our students or help the programs and this beyond just the college, but to help serve the institution and the land grant mission together.

Matt Hickey: Well said. And you've stolen a march on us.

Avery Martin: Yes.

Matt Hickey: And that's the next question is, again, the land grant mission is really such a powerful thing. And one of the things I've always liked about CSU is that it's not just sort of lip service. It tends to be centered. So talk to us about what it's like to be an academic at a land grant institution.

Kari Dockendorff: Yeah. This is my first land grant institution. I've been at the flagship, Utah State is the land grant. So that wasn't a land grant. And Green Bay is not a land grant either. And so it's been kind of cool to get to know a land grant and see from within what a land grant is like, and then also think about what do we learn about land grants? How were land grants started? Because we get them from the Moral Act. In 1862 is the Moral Land grant to expand west for the country, and doing so, providing incentives for higher education. And for me, I see our field, we are set up to, A, like I said, train people to help our students through housing, help our students as academic advisors, help train people to support them, and then also to think about, okay, I think that land grant piece around community and reaching out, thinking about it in reverse too.

So what does our community look like and is that reflected in CSU? And if it's not, how do we support those students to get here and find us? And then also support other institutions in the area, so the community colleges in the area, and helping them develop, maybe streamline efforts into getting to this institution once they maybe complete their gen eds or their associate's degree. So I think it ends up being really meta because we're supporting the work that everyone is doing and then also supporting other schools in the area. And I think that's not just higher ed. That's also the K-12 side and preparing teachers and going in to the K-12 areas and helping students from there move into Colorado State when they graduate high school as well.

Avery Martin: Yes, indeed.

Matt Hickey: That access mission is so great, isn't it?

Avery Martin: Right. That's awesome.

Matt Hickey: Well, great.

Avery Martin: Thank you so much.

Kari Dockendorff: Thank you for having me.

Avery Martin: Yeah, greatly appreciate it.

Matt Hickey: It's been a great fun, Kari, thanks for talking.

Kari Dockendorff: 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, two, and three. And if you want to learn more about our CSU College of Health and Human Sciences, go to www.chhs.colostate.edu.