[MUSIC] You are listening to Tell Me Your Story where we connect to HLS staff on a personal level. [MUSIC].

Hello everyone. This is Edgar from the HR Department at HLS. My pronouns are he, him, his. Today we're talking with Daryl Muranaka from the Faculty Support Services. Who will tell us about his life, how long he's in these HLS position, and the work he does. Thank you for joining us, Daryl.

Well, thank you, Edgar. I'm very happy to be here. My name is Daryl Muranaka I'm one of the Assistant Directors in the Faculty Support Services Department. I started at HLS as a faculty assistant in 2001. I think I might be one of the last people who applied to a newspaper ad for [LAUGHTER] a job here at HLS. I've been in the same department for my whole time here almost 21 years. I've been a faculty assistant. I was also the Conference Planning Advisor and then I was coordinator before I became the assistant director a couple of years ago.

Okay. I need to go back to your first comment there because that's really interesting. For folks now that are applying to a job at Harvard University, so everything now is online. You'll go right to your computer or your phone. Just get to do a webpage fill out that form and send your information. When you say you were one of the few folks in the past that applied via newspaper or they explained that it really because I always really think it interesting that I am in that age as well from the time of the typewriter, and all sorts of things. The young people really don't get it in terms of even the phone. Remember the phone with wire and all that kind of thing. This is another aspect of this that I think is fascinating that, oh, you used to do this way, and now it's even. How was the process? How did you do?

Sure. I was new to Boston at the time and I would sit there every Sunday with the Sunday paper and you'd have the jobs section and you just read through the job section. And I would see different jobs for Harvard University. I had actually put in about 11 paper resumes. I remember walking down to the corner, no, it wasn't the post office. It's the mailbox. With a big stack of letters and resumes.

That you had to send to the [OVERLAPPING].

That I had to send.

Now is my mistake. You were not joking. So Harvard used to advertise jobs through the newspaper?

Yes.

Like the regular newspaper that you don’t use as much anymore and everything is online as well. Would be in the newspaper's section or a job section?

Job section.

Those one that we see movies that the person go down in a circle to one and call in.

Exactly. In fact, I did a circle with [OVERLAPPING]. It was an experience. I mean, it was the last time I really did apply to another place for a job. Because the jobs that I've applied for here internally have been, of course, either electronic or in many cases. It was job reclassification.

I know lots of people apply to jobs at Harvard and they applied to a lot of jobs online. But it was a very different thing. Back then you may have to go out and you buy the nice paper and the nice envelopes and

To cause that impression than reading a nice paper that you wrote, the cover letter, and resume. Fill out the form, putting an envelope with the stamps, and then mail in, and what would happen? They would call probably right.

They would call. I would get a phone call and I came down. When I got my first job, I actually had a call from HR where they wanted me to interview for two different faculty assistant positions. I applied to both. I was actually offered both and to choose one.

Good.

That was a different experience at that time, HR was over at 23 Everett St. Across the street.

Okay was at 23 Everett street wow that is right Holmes Hall in the Gropius complex.

That's right.

interesting.

Then I did my initial interview there. I then met with FSS for my second interview and then I interviewed with a whole string of professors. Very much it's a very similar process today.

The interview process, [OVERLAPPING] so the candidates do meet with the faculty that the position is supposed to be.

Yeah. We actually in FSS do the interview process the same way it was 20 years ago, but it was everything is electronic now.

Wow. Before I ask them because I'm curious about and you can answer that after who was the person you in FSS that we started talking to or when we started the conversation for the interview and then started working with. But before that, what made you choose Harvard for example, jobs before that you had had the same position or experience while you were just like, I think I'm going to apply for this job at Harvard because.

When I was looking for jobs here, I really was casting a pretty big net. I had just returned from Japan. I'd spent three years in Japan teaching English and on the jet program and I was looking for the next thing in life. I'm originally from Los Angeles and as a child, my family moved to Hawaii. Hawaii is actually where my family first came to the United States back when it was a territory. My family has been in Hawaii since 1899.

Wow.

For us it was returning home even though I was from California. [LAUGHTER] But I had basically lived my whole life on the West Coast. I had gone to graduate school in Washington State. Moving to Massachusetts was a place that I read about in school and heard about, but I hadn't actually visited before.

Interesting.

New to me here and everything was new and Harvard was one of those places that I recognized the name. I had friends who were working at Harvard. That was one of the things that made me think about applying to Harvard.

There were a few things that were going on. I mean, my friend who worked at Harvard was also somebody that I worked with in Japan and she was involved with the Aikido Club, which Japanese martial art here at Harvard. Since I initially came just as a visit. I met the Aikido club there and I practiced with them a little bit. I had been to campus, just Harvard University as a campus a couple of times before I actually got my [OVERLAPPING].

Before you got a job. It's interesting to think or I think many folks who wonder, it is not different from me as well. Because coming from Hawaii, California, and then decide, no, I really wanted to stay in Boston because I loved the winter there [LAUGHTER] same for me I'm from Brazil, so everywhere in my family lives, it's 105, 110 all year long. You have just two seasons, rainy and dry season. It is not like the four seasons that you see here. Everybody asked, how can you adapt from such a warm place or sun all year long to Boston that you have like almost six years over that weather. But it is what it is. It's funny we find this way and you get there and you somehow you feel like homework is a place that you enjoy to be.

Sure. Yeah. Absolutely.

Yeah.

But now, and I'm going to start with the previous question that I had, and now you mentioned Aikido do. I'm going to leave that for later on.

Sure.

Who was the person that you talked to when you started working at, or you started working with FSS when you started?

FSS at that time, it was Debbie Gallagher.

Debbie had been at Harvard for a long time, and she had recently returned to campus. She'd taken a few years away, and she came back to start what was the Faculty Support Services Department. At that time, it was really new.

There was no program created prior to that to take care of the same business that Faculty Support Service was since Debbie Gallagher until now, right?

Sure. What FSS did back then was in many ways different than what it does today. I mean, then it was still being built and figuring out what it was doing. But it was a department that really it did a lot of the administrative things that are necessary for the faculty assistants as staff, like collecting timesheets and that sort of thing. At that time, we would print out timesheets and our faculty would sign it, and we would take it over to the FSS office. This is pre-PeopleSoft.

Everything was just you fill out form like [OVERLAPPING] a paper, right? All paper. I think it's important to know and for people to understand as well. What is the Faculty Support Services dedicated to is mainly to support faculty in general, all what they need here?

Yeah. The Faculty Support Services Department, we support our faculty, we support our regular,

it's hard to describe, but the regular tenured professors of law and the assistant professors of law, and a large group of our visiting professors and lecturers on law who are practitioners and visiting our school.

So that's another thing there. We don't need to go over numbers, of course, but we have a good number of professors, large number I would say that stay on campus year long, doing teaching, doing everything that they do, and then you have visiting professors and visiting scholars as well? Or there is a different there.

That's a different thing. I mean, you have the professors of law and, then you have the visiting professors, you have the clinical professors. You have these large buckets in the teaching program.

They come to teach specifically whatever is the top that they are handling, or they are researching and working with, right?

With our visiting professors and the visiting lecturers, they are often times, the visiting professors are all academics from other universities, and they have a particular specialty, and they bring that to our students. Our visiting lecturers often are practitioners, they're practicing attorneys, they are politicians, they are entrepreneurs, they are people who give our students the opportunity to learn about certain topics that are sometimes a little bit, not necessarily what you would, I mean, we have fascinating classes in our curriculum, I'm trying to think of a good example like Space Law and Policy or the International Law of the Sea, which are fascinating subjects, and we're really lucky to be able to have people come [OVERLAPPING] in shift.

That means that your department is responsible to bring not just support to the ones that are here, but also make sure that whoever comes, they're going to have an office, they need to have a space to work. They probably will help them with whatever information in terms of moving temporarily to Boston or back-and-forth traveling and everything else?

Well, for FSS, we basically help them a lot with their on-campus experience. In many cases, our day of visitors, yes, our faculty assistants do help with making travel arrangements. We do support many of them with offices and with support. I should say though, the visitors come in many shapes and forms and so some actually fall outside of the FSS umbrella. There are multiple umbrellas for support across the school. The teaching program here is quite expensive. It's very robust.

The faculty assistants there are specific ones just for visiting professors or the same ones that support. Then all the ones that are here annually also pick some of them to have that same experience in a sense, instead of having to deal with different professors all the time?

Well, I think that's a great question. As one of their forces and directors in FSS, and I'm one of them, and my area, my team, my faculty assistants that I work with are primarily the ones that support visitors. I have a team of very good assistants whose job really is to support a portfolio of visitors, visiting professors, lectures. Sometimes they come in teams where it's a couple of people teaching one class or several people teaching one class.

That experience is a little bit different than someone who's supporting permanent faculty where it'll be much more integrated into some of the business of the schools and committees and that thing, and there are here all the time, whereas the visitors, sometimes there are regular visitors, but they come once a year. Sometimes they'll come for modules, two or three week intensive blocks. Many of our practitioners come as day of visitors. They're here just for the day. As opposed to our many of our visiting professors who are here for an entire term, all the way across. My team, I'm very proud of them. They're very flexible. They're very adaptive.

There's a lot to keep [OVERLAPPING]

Question, your team. All of them, free, pandemic or what's the distribution there?

I will say my team. Let me think. Give me a second here.

Or even to do the entire FSS majority. [OVERLAPPING]

I think we're probably over half new since the pandemic.

There was a shift.

There was a shift, and from my understanding, I don't think that that's very different from [OVERLAPPING]

No. Is there anywhere. The entire university went through the same, which makes interesting in terms of, that's what we're going to ask the reason that I asked that question is, so how was having the entire department in one specific way, pre-pandemic, and what you had to learn or did department like the school and university had to adjust during pandemic, and now that's a mix I would say?

Yeah, that's a good question. In one respect, I think if it were a situation where there was no pandemic in there where you had one type of staff in one year and then the next year was going to be a complete, that shift that 50 percent plus shift. I think that would be really difficult because there would be this sudden shift in skills, in outlook, but with the pandemic in-between, there was a lot of shifting just in general. We shifted with technology, and at first it felt really huge, I mean, when we shut down in March of 2020, we had a couple of weeks to train everybody in our department.

Yes.

Get the faculty ready to go remote.

Time zones Daryl, right?

Exactly. We had some visitors who are teaching from Australia.

Students that were.

Were abroad.

International students that were abroad that you have to figure out, I imagine the scope of trying to adjust with all of that with professors that could be probably in different places as well.

It wasn't an interesting time. I mean, I think we really pushed on a number of barriers that we thought were firmer because HLS is very much a brick-and-mortar experience, and I think that that is really what we do best.

The pandemic really gave us a glimpse into other things that we have the potential for. I think it's nice to know sometimes, even if you aren't going to do it all the time, it's nice to push those boundaries, to know you can go farther. I think that as far as our ability to be adaptive and resilient, even with that becoming part of it. Not that it wasn't part of the cultural before it because it was, but in a slightly different way.

It open through change right? I think thinking the pre pandemic situation you have in this structure, you have a routine. Of course, people come and go like our students every three years changed everything or every year changes everything. You know, that's going to be that way, but you have a base, you have a structure that is say, I'm going to work with this and then there is a change and make an adjustment here. With the pandemic everything changed, things that we thought that was not going to happen, happened. One thing that I think also, I like to bring in terms of we always share experience with other departments with other folks to do what we can do. It depends on department that you work with. Some you're going to work more. I think this pandemic, we had an experience that heavily depended on ITS, the technology services that we have here. I just imagine how much work they had to be going around to try and try just because that depends on really mainly on them in that situation more than what to do, right?.

Yeah I know. One of the one of the great things during the pandemic was for we in FSS, being able to work with our IT colleagues, with our LXT colleagues, very much hand in hand. There was a lot of really good collaboration, a lot of communication that was special in that we're going through this very traumatic event together, but it was also a really great opportunity to get to know a lot of these people. A lot of these colleagues, some of them who are new, some of them who I worked with for years. You got to see parts of them. You're on a Zoom meeting. You see there. You see their house or their home office behind them and you learn about them in a really special way. That was in some ways, it was part of the challenge and it was partly a gift.

When we come back, after all that we have been through, I think we have a different I don't know if you happen to you. I just my perspective on that is, I remember when I saw the first folks that we have worked with for so long that you know, around the campus and how happy. I don't know if I showed that much, [LAUGHTER] but they know how happy it wants to see them. Just to say, hi, there was a different coming back to campus to start working again and seeing faces that for two years, barely or virtually you would see, or some of them because we're not connected, you don't see that oath and because part of a different department I think is really interesting, but here we are. Now with the new rule, all the changes that happened, how is the family support services new department handling everything, and what's the the latest compared to when we started now, how you see it?

Well, I think FSS as it is now, really feels very much, I guess the right word I'm looking for is refreshed in the sense that we've come back where we're doing different things. We're experiencing our work in a way that it is, in some ways very familiar and in some ways very different. I think that that's great. I think there are lots of people that I miss who left us. At the same time, there are lots of really wonderful people that have come in. It's hard to say that one experience is better than the other. But I think it also shows too that time marches on. You wake up, you start a job one day, and then you wake up and it's 20 years later and everything is different. That sometimes can be a scary thing and sometimes can be a great thing. I think for me it's really been a great thing.

I'm glad that has been that this experience that has been this way for you because it's good to show here just goods stores and people we're here for so long and what they learned, how they progress, how they developed and you are one of those goods stories. I have to ask you about two things that one that I knew. One that I didn't, I was told and I was happy to hear about. One is Tai-chi. You taught Tai-chi and I know that you had a group here and I heard that you practice Aikido. Tell us a little bit about that and how that helps you in life and how you do both.

Sure. Aikido, I'll start there because I was introduced to Aikido when I was in college many years ago. At the time I was practicing Judo and Karate. I really was into that. But there was always something about Aikido that I really liked. It was a few years later when I was living in Japan, I took up Aikido and I practiced with a local Dojo there and got my show down, my first degree black belt in Japan, and then returned home. When I returned home, I really felt like I wanted to continue that, which is one of the reasons when I first came out to Boston that I started practicing with the Harvard Aikido club. Very much so, more so once I got a job here.

I was involved with Avert Aikido Club for a couple of years. Then I got involved with the MIT Aikido club where the longtime sensei there Dicks Stroud became my Sensei and he was my sensei until he passed a few years ago.

I'm sorry.

But I really enjoyed practicing with the MIT Club. After a little while, some of the undergraduates who I knew in the Harvard Aikido club, wanted to have a change, and so they brought in another sensei Sioux Hall (Shihan) who brought me back to the Harvard Aikido club. When Sioux, she also passed away a few years ago, but she was really great. She was at that time one of the highest ranking woman in Aikido in the United States. She was a really amazing teacher and friend.

The undergrad brought you back front of MIT?

Actually, there was a period where I practiced at MIT and I was one of Sioux's junior instructors here at Harvard.

You were working at Harvard, already?

Yeah working at Harvard already. I stayed with the Harvard Aikido club. After that we changed her name to the Harvard Aikikai and I stayed with them until, I'm still technically on the active roster, but I've more or less retired.

I'm past 50 and having a little crickier than I used to be. [LAUGHTER] In Aikido we do a lot of throwing and so you end up spending a lot of time airborne.

it's very physical that way.

Very physical that way, and I just can't put it in the same frequent flyer miles that I used to.

The group still exist, the Harvard Aikido group?

The Harvard Aikido guys still exists.

Is open to office staff to participate as well or has to be an invitation. How does it work?

The mandate from the club, it is a Harvard undergraduate sports club. But they do have a provision within the club constitution to be open to the Harvard community.

Interesting.

I taught with them for up until 2021.

Sioux passed away a few years ago and then another person took over who was Sioux's number 2 person. She left being the chief instructor to pursue other career goals which she needed to do. At that time, I was promoted to fourth degree black belt and took over the club until I retired. But it's one of those places in my life where Harvard has been very good to me. Many people my age, we don't get the opportunity to teach regularly or to continue to practice when you get to a certain age. Martial arts can very much be a younger person's sport, and as you get older, it gets tougher and the opportunities to teach are fairly limited and through the Harvard Aikikai offered me that opportunity to continue my practice.

That's brilliant. Tell me a little bit, if you can. What's the difference in changing the name from Aikido to Aikikai?

The organization that we're part of, the main line School of Aikido is called the Aikikai. Many Dojo around the world often have the place name of where they are with Aikikai. The Harvard Aikido club, changing from Aikido club to Aikikai, although sometimes it is still the Harvard Aikido club, I think officially for the university, it is still the Harvard Aikido club, also known as the Harvard Aikikai.

Aikikai. Forgive my ignorance in here. That is a meaning for Aikido or an Aikikai.

Aiki is like blending energies. Aikido is the way of blending energies. Then the Aikikai is, kai describes a place or an association. It's like this place where this group of people who practiced this blending energy. One is the name of the art, the other is the name of an association or group that practices this.

Again, forgiving my ignorance in here, once it is blending energy or manipulating a sense energy, the physicality comes in what sense? Is the release of energy in your body or?

Sure. That's actually a really great question. A lot of what Aikido does is it takes the energy of the attacker and redirects it in a way where oftentimes we do throws, we do pins.

Many of the ways in which we execute the throws as the momentum comes in from whatever direction from above, from the sides, we don't interrupt their motion or their energy or their intention, we just let them go in that same direction and oftentimes lead them to go a little further and maybe until there [OVERLAPPING]

But not simulating, you're not taking it to. You just diverted.

Right. We don't clash head to head. We are always a little to the side, and we always move people through. One of the things that I, as I was teaching students was asking, when they're doing a technique, did the other person feel heavy or did they feel really light? Because if they felt really heavy, then you're using your energy, your own personal energy, your own muscle strength to force the technique. But when they feel really light, like they're just whizzing through, whizzing by you, and then they [OVERLAPPING]

That's the right way.

That's the right way because then it's all their energy, it's not yours.

It's a brilliant way to see things. I tried to translate to other things in life that you can think about of could be considered in terms of the energy, but also in terms of problems or of people's behavior towards that.

Of course. I think of Aikido has less of a confrontational activity and more of a way of thinking about, just you can think about it as a way of life, but also it's a way of conflict resolution.

Yeah.

There's a lesson, it's very difficult to describe it. I do a demonstration for students using one of the techniques of,

they attack you, and you get behind them, and you're looking over their shoulder so you can see what they're seeing. Because obviously they really don't want to be attacking me. I'm such an awesome person. You get behind them, see what they're seeing, but there's nothing there. Let's turn around and look around and see where things are going. Then in this part of the technique, you're leading them, building up some momentum. Then when you actually do the throw, their feet have oftentimes moved ahead of their hips, ahead of their shoulders, so now they're off balance, and it's very easy to throw them.

Very interesting.

But very much so with something similar, not in the sense of getting the upper hand on people, but more of in your interactions with people. You really do need to try and get behind them, see where they're coming from. See what they're seeing and then lead them, not push them. Well, you are pushing a little bit, not pulling them into looking at how you see things, but take them in the same direction that they're going, and then lead them towards.

Because there are always options.

There are always options.

If you come to me with a problem or with a perspective, what do you think that I am doing, or I'm saying, and I think that's not what reality is in terms of our connection there, I don't need to take that energy as well and trying to just defend myself in the sense of oh, no, they don't even become bigger. If you have that feeling, you keep that feeling them because it's not part of me and I don't need to getting involved and create a bigger problem than it is with generate sometimes, bigger conflicts. I think that's very interesting and what it is, because sounds a little bit and again ignorance here with the Tai Chi because Tai Chi is more of a beautiful movement in the sense of find your own energy as well is that's what is?

Tai chi does something very similar and there was an exercise that I was doing with my teacher. I've practiced in a Tai Chi group until my son was born a few years ago and then just, I had two kids and no time. But when we did Tai Chi, we did this exercise called pushing hands. Pushing hands is very similar to Aikido, where I'm not going to push against you. I'm not going to, in the sense of I'm going to push my force against your force. It's like where you're not pushing, that's where I'll push. Where you're going to give that's where I'm going to push. I'm just going to take what you give me.

Other exercises where you want to just lead them. You don't want to pull them or yank them. You want to just nudge them where you want to go. In that sense, Aikido and Tai Chi Chuan are fairly similar. In life, working with people is basically what we all do it. If you're constantly going to just clash force on force, the only way you ultimately win is if you're bigger and stronger and there's always somebody bigger and stronger than you.

Yes.

When I was 30 years old and a new black belt, I was younger and stronger, and faster and here I am past 50. I'm nowhere near as strong or as fast as I used to be, but I can be effective when I need to. Just not clashing. When you're younger, you're more apt to do?

Who do you think that would be, in a sense? Because of how much energy we all carry from the youth and just certain point that everything that you need to resolve is based unnecessarily the physical clash. But in this intense energy that you want to express, and you push, and you say, sometimes with no consequences. Thought through in terms of what's going to happen by doing and acting that way. Like I said, after our 50s are maturing in our way, we learn. The more resourceful in a sense of thinking more in the energy is not as punching out all the way we'll learn how to deal with that and be a better communicator in a way or more patient with life in general or everything else. Is that what it is?

I think there's something to that. I had kids late, but I think having kids helps too.

Change a lot.

Changes a lot. You can't always just clash with a three-year-old. You don't win all of those battles.

Communication.

The Communication.

Is completely different there, right?

Right.

Try to explain or justify from your point of view is again, going back to Aikido, I'm going behind and see what the broader view because he's a different conversation. Maturity in a level, and I assume that they're also helping you in your job dealing with, I don't know, frustrations dealing with development, your own development, career development, or even interactions with people throughout all these years that you're here, right?

I would hope so. Yes. I think there are always going to be frustrations, setbacks, and things don't always necessarily happen the way that you wanted the first time around,

but I think Aikido really has changed over the years, has changed or shaped my outlook on accepting the things that I cannot change. Then teaching me to look at a problem, to try and find a way around the problem, or to shape the problem in a different way so that I can overcome it if I couldn't overcome it before and this is actually one of the things that I find working at Harvard so many of our students are very good at that. They don't just accept a problem as the end. It's the problem, and now they're going to figure it out.

Has to solve the problem, right?

When working with the undergraduate club, we oftentimes they wanted to put on events or do things that really were things that they needed to plan and do and they would run into all obstacles.

Roadblocks.

Roadblocks. They can't have this or they can have this or somebody didn't do certain things, and they would always find a way. I was always amazed at their ability to find a way. It's something that I tell my kids, these other kids really, they find a way. You have a problem, you just got to maybe look at it a different way.

Take a different look or ask for a different opinion in terms of perspectives, and everything that you can. Because sometimes there's just you stay stationary in one position, looking at one thing, someone comes with a completely different view. We can give a different approach, a different perspective of that.

That's one of the things with like Aikido where oftentimes we start when we practice face-to-face. But if I'm doing the throwing, I often end up behind you. I have not just the look that I had when I started, but now I also have your point of view as well. That's actually another part.

Which is very helpful.

Is that's a thing developing some, even metaphorically Aikido has. Sometimes I would sit there after practice and think, how did that work? Did that work okay? Did that work out not okay? Why didn't that work that way the way I thought? Because I didn't take the other guy's point of view. I didn't put myself in the right position. Then I would think about some problem that I had at work, and it's the same solution. The same thing I didn't do in practice that would have helped me in that situation also is the solution for what I did t work.

That's really interesting, and I think that's a good way to see or how you use the techniques that you'll learn in life and how you're going to practice that as well with the environment that we live or work with.

Yeah.

One thing that I would tell you, Daryl, that you're getting close to our time here. Your department and I'm telling you that since I was in facilities and then later in DOS was always helpful in any way that I reached out or trying to communicate and the time that was Debbie Gallagher, I remember, I don't have much contact with Tara, which I hope we will get to know better as well, but with you, I remember how long you have been working together on this campus. When in DOS because there was always the situation with the students, and then you have to reach out to faculty assistants and get their help, communicating with professors and everything. I always found a response. I always found a good group of folks, of workers that would help you to solve a problem or give you the best direction on what to do. Thank you very much for everything that Faculty Support Services does. Thank you for a second invitation to come and talk to me. I really appreciate, and I'm pretty sure that everybody is going to enjoy the conversation as well, and until next time. Thank you very much, Daryl.

Thank you. It's been a genuine pleasure and also all these years working with you it's been a wonderful experience. Thank you for inviting me.

Thank you and for everybody else, until next time. Thank you. [MUSIC]