[00:00:04]

[MUSIC] Your are listening to tell me your story where we connect to HLS staff on a personal level. Hello everyone. This is Edgar Kley Filho from HLS Human Resources department. My pronouns are he, him, his. Today we're talking to Emily Neill from HLS library. Who you tell us about her life, how long she's in disposition at HLS and your work does. Thank you for joining us, Emily, and please tell me your story.

[00:00:39]

Wow, that's [LAUGHTER] a big opening. Yes. Well, as you said, I'm in the library here at Harvard Law School. I've only been here since October. However, I've been at Harvard for ever.

[00:00:58]

Really?

[00:00:59]

Yeah. I went to grad school here starting in 1992. I've only really left for a short stint at MIT. I've been in a lot of different places at Harvard and the law school is only the latest. But it could be the greatest.

[00:01:13]

Yes, definitely is. You should be glad that you are here. I want you to go back to that story and explore more about everything because this is a cool thing about Folks that you have working here at HLS that sometimes has this background that are so close to us and you have no clue that they are here for a long time, like you said that you were. I want you to go back to the Harvard part, till you get here. But tell us a little bit about your background. Are you from the New England area, your familie is from here, what you can tell us a little bit?

[00:01:48]

I'm very originally from the eastern shore of Maryland, which if people a few people know what that is, I know what that is, is basically it's a little bit backwater, very country. We eat hard-shelled crabs, that thing. But I left there and started first grade and Massachusetts. I consider myself largely a Massachusetts Native.

[00:02:07]

Yeah. When did your come Massachusetts?

[00:02:09]

In 1976. The bicentennial year was exciting one for us here in America.

[00:02:15]

Historically is.

[00:02:16]

Yeah. We moved from Chesterton, Maryland to Amherst, Massachusetts. Amherst is West and it's well-known. It's the Pioneer Valley, otherwise known as the Happy Valley, where if there are five colleges, Hampshire College, Amherst College, UMass Amherst, Mount Holyoke, and Smith. They call it a suburb of nothing because there's a lot going on there, but there's no major city nearby. As far as growing up, it was pretty great place to be. Much going on. Many young people, lots of music, lots of cultural stuff. Then just a bunch of farms and lakes, that thing. It's a nice next.

[00:03:00]

Two things because now I'm curious to ask different aspects of what you just said. First, how was the transition? Did you feel like there was a difference in terms of leaving Maryland and what you used to be leaving there to come to Amherst area, there was similarities or completely different. How was for you at that age?

[00:03:19]

Let's just say that I think our parents saved us. I come from a family of I'm the youngest of four. I would say that I'm a lot more of a cosmopolitan and semi enlightened person because we got out of there in time. Nobody quite understand. Like in the north people think Maryland is the South and in the South people think Maryland is the north. It's that weird space called Mid-Atlantic where there's a mix of both things. But I would say because of the rural nature, even though it was a college town too, there is a college, they're called Washington College, which employs a lot of people. It had that going for it, but it also just had pretty typically Southern racial dynamics. Haves and have nots. There's very clear lines between white population and black population. A lot of austere conditions are the haves and have-nots were pretty marked in that area. We went to public schools and so if we had stayed there, I would be a different person. I'm pretty sure.

[00:04:31]

That is definitely an impact. Depends on the choice where you go to study, where you live, and if you decide to stay. There is also a difference because I was talking to I think was Caryn Shelton-May, who is also, I think from Maryland, but she was from.

[00:04:48]

The DC area. There's there's different Maryland.

[00:04:51]

From the beach side.

[00:04:54]

She's near Baltimore, that thing?

[00:04:56]

No. I'm lying to you.

[00:04:57]

You're lying?

[00:04:58]

Yes.

[00:04:58]

You're always lying. [LAUGHTER].

[00:05:01]

Exactly. No, Caryn is from Virginia. Virginia Beach, that's different from Virginia countryside. I was talking about dancing. Is that what's guaranteed?

[00:05:12]

No. Similar thing though in Maryland there's like to the west side of Maryland. Like I'm eastern shore, Western shores Baltimore and there are big differences. Or if you're close to DC and Maryland like that's a very different Maryland.

[00:05:29]

It be the same about New York City and all the population surrounding to New York State or northern New York State. Great. Then another interesting thing that you told me about moving to Amherst is that is not big, supposedly to be just farm area, rural area, and not a big city, but five colleges.

[00:05:54]

Five colleges. It's a really unique place. Two of them are women's colleges. Mt. Hollyoke and Smith, UMass Amherst is like the flagship campus of our State University. Amherst College is pretty typically like small liberal arts preppy college, which has actually come a long way since those days. Hampshire College, which is the one who just offered to let any of the students from New College in Florida come to Hampshire for free, to get away from what's happening.

[00:06:27]

Really?

[00:06:27]

Yeah, Hampshire is very experimental college. It's one where people design their own majors and it's known as hippy, dippy. It's where our famous, what's his name? Who does all the jazz documentaries, country documentaries. What's his name?

[00:06:46]

I'm trying too.

[00:06:47]

I documentarian. Very fun. Anyway. He went there. And he's basically saved the school several times from financial ruin. But it's a very unique place and there's just a broad range of kids, young people in that area. As a high school student growing up, that just makes for a lot of fun.

[00:07:05]

Your high school was in Amherst facility.

[00:07:07]

Yeah, I went all the way from first grade all the way to high school there.

[00:07:11]

Great. It was a good experience.

[00:07:13]

Yeah, I loved it. I had a great childhood, I would say.

[00:07:16]

Now college.

[00:07:18]

College, and I couldn't go to college in the town I grew up in. Although two of my siblings did, but I needed to leave. I needed to be like launch. I went to Oberlin College in Ohio, it's like a liberal artsy, radical left. [LAUGHTER] A little place in the middle of some cornfields. It was like Stop on the Underground Railroad, the first college to admit women. It has a reputation.

[00:07:48]

Is that a radical left in the middle of Ohio?

[00:07:50]

Yes.

[00:07:51]

That's very interesting.

[00:07:52]

Also a very interesting dynamic. With the town and gown relationships. But also really good experience. I was not interested in being in a city. I just really wanted to go and study. Like I remember, I went to visit the campus over thanksgiving break and there was no students there and it was totally gray and rainy and horrible. I had to read Elie Wiesel's Night for my class I was in at that time. I just spent the whole time in the library reading this really dark book, and I just knew this is the place for me. They have a wonderful library. It's beautiful and it's well-known for what they call a womb chairs. It's like like a big circle, like plush on the inside and it spins around and you crawl in. I was sold.

[00:08:39]

For reading, that was a perfect. I loved the library.

[00:08:43]

You could meet anything in that chair I can see. I am just Beach. I don't know exactly what the design is, but [OVERLAPPING].

[00:08:49]

I'll show you a picture later. It's a great a womb chair. Do you need to say anything more?

[00:08:54]

Yes. That's why my beach or was it that sounds so comforting like that. You feel good.

[00:08:59]

It holds too all around. You get into that little [OVERLAPPING].

[00:09:02]

You can read any genre even a horror that and feel protected and safe.

[00:09:06]

You're protected.

[00:09:07]

I want to see this picture. When you're finished with college, what is your next exploration?

[00:09:13]

Well, I went to college to study Buddhism. I was really interested in Buddhism and they have a really good religion department. They're in Buddhist studies in particular.

[00:09:25]

But I tried really at 3 years, 9:00 AM every morning I took Chinese and I just could not drill it into my thick skull. I was just really bad at it. I felt very much like I couldn't be a scholar and something that I wasn't able to at least read the language and one of the major languages in which it's practiced and Japanese and Sanskrit were off the table. [LAUGHTER] Towards the end of my undergraduate degree, I was just taking other religion classes to finish my major and I got introduced to feminist theology, which it takes many forms. Some of it's just feminist critique of Western religions and Western binaries. Others of it is actual women creating alternative ritual practices or just working from within their religions to transform them. Anyway, I felt like you know what? I get this, I can relate to this even though I did not grow up religious myself, but I had strong feelings about religion. Critique I like that and I didn't really have any idea what else I was going to do with my life because being a religion major isn't a particularly practical thing. All of my professors were like, you should go to graduate school because you're good at school. That's what I did. I went to Harvard Divinity School and that's how I ended up here in the first place.

[00:10:49]

Also, you went to Harvard Divinity School, is one of my curiosities. Just going back a little bit before because I wanted to clear that out in my mind. Religion. You went to school in the study of religion, they study Buddhism although did you practice Buddhism did you learn it?

[00:11:07]

I tried. I went for one of our winter terms like January term I went and lived in this Peace Pagoda in Leverett, Massachusetts with these monks. It just took a month to convince me that, no I was not going to be a practitioner I was going to study religion.

[00:11:25]

But it's interesting because the search for answers in terms of this spirituality or religion in general, what you are going to study because you said that you studied quite a few of them. It's not very easy as well here, I think in US to talk much unless you are in the right environment to talk about religion. Could you take a back a little bit?

[00:11:48]

I would say, what people hear about religion in the mainstream media, sadly, are the extreme.

[00:11:54]

Exactly.

[00:11:56]

But having spent years and years immersed in looking at all forms in practice. There are so many amazing.

[00:12:06]

Teachings, right?

[00:12:07]

Yeah. Just in terms of how people understand religion as justice-seeking or as an institution through which to achieve political entity, or just like social political ends, which is what interested me. I wasn't particularly interested in my own enlightenment because I just think that's a hopeless case. [LAUGHTER] But I do think the religious impulse is something that you cannot deny is important in the human condition. To dismiss it as many academics do in general, the field of religion, that's just for crazy people or diluted people or it's very easy to use it for self-serving ends. But there are some really progressive and amazing communities out there doing stuff.

[00:13:02]

Beautiful things.

[00:13:03]

Yeah. You just don't hear about that a lot even though I spent 10 years immersed and surrounded by people like that, learning about people like that. I also learned about the dark side of every religion has a very dark side.

[00:13:17]

Yes. Usually touched by men, when we go to that dark side.

[00:13:22]

Basically, as soon as something becomes institutionalized, rather, it becomes co-opted by whoever is in power. Whether that'd be the Roman emperor, or whether that be Catholic priests, or whether that'd be just, it's a largely patriarchal undertaking, institutionalized religion.

[00:13:44]

It's interesting because they are going towards enlightenment, emotions, self-discovery, but becomes this patriarchal thing that should be very rigid and restrict. But anyways, different story.

[00:13:58]

We could talk about that.

[00:13:59]

Yes, I would love to. I love those topics as well. You come to Harvard Divinity School. For me, just satisfy my curiosity because I always thought that there is a place that I would like to try to work or study. It is Divinity School. I think the same way that you went to search for the religious aspects of everything turns over religion I would like to have that environment just to see how many different theories or religions they can teach you there where the conversations go. Was nice in that way for you?

[00:14:37]

Everybody outside of my life was like, are you going to become a nun? [LAUGHTER] That's what they thought it was.

[00:14:44]

Because of the name of your thing Divinity School.

[00:14:46]

Divinity School that they don't know what that is. But it's a place where you can go. There's just a traditional master's degree in religious studies, which is like an academic pursuit. Then there's the ministerial track where you can actually go to become like a community leader or a minister in various sex. Then there's the equivalent of a PhD. They called it a ThD at the time and has since been co-opted back into the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, religion program. Because religion, it really gets the shaft here [LAUGHTER] at the institutional level. They took away the Divinity schools degree, which they fought so hard to keep the higher degree. Anyway, it's when I got there, it was largely Christian-centered. There was Islam and Judaism were at the margins fighting for space. It has since gotten better. But the people I've stayed in touch with over the years that they move people through there quickly. It's a master's degree, is a two-year program. There's a lot of people going through there all the time. But it's a struggle constantly, it's like any other places. If you're, if you're a mainline Christian, if you're white, and if you're male, you're going to do a lot better. But there's more there's little pockets there and their support to do other kinds of work. I'm sure they'd kill me for saying this, but I mean come on I have to be honest. If you talk to any black person who comes out of that school, they've had a very different experience and I was in touch. I was running the Women's and Gender Studies Program at MIT for a while and I connected with a lot of people over there because I still think religion is interesting. Whereas a lot of people at MIT are like, what the hell is religion got to do with it? But I stayed in touch with a lot of people and there's a lot of struggle there and there is a lot of sense of alienation. I would say it's not a dream place, it's like any other place.

[00:16:50]

That's exactly my curiosity on that one.

[00:16:53]

You can get some things out of there, but you're going to have to fight for it.

[00:16:56]

But you have to go like you just mentioned, you have to go through the channels that are already available, not trying to create some other channels that could be interesting.

[00:17:05]

You can try to create them and I did. I think there's waves of people there.

[00:17:11]

Coming and go.

[00:17:12]

Towards the end of my degree, we had a large group of people who were pushing against the powers that be and who were able to change some things. But then you graduate, they're counting on you graduate.

[00:17:24]

Exactly.

[00:17:25]

Then there has to be this momentum, that constant pressure against the status quo. But I feel like a lot of people in grad school like they're still in that mode of life or they are pushing against the status quo to some degree.

[00:17:40]

In some level reminds me of here, very distant comparison, but in the sense of comes and goes.

[00:17:51]

Fast rotation. The students who come into HLS, and I'm talking about the time that I used to work for DOS and they manage students orgs and journals. Journals are more fixed than remain. A few of them change or they stop working with them. But the orgs, there's a constant of a creation and elimination. Because one group comes and stay here for three years and say this is a great idea let's create this org, and then by the time when they leave, they don't have enough followers or people to keep going with that one. That org goes dormant for a while and maybe never revived sometimes they are, depends on the group that comes few years later. I saw some of them coming back to life, say, you want to take over this one again. But might be something like you are saying, instead of having an opportunity that everybody could have a chance to explore deep like you mentioned in college, how many different experiences you have to touch then to learn something there. From different parts all over the world probably that would be interesting just to learn from different views. You graduate in Divinity School and you said that you went to MIT?

[00:19:04]

Well, it wasn't that smooth. [LAUGHTER] So I did the master's degree, which doesn't count towards the doctorate and then I started the doctorate. I was all told I was at the Divinity School for way too long because and also I was working 30 hours while I was there. They don't have money. They don't really give you money. I got married four days after I graduated from the master's degree and I was a young person sitting up home and in graduate school. I got divorced. All this time I was working at various places around Harvard. I worked in the chemistry department because as a grad student, I was offered this job running the Women Scholars Program at HDFS, but it paid half as much as if I just did this admin job in the chemistry department. These are the decisions you make. Although it would have been nice to work on something that I was also interested in, I needed to pay the bills. That's how I started getting involved in all these other offices around campus. I started running this talk series on economics and political economy and religion. It was like a weird combination of interests. Robert Barrow from the Econ Department and his wife who was a religion scholar and that was fascinating, period. I ended up working in the Econ Department running the undergraduate program. That came after I took a period, I didn't finish the doctorate right then I had a child. Lots of things happen. Let's say life happens. That's how I ended up working in Student Services, which is where I am now. I'm a Program Manager. But my first experience was in economics, working with Econ students and that's a huge department at Harvard. It's considered like a college within a college and everybody at the structural level hates the Econ Department because they take up so much of the student body. They take up people who could be in other more humanity style programs, which are everyone's fighting for students at the undergraduate level because a lot of people's budgets depends on how many students they have. That world of undergraduate life at Harvard is a unique one.

[00:21:35]

Where that sits?

[00:21:37]

The Economics Department is right next door to the law school. In fact, it's Littauer, which is there big building. That's where I worked for seven years.

[00:21:47]

When I was in landscape I took care of Littauer and everything in that area. I thought that Littauer is just administration building.

[00:21:54]

No, it's the Econ Department. It's the seat of Western power. I joke but I'm not really joking. Larry Summers, there's so many people in there whose names you would know and that have a hand and economic policy in the US.

[00:22:18]

The class was inside of the Littauer?

[00:22:21]

Some of them are, but they use classrooms all over the campus because they're part of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. They're not a school unto themselves.

[00:22:30]

That's why we're saying that it is a college inside of a college.

[00:22:33]

That's right. Because it serves undergraduates. There are also lots of graduate students. But, they're graduate students from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The business schools are separate entity.

[00:22:45]

My mind was, where is this Econ in?

[00:22:51]

Their department is very adamant that they don't want their students to take business courses. They have a very kind of strictly liberal arts approach to econ, where it's, they want you to have the classical econ education. All the students had to go to MIT to take accounting, which is a practical skill to have, but the Econ Department would not offer that. They're like, no, our students don't need to know accounting or personal finance.

[00:23:19]

For economy?

[00:23:20]

Yeah. I ran the advising program for undergrads and I built it out over the years I was there and one of our big things that we accomplished was finally getting a personal finance class. We couldn't do it in a normal semester time. But so many kids wanted that. As we saw here at HLS beyond, at a personal Finance program and we did it in our seminar rooms in the library, which have a capacity of 45 people to fit in the room, 160 students registered for that and obviously that's such a felt need and yet you don't see it really addressed anywhere. Everybody feels like it's below them to offer this. I'm just like, really? The funny thing is when we put that program out there, so many staff were also like can we take this? I was like, I want to take this.

[00:24:11]

How long did you stay there?

[00:24:14]

I was at the Econ Department for seven years.

[00:24:17]

Seven years?

[00:24:18]

I had a brief stent working for one of the professors there, Sendall Mullen Nathan, he's in behavioral economics. He started his own company called Ideas 42, which was a consulting company that worked with organizations to streamline whether they were making something or whether they're in-house administration using behavioral principles to do a better job more efficiently, get to the end they wanted.

[00:24:51]

Microsoft. He went out there and do something with them. He's very well known, and so we worked with a lot of cool big organizations. The New York's Department of Education, we worked with. That was fun, but I was older than the two founding director [LAUGHTER] all the people I worked with were like children and they were available 24/7. Meanwhile, I had a child and it was fun, but definitely being at a startup was not for me at that age. I was in my early 30s and I was like no. Then?

[00:25:27]

Then I went to MIT. That finally I got a job that matched my degree. I ran their women's studies program there. They have an amazing School of Humanities which few people know about. But it's ranked number four for humanities.

[00:25:42]

Humanities?

[00:25:42]

Yeah. One of the secrets of MIT is that of all the schools that are there, there's like engineering and there's Astro. One of the schools as humanities and undergrads they will take the most amount of classes in their undergraduate degree in the School of Humanities because they are required to take one class and humanities every semester that they're there.

[00:26:06]

Why is that?

[00:26:08]

Because MIT believes in developing well-rounded students. Make connections between [OVERLAPPING] Humanities and Sciences. Two things aren't separate. They also require you to pass a swimming test before you graduate [LAUGHTER] which I also really respected. It was a guy who gave all the money for the gym. He was a big advocate of swimming and so the conditions under which he was to give this money or that you're acquired all students undergrads to pass a swim test.

[00:26:38]

Is interesting because you're talking about swimming classes, and there is always this legend that the Weidner Library, who was given to Harvard, or the money that founded the library, was given by the widow and mother of a husband and son who died during the Titanic accident. When I started learning about this, the legend was saying, that's very interesting. Part of this is true. She gave the money, she would have the concept for the library, the design and everything else so strong that nothing can be touched. Inside or outside of the skeleton or the library. She created a room for her son, where his desk and belongings are there. But the legend says that when the library opened, one of her demands was everyone should have to take tests in swimming because her son didn't know how to swim supposedly. There was always flowers giving every week in his memory and ice cream. I thought, that's lovely, so it since then for 100 years or more, this has happened. I find out recently that's not true [OVERLAPPING] that was not a demand for the swimming.

[00:28:11]

Still it's a great idea.

[00:28:12]

The flowers or something that they do there for decoration purposes, not necessarily just because of that and it's a thing. But remains the idea that the library, so that's why you have six floors, most underground, that connect the two [OVERLAPPING] That's the way to grow instead of changing the outside design that remains. But the swimming that's triggered me in terms of, other swimming situation that really wants to have that interesting [BACKGROUND]

[00:28:40]

I really believe it's everyone should learn how to swim. One of my sons doesn't know how to ride a bike or drive, but they do know how to swim.

[00:28:51]

Well I know how to ride a bike and know how to drive, I don t know if I know swim and off. I think I can survive.

[00:28:58]

We got to get to work on that now [OVERLAPPING]

[00:29:01]

I have a such a fear of water [OVERLAPPING]

[00:29:03]

That's the thing. It's really important. The planet is 70% water, and with global warming, it's only going to get more hotter [OVERLAPPING] This is time to learn [OVERLAPPING] they have classes at the Malkin for people who have different psychological feelings about it. Were you spend a week just putting your face in.

[00:29:23]

I should try that.

[00:29:24]

Yeah you should.

[00:29:24]

Just for the sake of it. We've talked in another Virginia about why I think it is a trauma from childhood stuff.

[00:29:32]

But many reasons to be afraid of the water.

[00:29:34]

But it is something that always curious, the same thing as skin [LAUGHTER] [OVERLAPPING] Being New England, not know how to sky is not.

[00:29:45]

It's not, don't worry about it, it's further rich. Nobody's really skis.

[00:29:49]

That's true as well because it is very expensive to get there.

[00:29:52]

It's a waste of time and it's not as fun as everybody says. It's just mostly dread and screaming and talking to yourself and then getting to laugh where you can sit in the hot tub or have a beer. That the only good part about it. Sorry. Skiers.

[00:30:06]

I'm not going to see it too. Thank you. I take that out.

[00:30:09]

You're excused.

[00:30:10]

Exactly. After MIT then you come back to Harvard

[00:30:16]

Actually, I worked for Partners and Health during the pandemic and where I ran a team of contact tracers and investigators. That was an amazing experience because as many people were just stuck at home and doing jobs that had largely been emptied out and higher ed, when your students aren't there with you and you're in student services, what are you doing? Luckily, this opportunity came along and for almost more like a year-and-a-half. I was right in there, seeing what the state's response was to our particular Massachusetts way of dealing with the crisis. I also was managing a team of 25 people and I only manage one or two people in my life and remotely. That was a very cool experience I really liked that.

[00:31:13]

Sounds cool, but it wasn't scary as well. Would you have more information about how the pandemic was developing?

[00:31:21]

I started out as a case investigator myself. I started doing the things where I literally just calling people. Some people were terrified, some people were super annoyed. It's very emotionally taxing that way. I was glad to become a supervisor of a team because then I had that one remove and my job is just taking care of my people who are doing all that frontline calling [OVERLAPPING] In some sense it gave me a probably a false sense of control because we're constantly having to be updated on what the new protocols were. We were learning live where the constant refrain was, we're building the plane and for flying it. Which is true. At least it gave me a sense of purpose and that time that I felt it was nice to have that because I know a lot of people got to feel like that.

[00:32:14]

Because you weren't hands-on and you were in touch with the information coming, the needs to change. But also in connection with people who are dealing with the change. We're not happy, or you scared of it, which was an interesting moment.

[00:32:28]

It was great to be able to offer help. One of the things that the state of Massachusetts did through Partners and Health was it's called the CTC, that Contact Tracing Collaborative. That was the entity they created. But they they basically pulled all these social workers and organizations by region so that when people were stuck in their homes, you could arrange for organizations to help them, whether it was with rent or delivering groceries or all stuff. You could put people in contact with services and that will bring people to bring diapers and formula to peoples house who couldn't leave their house. It was really nice to see that Massachusetts was pretty efficient at getting things to people that needed them. I think I'm sure there's so many levels at which our effort can be critiqued and it often was [OVERLAPPING] I thought we did a good job. Paul Farmer this was his baby in many ways. Rest in peace Mr. Amazing. But it was very on the ground, hands-on organization that was built out of nothing and I felt did a pretty good job.

[00:33:41]

That's was wounderfull.

[00:33:42]

I was just waiting for higher ed to open back up because I wanted to end up back in Higher Ed, but it was largely shut down, as you probably remember during the pandemic.

[00:33:56]

Everything in people were not sure how it would work and how long. Then when you are in connection with the Harvard back here and you started HLS.

[00:34:08]

Actually, I started at the Kennedy School.

[00:34:10]

You studied at Kennedy.

[00:34:11]

I was a program manager for the Science, technology and Society Program over they're run by Sheila Jasanoff.

[00:34:20]

It was an interesting experience. I didn't have as much independence as I was used to having in that position. Although we brought fellows every year, so that was very enjoyable part of that job bringing fellows from all over the world and they'd spend the year. I was their main person, helped them get over, manage the school during their time there, that kind of thing, and then just the mechanics of a program. I didn't get to do program development and I didn't get to plan it out. My faculty director was very hands-on, shall we say? [LAUGHTER]. This is a new position, HLS beyond, although it had its first stuttering start just before the pandemic. It's the brainchild of Jonathan Zittrain and Jocelyn Kennedy.

[00:35:17]

I thought that was something that you came up. [OVERLAPPING].

[00:35:20]

No. That was prior to run it. They had this idea that law students are so nose to the grindstone and everything they do is so wrote and they don't have a lot of opportunity to veer away from what their focus is.

[00:35:40]

Yes.

[00:35:41]

[OVERLAPPING] The law curriculum. They start to feel like there's so many things that law students might benefit from knowing or having exposure to that that are either very current and therefore are not going to be in any curriculum or that maybe aren't directly related to a law curriculum, but certainly enhance their sense of humanity or their skillset in the world like soft skills that kind of thing. Of course, there are many offices and departments at the law school that do stuff like the Office of Career Services and Financial Services and the Office of Student Life, that thing. But they still felt like there were some little area that wasn't quite covered. They started off right before the pandemic. They had a few things and then everything shut down. Then they decided when things were coming back up there, we need we need to get somebody in here to be in charge of this. This is the position I took, as the program manager position. [OVERLAPPING].

[00:36:41]

I loved the name. [OVERLAPPING] I don't know why. Maybe because I'm very much into this mistake, or spiritual idea that I have this but beyond open so much you can put anything in that program.

[00:36:57]

It's true, it's a good rubric.

[00:36:59]

Because whatever you want to add to do this is on your path, you can just go beyond, feels like it's TV series with a really good outcome and everything. I have noticed some of the programs that you have put there, the storytelling.

[00:37:15]

Yes.

[00:37:16]

It was lovely to see that the way that you are arranged, that one, I really enjoying seeing the shape and how it came up in the idea that this doesn't have that chance and other things that you can put together. What is in the future for Beyond? Do have some plans or some ideas that you didn't put together, but you're going to try to work with?

[00:37:41]

Well, you're catching me right at the end of a season of planning. I spent fall putting together a new programming for spring. As I spent, I had to get to know the law school and see what was already being offered, see what niche could we fill? What was missing? Also, one of our priorities is to use the resources we already have here, not bring in people necessarily from the outside.

[00:38:07]

We have plenty of people here with expertise, right.

[00:38:09]

There's plenty of people here. Of course, we don't have a huge budget or anything, so we really wanted to use people's expertise that are already here and that have the same recognition that there are some things that students should know that they're not going to get just taking their classes. We just, we're using one of the fellows at the LAL from the Berkman Center, Molly White, she was formerly a programmer and computer science person who has become a critic of Web 3 dreaming. She's very critical of cryptocurrencies and looking at the exuberance around the development at Web 3. This is something Jonathan Zittrain is very interested in too, and is skeptical of as she is. You can see in the programming on HLS events calendar that there's a cryptocurrency club and the general public doesn't have a real firm grasp what that is, what is blockchain. There's all kinds of other uses for blockchain that aren't just currency-related but as an arbitration system online, as this great democratic force on the web that's supposed to take us out of our hierarchical identity-based things. She's doing a three-part series. We're just having this ongoing conversation about implications of things and live as things happen. It actually happens to be a very interestingly well-timed series because of everything that's going on with the failure of FTX and etc. That's one of the things that's ongoing right now.

[00:40:03]

It's great.

[00:40:04]

We've designed it as a mini-seminar so that you have to agree to go to all three sessions so you can be part of this conversation. She's giving some readings and people in the group take charge and do some analysis and start a discussion. It's discussion-based.

[00:40:24]

That it is a preparation when you come to the event already?

[00:40:26]

Yeah. It's already but it's more like just interest-based. It's not like, you have to write a paper, there's nothing like that. But at least you're going to be a little bit to have a better base to have a discussion instead of what is this?

[00:40:39]

The idea is to come out of it, having a much firmer grasp of what are the implications of this, what is it? How does it work? There was a lot of response to that. Again, because we're doing it in the library seminar rooms, we had to limit the size and also for it to be a meaningful exchange. We limit that to 25 people, but we had almost 80 people that wanted to be a part of it.

[00:41:02]

I think that one is going to be, I'm not surprised to say that there is a lot of interest in people too because it's something that's all over the place and people really have no idea.

[00:41:14]

I sit in on those because I'm just like I need to freaking know what's going on. As many times I try to read about it, it's like my eyes glaze over. I'm like, wait a minute, you lost me.

[00:41:24]

Yes.

[00:41:25]

If your mind doesn't work that way its [inaudible 00:41:28].

[00:41:28]

It's a like twilight zone. But generally, they don't know what is happening in there.

[00:41:33]

Familie is really good at breaking it down and understanding how to describe it in ways that different brains can understand. It's been great to have her. Yesterday we had a program with Professor Arevik Avedian. She's actually a lecture here, on how to read an empirical paper. Many people were interested in that because it's basically she gave people their paper head. Did they read it? Probably not. But luckily, she asked them and she just broke down. What's the language of statistical analysis? what do these terms mean? When you look at these graphs and charts, what should you be looking at? What's important. It was so practical and important.

[00:42:17]

This emphasis on statistics and data around here is relatively new and the other building that out a little bit, but a lot of law students don't really have a strong background in statistics. They had that same fear response as soon as they see a chart or graph they're like.

[00:42:32]

When they see a research, for example, that have all those reserves is statistical information, and you have no clue of what you're looking through that with someone just give us some explanation your interested towards that opens because it, oh, now [OVERLAPPING].

[00:42:46]

You know what to look for. She teaches this wonderful introductory class in the fall to give people in a much more cohesive semester long way skills that they, more and more so in courts like data is what's being used to make arguments. If you don't know both judges and lawyers, if you don't know what that is, you're going to be left behind, so that's another program that will probably offer again. We thought about having a panel of her students in the fall just talk about why it was important, what they got out of it and how they've used it. Just to have peer to peer review, you're like, why is this useful? Why should I know this? Like how is this going to help me? If you don't already have a sense of what that is.

[00:43:32]

One question or my interests, but thinking about your background, we will have a program eventually on religion somehow, spiritualism somehow. [OVERLAPPING] Would allow that to happen. I know I don't want to have someone yeah.

[00:43:50]

There was some guy from the Divinity School actually interviewed for this job, my job, and didn't get it. [LAUGHTER] Jocelyn told me about him and said, Oh, I should put you in touch with him because he was interested in doing something around it was probably around meditation or it was Buddhism related? Maybe, yeah. I mean, [OVERLAPPING] But there are there are other offices like the wellness office. They do a lot of stuff around breathing and meditation, that thing. I guess the one thing that's difficult about HLS beyond and finding our identity is not just becoming like a bucket for anything that's not something else. Yes, we do want to have a specific identity about the programs we offer. It's good in that sense to have Jocelyn and Jonathan and myself because we just kick around and kicking around some stuff gets kicked to the side. Because we want to be known for a certain programming and not just like if somebody can't find anyone else to sponsor something go HLS beyond, we want to have a more concrete identity.

[00:44:55]

I think it's open to a lot of ideas, but I agree with you that should follow what your philosophy, your goals are. Three of you are thinking about and go for it. But I liked the idea of offering an option for the students outside of the strict academic that they always come on.

[00:45:13]

Students have been like, I cannot tell you the number one thing that I hear from students after it's like, thanks so much for doing this. As busy as they are. They do come and they're grateful just to have to be, first of all, to be acknowledged as more full human beings that have needs and holes in their education and knowledge outside of just the law curriculum. They've really gotten a lot of positive feedback or just appreciating that they're being thought of as full human beings. That should be able to spend some time getting. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:45:47]

Their minds get out a little bit of that sequence of, I don't know, sometimes you can say as that code topic in a way, what they are used to explore something that can be as rich. But then I'll give some, a break and a different process, their mind.

[00:46:06]

Different pieces of their brain.

[00:46:08]

One thing that I can tell you is I had never met Professor Chen and I had the chance to watch him talking sitting with Andre Perez. Those are the things that I like when you go to a conversation like that and you watch someone with that expertise, the talks that he was covering there.

[00:46:28]

So smart that man.

[00:46:30]

It was just incredible. I was watching and my God, I'm watching this person talking about Andre was fantastically well given what he learned in terms of documentarian, everything else. But I was looking at Professor Chen is here for awhile and then I keep thinking, students and learning from the person directly. Yeah, What a great experiences where we didn't have so many others. Emily?

[00:46:59]

Yes, this has a time is coming to a close. So you're trying to tell me.

[00:47:04]

We need to keep talking.

[00:47:05]

Yeah, I want to learn more about beyond and [OVERLAPPING]

[00:47:09]

I'm going to say out loud here in case anybody made it to the end of this or even lift [LAUGHTER] that we do on our webpage. Law.HLSbeyond there is a place where you can submit ideas for programming. Although I did say that we're not going to do everything that people bring to us, but we'd love if you have an idea to talk to you about it, so I hope people.

[00:47:31]

Open to suggestion is that there's a comparable.

[00:47:34]

You don't want to be offering the thing yourself, but if you have an idea of some lacuna out there could be filled, please bring it to us a minute to come talk to me directly. I'm pseudo method as well.

[00:47:46]

That question because eventually I'm going to send you a message asking for some more details to more along with that, when we released the episode that will be coming in fall, please send me the link when they send out. Then a little blurb in terms of what is bad because I think it'd be nice to have that one with the episode. People can read that one. Staff. Yeah.

[00:48:10]

I know there's a lot of staff that have things to offer. That staff are huge resource everywhere I've worked, people tend to overlook it. Always has to be professors perfect, but it's really like the staff who make a place, what it is in so many ways and they have so much to share an offer and this HLS. I can't believe how many groups and discussion groups. And there's a music appreciation and there's crafting and then there's like IT geeks and there's so much extra stuff going on where employees are just getting more out of their work situation than just the average decision.

[00:48:47]

You should get because I spent quite a chunk of our lives here. One thing that we need to do more if it's possible and if you have the time in our busy schedule is really to get together to get to know each other and try to have a conversation once in a while. I am here for 20 years and I have some people that I never talked 20 years.

[00:49:09]

I didn't know you've been here for 20 years.

[00:49:11]

20 years already.

[00:49:12]

Should we turn around, am I going to get to interview at some point?

[00:49:15]

I don't like to be talking about.

[00:49:17]

We work together a little on that. I feel like I'd be a good candidate.

[00:49:24]

Our conversation would be so wild, so we would think about that.

[00:49:29]

All right, keep me in mind.

[00:49:30]

Yes I will. [LAUGHTER] Thank you very much everybody for coming to our set and to participate in this episode in this podcast.

[00:49:40]

Thanks for inviting me.

[00:49:42]

You're very welcome.

[00:49:43]

I'm excited too. I'm so glad that you do this. It's really cool.

[00:49:46]

Thank you. I want you to be paying attention beyond, because if you have a chance, if there is a space, I really want you to see what the program is going to bring. I think it's fantastic. I have seen some are going to be good. Yes. Yes. We'll be there. So thank you very much, and for everyone out there, I'll see you soon. Bye bye. [MUSIC]