# Transcript

00:00:00 Sarah

Welcome everyone to the first episode of season 2 of inclusion infusions. We still have lots to talk about and you keep listening.

00:00:13 Sarah

So off we go with another season of conversations with experts in equity inclusion diversity. We're going to discuss some challenging Ideas for our very curious listeners across the Ontario College System this season. My name is Sarah Gauen and I'm about Algonquin College’s inclusion and diversity specialist.

00:00:31 Sarah

Today we're going to try to uncover what it means to be an inclusion champion.

00:00:35 Sarah

And how they're made we're going to be joined by all of the nominees and of course, the winner about Algonquin Colleges Inclusion Champions Employee Award. You're about to hear from the role models for fostering change to create spaces where everyone belongs.

00:00:52 Sarah

Every year, the employee awards are hosted in the spring, providing an opportunity for our community to celebrate those who are excelling in every aspect of the college.

00:01:01 Sarah

But this year for the first time the inclusion champion award was presented so this brand new award was presented to the employee who has made Algonquin college more equitable diverse inclusive and respectful institution. All our nominees must have built or promoted a set of practices and behaviors.

00:01:21 Sarah

Within the workplace team or among individuals, then enabled understanding communication effective interaction with people across differences whether those differences were real or just process.

00:01:34 Sarah

These employees were all able to create a sense of belonging.

00:01:38 Sarah

Where colleagues and students

00:01:41 Sarah

Were recognized and valued for their uniqueness

00:01:44 Sarah

They all created Algonquin College as a place where individuals were able to be their authentic selves. We are very excited to speak today with all the people.

00:01:54 Sarah

We've achieved these important objectives to become inclusion champions.

00:01:59 Sarah

OK, I'm sure our street, the scenarios heard me say we an hour. And, yes, this season. I'll be joined by a new crop of dynamic and committed Co hosts from the inclusion and diversity circle here with me today is Jay Timms, an assistive technologist from the Center for accessible learning welcome Jay.

00:02:18 Jay

Hi how you doing

00:02:19 Sarah

So glad you could join me this morning. Many people know you, you're a familiar face at the college but I'm guessing 'cause. It was a surprise to me that many of our colleagues don't know that you actually have a background in broadcasting? How did that come about Jay?

00:02:35 Jay

That's a longer story that I'm going to summarize but I was working in TV when I was younger. I didn't really know what I was going to do.

00:02:43 Jay

I hadn't finished college yet and I had some challenges really with TV in the production side because I'm visually impaired and is a little bit frustrating, so somebody said. Hey Jay, you know 2 things for you here when you have a face.

00:02:54 Jay

For radio you know if anyone ever tells you that.

00:02:58 Jay

And maybe it's not as visual you should try that out, and so.

00:03:02 Jay

So about a year before I took my course I popped into Algonquin just to check it out and her ask the teachers do a little legwork to see how things run so I knew where I'd have it.

00:03:12 Jay

You know any kind of a challenge or if I could do whatever it is. I would need it to do for the course and that was my first experience at Algonquin about a year before taking the course everybody.

00:03:22 Jay

It was super great to work with.

00:03:24 Jay

Then I came in as a student and finished the program in 2000.

00:03:29 Jay

Had somebody bumped into me from Center for students with disabilities at the time. 'cause I was in there just to get the accommodations. I needed, saying, You have any idea how to run this scanner thing and I did, and went from there and that's how I shifted roles. But in radio. I worked for a couple of stations in town that I don't want to mention the name of 'cause I had a weird and interesting experience.

00:03:49 Jay

I can share some time.

00:03:50 Jay

I'm around accommodations, but I loved working in radio and that helped me with on stage stuff here at the college just talking to people and interacting so that's really where I came from.

00:04:02 Sarah

So thanks Jay, it makes you a great co-host this morning and it also meant you were able.

00:04:08 Sarah

To help me as I experienced mic.

00:04:10 Sarah

Troubles this morning so.

00:04:12 Sarah

So glad to have you on board?

00:04:14 Jay

Yeah, sometimes you know as a Technical Support person does help but we try.

00:04:18 Sarah

Right so Jay I appreciate that you.

00:04:22 Sarah

Were able to to help me with some some technical pieces around my mic and I think it's that same willingness to support others. Regardless of what challenges they have that will come through in our interviews with our inclusion champions this.

00:04:38 Sarah

Morning so I think the first person that we're going to learn from this morning. Is Doctor Melody. Wilson and I'm wondering if you can share a little bit of her background with our listeners before we speak to her directly.

00:04:51 Jay

Doctor Melody Wilson Passion for sharing knowledge, engaging in music re framing life experiences into arts and fighting in the battle towards social justice. Activism is evident in her life and work and avid lifelong learner, Melanie is actively engaged as a professor of communications and technical report.

00:05:12 Jay

Preparation at Algonquin College, she was a PhD from the Ontario Institute for studies in education at the University of Toronto in educational leadership and Policy Studies.

00:05:23 Jay

Lt is an accomplished teacher singer painter recording artist composer poet and author.

00:05:30 Jay

To relax, she enjoys playing piano, strumming guitar, creating videos, taking long walks and having deep transparent conversations with anyone who wants to engage Melodie attributes her versatility and music to her mother, who gave her no choice.

00:05:49 Jay

And named her Melody.

00:05:51 Sarah

I want Melody who's joined us welcome Melody to hear a little bit about what your colleague, said about you in the nomination for the inclusion champion awards so Melody. We we grabbed a beautiful clothes here and I'm going to read it to you.

00:06:06 Sarah

Your colleague, said that her storytelling experiences and honesty enhanced the impacted importance of her content and contribute to a community of trust warmth and inclusion.

00:06:18 Sarah

She shows up early to each class to chat with learners plays music, sometimes music that she's recorded to welcome learners to class.

00:06:26 Sarah

And conveys at all times to her learners that she cares about them. Techniques like this are crucial to helping Melody create a learning environment in which learners feel they belong and are supported.

00:06:38 Sarah

Well, welcome Melody can't wait to jump into this conversation.

00:06:42 Melody

Thank you Sarah and it's a pleasure to be here and thank you for the beautiful introduction. Today I didn't know that's what they said about me, but that's interesting.

00:06:53 Melody

You just read that they said that I love to tell stories and I do and I. I really enjoy when my learners.

00:07:01 Melody

I also feel that freedom to share their own stories. So I get the ball rolling. You See and I begin with my own story, telling my mother.

00:07:14 Melody

You probably hear a lot about my mother throughout this time together today. She was a storyteller. My mother since we were children would tell us stories indefinitely.

00:07:28 Melody

Both of her parents had passed away by the time, she was 14 years old and all she knew.

00:07:34 Melody

I do.

00:07:35 Melody

Do in her estimation to share our grandparents was to tell stories so I I. I haven't really thought about why. I share with my learners. I just recall when you were reading that Sarah the reason why because?

00:07:55 Melody

My mother, she told stories of her parents in the West Indies of her mother and her father. Relational dynamics when her father came home from work, he would call out to.

00:08:11 Melody

His wife named Marty and say Marty why is there a cobweb in the corner of the house? Why do I still see that a little bit sexist there?

00:08:22 Melody

But that was their reality. Marty you know what? Are we going to be eating today. Marty you know and and that's how it became?

00:08:31 Melody

A ongoing conversation not with just that story.

00:08:35 Melody

But for many stories throughout our growing up to the point where you can hear my sisters. I don't have children, but my sisters and I speak to my nieces and nephews.

00:08:48 Melody

They share the same stories and we have a recurring time of laughter when we get together when we

00:08:55 Melody

Think of mom stories mom is gone now, she has passed away, but her stories live on.

00:09:01 Sarah

That's incredible that the grandchildren are able to speak about these family stories as if they were they were there.

00:09:08 Sarah

So I'm I'm keen to jump a little bit further into these stories, but another thing that your colleague shared with you here Melody was that you care genuinely about your learners, and that's one of the colleges core values.

00:09:22 Sarah

Another one is respect, and I think these values are kind of at the heart of who we aim to be as an organization, and I think they're really important, but I'm wondering what that core value of caring and respect. What does that mean to you, Melody?

00:09:38 Melody

It's a beautiful question Sarah.

00:09:41 Melody

It means that we recognize the other person or the person we're speaking to for example, my learners. We recognize that they are capable of succeeding that their life their experience in the classroom.

00:10:01 Melody

And out of the classroom matters. So when I meet my learners. I begin with the premise of success I begin by saying.

00:10:12 Melody

You will succeed but when I say that I believe I'm transferring I hope I transfer and I hear from my learners that I am transferring the message that I believe in them. I believe they will succeed and right away. It tears down the bias.

00:10:33 Melody

And so it doesn't matter who is looking at me at the other side of the camera or face to face that wall of bias that they may perceive about me or thinking that I may perceive about them falls to the ground when I say don't quit you will succeed.

00:10:54 Melody

I'm literally, saying We are in this together, we walk together. Your success is my success. My success is your success and then they feel right away.

00:11:07 Melody

A sense of belonging in this classroom a sense of hope you know, there's a lot of self fulfilling.

00:11:15 Melody

Prophecies that go.

00:11:17 Melody

In schools in Education where the teacher speaks something that is demeaning that doesn't build up the other person. We as educators are called to build up our learners. If we are speaking to our learners in a class.

00:11:37 Melody

Or 2 people in any walk of life and we have a word that puts them down. We have diminished a life so my core value of respect.

00:11:50 Melody

Lies in the fact that I build up lives and not put them down. And so when I say you will succeed that is what I'm saying I'm saying I value you I respect you.

00:12:05 Melody

You to the point where I am going to end the journey with you for this term walk with you toward your success and then I articulate that.

00:12:17 Melody

Sarah I just don't say it once I make it a mantra, and I say it almost weekly. I will say don't worry. You will succeed or just in an email or just in an an announcement you will succeed and that comes from another story.

00:12:38 Melody

I don't know if you want me to share the backdrop of that story, it stems from childhood. But it's emphasized in another story. So while I'm on a roll. I'm going to say this story that really.

00:12:52 Melody

Puts that success factor and respect factor on the table. You know Sarah and Jay. My late husband died only a couple years ago.

00:13:03 Melody

I miss him dearly. He was the healthiest man and he died with head and neck cancer within eight months and.

00:13:12 Melody

I was wrapping up my doctorate at the University of Toronto. I had to stop everything to take care of him, and one day now, in retrospect it was about two weeks before he died. I put my head on his his lap and I just cried.

00:13:27 Melody

I said I cannot do this, I cannot. I'm just giving up everything the world seemed so small everything seemed useless.

00:13:36 Melody

Unnecessary. It was vain. Everything was trivial to me. I said without you nothing is worthwhile and you know what he did, he he.

00:13:47 Melody

Was a kind good man. He was a social justice activist. And Oh yes, I forgot to share. I also said that I was going to quit my pH D.

00:13:59 Melody

Because nothing was worthwhile and he put his hand on my head and he said Melody don't quit. Don't quit that I I said, but how am I going to live without you? He said you will live, don't quit you will succeed and there you have it. The backdrop.

00:14:19 Melody

For that story, and I literally tell that story, I tell my learners you will succeed, and I tell you the story of why I passed that on and in the same way that my mother.

00:14:34 Melody

Again, here comes my mother the same way she passed on stories to me of how she moved forward after the death of her parents is what I pass on to the students and I let them know that they are successful even before they have even had a first assignment.

00:14:53 Melody

I don't wait for them to do something to show that they have done well and then give them flowers.

00:15:02 Melody

No, I give it to them and I trust that they've heard me and over time they start to believe it themselves. This is important to me.

00:15:12 Jay

You know that's an awesome message and I like that attitude, something I might steal from you just saying that positive thing until it finally comes through.

00:15:20 Jay

I think that's awesome for your students and you could really hear your genuine intent. When you speak that's amazing wondering when you first became aware of any kind of racial or cultural differences at the college.

00:15:33 Melody

I have not had an experience of racial indifference or difference I haven't felt.

00:15:42 Melody

Or experienced negativity of only experienced.

00:15:48 Melody

Support I believe my initial experience occurred in childhood. Let's talk about the college and let's talk about racial difference. There is a distinct racial difference in the sense of.

00:16:07 Melody

I still feel like a fly in the buttermilk if you will. I still feel like I felt when I was in elementary school in Ottawa when I was in high school. One of the few people of color more specifically.

00:16:27 Melody

Black woman I feel like I'm still the only black person and I'm not the only I haven't seen everybody in every department.

00:16:38 Melody

But there are so few that's noticeable to me, because when I go to a conference or I'm in a meeting and I'm on zoom, or, you know, even the awards for teachers, you know, honesty, that's when it started. Even just this past semester started being more.

00:16:58 Melody

Real to me that you know what I'm like. The fly in the buttermilk. Am I still the only one of the few black women?

00:17:07 Melody

And notice I said black and woman.

00:17:12 Melody

At the same time, and I said, I thought things were changing, I thought we were going to see more diversity and I started to think where does that come from? Why do we not have more diverse leadership at the college?

00:17:31 Melody

Itself and I thought boom over these many years and I repeat many years.

00:17:39 Melody

Things don't seem to have changed when it comes to.

00:17:44 Melody

Having a diverse representation of people.

00:17:50 Melody

Of color at the college. Now I'm going to step back and say again. I haven't seen everybody, but in the context of being in meetings, being at conferences, that sort of thing. I have to say I still feel.

00:18:10 Melody

Very much a minority, so that's how it plays out in the college. But it doesn't play out in terms of lack of support in terms of not being appreciated in terms of not being welcome. It doesn't play out like that. It's a viewpoint. An aerial viewpoint, if you will, of still.

00:18:30 Melody

We need more diversity in places of leadership.

00:18:36 Melody

Yes, I love teaching. However, I still don't see much representation and at this point any representation with people of color when I'm in a leadership meeting or with the leaders or the chairs or their associate chairs, I still don't see that.

00:18:57 Melody

That's disappointing for me, but you know what? It's not about not being respected in the context of the word as we talked about earlier.

00:19:07 Sarah

So I think that's an incredibly powerful image. You shared Melody of of the fly in the bud.

00:19:14 Sarah

And I know you've mentioned that at the college you don't feel a sense of exclusion, but I'm wondering if you can describe for me a time where you have had to confront racism or sexism or ableism or any other exclusionary ISM any of those challenging moments? If you can tell me.

00:19:33 Sarah

But when you have had to stand up and address that kind of behavior.

00:19:38 Melody

You know the etymology of the word. Respect is really to this. An old French word meaning relationship.

00:19:46 Melody

It means to regard and to look at or looking back, and when you respect someone in essence, you're giving them a second look and you are regarding them as someone to engage with. Like you look walking down the street.

00:20:06 Melody

For example, and you see someone and they wave to you. And something about that person or whatever it is in that quick engagement causes you to turn back and to look back at them.

00:20:22 Melody

Just to gain more a better viewpoint of the person, even if you don't know them. There's something there, but that willingness to look back and to engage is very important when we talk about differences racial differences when we talk about religious.

00:20:42 Melody

Differences, gender differences any diff.

00:20:46 Melody

Are we willing to take that look back and to have a second conversation or a second experience in terms of going back and looking again at an individual or at the, let's say someone said something and you disagree?

00:21:05 Melody

Are we willing to stop and think and revisit?

00:21:10 Melody

Is it what they said in the context of how it was said? This is so important to me when it comes to experiences of being confronted or being challenged with inequity. It's like we, as individuals don't take time.

00:21:30 Melody

To look.

00:21:32 Melody

At the context of a person's life, we judge a book by its cover, or we generalize and I'm putting myself in that we we often generalize, and we judge a book by its cover without taking a second look at this story. The complete story.

00:21:52 Melody

Of someone's life. So when we're talking about something like Black Lives, Matter as a black woman, I'll jump on that.

00:22:00 Melody

Topic when we think about Black Lives Matter and how it plays out, perhaps with perception at in the College in the workplace, out of the workplace, do we take time to reflect on the historical perspective of that the individuals?

00:22:20 Melody

In that movement Harvey issue of who he talks about the role that history plays in any contemporary conflict. Social conflict in every contemporary or present day. Social conf.

00:22:35 Melody

In fact, you have a historical occurrence that took place that has not been resolved, so to me when we talk about confronting any form of racism, even in my life, I'm confronting it from the viewpoint that somebody.

00:22:55 Melody

Does not know my story. Someone does not know your story. Someone has not walked in your shoes and they have not taken the time to become involved.

00:23:07 Melody

Without knowing your story again, Speaking of my mom telling stories I have never seen her parents, but I know so much about them in their absence the same thing. What is the story behind the conflict? It usually runs very deep.

00:23:27 Melody

And until we can dig deep together by having these wonderful conversations.

00:23:33 Melody

There there's going to always be an an issue that needs to be unraveled, and until it's unraveled honestly, transparently, and people are willing to show their vulnerabilities. That level of respect or looking back again, will always be something that.

00:23:55 Melody

Will be one team.

00:23:56 Melody

I'm going to stop here and say did I answer your question?

00:24:02 Sarah

I do think that's that's a great answer, and I think that it really gets at the empathy that you you convey to your students that you convey to other people that your colleagues spoke about in your nomination for the Inclusion Champion award and.

00:24:18 Sarah

I think it's this. This idea of taking a second look, getting to know someone story, although it takes time. It is so powerful. So thank you for sharing that.

00:24:27 Jay

And I wanted to add and you have me thinking wondering. What is some advice. Then, on how to dig a little deeper in a respectful way 'cause sometimes I have this feeling like.

00:24:36 Jay

Is that OK to ask and should we be talking about that? But I kind of want to know and maybe it'll help with our interactions with people but do you have some advice on how to bridge some of those gaps?

00:24:47 Melody

Yes, Jay, I have one thing or I have many things, but I'm going to just share one thing that I've noticed when we're challenging those oppressive moments or trying to make sense of what we experience as individuals or as a group.

00:25:07 Melody

I find that it's so easy for us to take our cue from the media.

00:25:13 Melody

To take our cue from what we see displayed on the left or the right on CNN and we jump the bandwagon of our are again our biases or preferences.

00:25:27 Melody

And we say, well, I'm going to agree with this story or I'm not going to agree with that story and what's happening.

00:25:34 Melody

When we let the media become our cue for decision making, is that our minds towards other people get more and more polarized?

00:25:47 Melody

We get more polarized in our attitude towards the quote, unquote other.

00:25:52 Melody

From someone who's different than ourselves, we get more polarized because we're following the lead of a conversation that has nothing to do with the real live experience and stories of the person or persons we are actually biased or discriminating against.

00:26:12 Melody

Against a lot of our this day and age, we don't take time if we want to know an answer, we jump on our computers and we Google it.

00:26:22 Melody

Then we have these conversations with like minded people who agree with us and we continue on that bandwagon and our world.

00:26:32 Melody

Is taking us that way so my piece my humble piece of advice very humble.

00:26:40 Melody

Is to get to know the individual or the groups.

00:26:48 Melody

Or the quote unquote other from another perspective, a new perspective. Do not go down the road of the media and then when we come to the workplace, the perceptions of.

00:27:02 Melody

For example, myself is a black woman. Let me just put myself there. The strong black woman.

00:27:10 Melody

Comes from where?

00:27:12 Melody

What show did we get that from? You know I was raised in Ottawa. My mom actually thought I was a very passive person too.

00:27:22 Melody

Passive, she'd say Melody you're too passive and she wanted me to stand up and speak out she would.

00:27:31 Melody

As a musician, she would put me in situations where I had to play for people. The piano on the spur of the moment.

00:27:40 Melody

I did not have choices. I had to go and speak up. I had to. My parents were church leaders and from Jamaica West Indies immigrants they came to the country. They started a social ministry where they had people that were also immigrants.

00:28:00 Melody

Come and live in their homes.

00:28:02 Melody

My father began a church 50 something years ago that still stands in the capital of Canada. People still go there to get help or to get spiritual health, food, clothing.

00:28:15 Melody

Whatever my sister is now doing that with her husband, that church because my dad is 88 but my dad.

00:28:22 Melody

Still is on YouTube and Facebook doing his teach.

00:28:28 Melody

And you know, they knew how as immigrants to come to a country and to speak up, stand up, and to show up and to be there for people.

00:28:39 Melody

But my mother would say Melody you are too passive and I grew up in the suburbs of Ottawa.

00:28:47 Melody

In Orleans, and I think something in terms of socialization may have gotten watered down because basically.

00:28:57 Melody

When we talk about working with people, when we talk about knowing people and respecting people and to be vulnerable, people with other people so that they can come and confide in us and trust us. That is something that is in lost art. Why?

00:29:17 Melody

Because we are leaning more towards what's said in media, social media and polarizing our own thinking. That would be my suggestion. Get to know people.

00:29:32 Melody

Get to understand their story. Get walking with them in their shoes. And how do we do that? Just have a conversation.

00:29:41 Melody

Do not look at myself and if I'm in a meeting and all of a sudden Melody speaks up the strong.

00:29:51 Melody

Black woman type. We are stereotyping right there without getting to know the person, so that would be my suggestion. Do not allow your preconceived notions about anyone.

00:30:05 Melody

To filter your eyes so that you can't see the person to even want to ask them about their story or even just be a friend.

00:30:17 Melody

You can't get into every like my parents when new people came to the church they would say say, say hi to the new people.

00:30:25 Melody

I was as shy as a shy can be, but Mom said just say hi.

00:30:31 Melody

Let's just start with simplicity just by opening our mouths and saying hi and don't take things personally again, being influenced by social media.

00:30:41 Sarah

Thank you Melody. I think that's such powerful advice. Getting to know the individual and it ties back to what you started with at the beginning, saying to your students that they're going to be successful and that you are there with them right is saying we're going to to do this together.

00:30:57 Sarah

I think that is what I think I'm going to take away from this incredible but short conversation that we've had, and I think I might have to enroll in some of your classes, knowing that now, knowing that I would be successful, they sound wonderful.

00:31:12 Sarah

So I just want to thank you again for joining us today for all that you do for the Algonquin.

00:31:18 Sarah

College community for our learners and our colleagues, and congratulations again on your nomination for the Inclusion Champion award.

00:31:27 Melody

Thank you.

00:31:28 Jay

So we have another opportunity to talk to another one of our colleagues at the college and this is doctor, Elizabeth von Moos.

00:31:37 Jay

And let's join the College in 2010 as a part-time professor and for the last 7 years have been a full time professor here at the college and teaches math and a variety of programs. I'm wondering if you wanted to elaborate.

00:31:42

Haven't you?

00:31:50 Jay

On that at some point lose but I think.

00:31:52 Jay

My co-host has something else to add.

00:31:54 Sarah

Yes, so please.

00:31:56 Sarah

You are one of the incredible nominees for the Inclusion Champion award, and I don't know if you were able to hear what your colleague said about you, but I'm going to share some of my favorite excerpts from your nomination. So in your nomination, your colleague said that Liz will frequently evaluate not just the interactions.

00:32:16 Sarah

At hand, but also the longer term impact that these smaller decisions will have on her more vulnerable.

00:32:22 Sarah

Students, for example, during the recent move to emergency teaching online, Liz was the professor in the mathematics courses who first raised the flag that using a camera for online assessments will have an impact on many of the cultures which are predominant in her international cohorts. Cameras may be a barrier to those who are traditionally more private.

00:32:42 Sarah

Or have restrictions on what can.

00:32:44 Sarah

Be shown to strangers so.

00:32:46 Sarah

I think that was a great example of the small things that you clearly do to make your students feel included.

00:32:53 Sarah

Not only that, your colleagues also said that you are a fierce advocate for your international students and that you've worked tirelessly to help them adapt to a very new world at Algonquin College. So congratulations.

00:33:06 Sarah

And those are some very important words. Your colleague shares about you, and I wonder if we can jump into this conversation talking about.

00:33:15 Sarah

In fact, we know that that's so key to creating an environment where we have belonging and it's one of the colleges core values. I'm wondering if Liz, if you can tell us a little bit about what respect means to you.

00:33:29 Liz

Yeah, so I thought a quite a bit about this and I think respect is about holding space for people.

00:33:36 Liz

And when I think about my classroom. It's not just accepting the learners where they're at but giving them the space to share something of themselves.

00:33:45 Liz

So not asking them to to check part of themselves at the door, but letting them know that it's OK that they bring themselves to class all of themselves.

00:33:54 Jay

Wonder if you talk about your first realizations at the College of the cultural differences and how that's playing out in the classrooms or with coworkers that sort of thing.

00:34:03 Liz

I think here too. There's not a single moment there were certainly a set of experiences and.

00:34:09 Liz

It's been a long process to come to this point where as you mentioned Sarah I. I teach math and I've been used to teaching technical subjects where there's usually a correct answer. And I've been very, very focused on that and not focused as much on all the the other aspects on all those other.

00:34:29 Liz

Pieces that people bring with them, even when they're doing a technical subject and recognizing that each student is on a different journey. So just slowly being part of the fabric of the college and working with all of our different.

00:34:43 Liz

Has has really opened my eyes to all the different experiences that people bring. And I think part of it is the pandemic necessitated so many changes and it made it much more important.

00:34:55 Liz

That or I felt it became much more important that I reach out and learn about my students because I felt that if I couldn't see them in front of me that I needed to reach out.

00:35:04 Liz

And I've realized that even when I can see them in front of me that it is incredibly important to open up.

00:35:10 Liz

The space for them and this is where I had a lot of international students or rather when I realized I had a lot of international students who were living internationally.

00:35:20 Liz

Still, that I really had to adapt to how I was delivering the course delivering the material and engaging them in the work.

00:35:29 Sarah

So was there someone that?

00:35:30 Sarah

Inspired you to start having these conversations to make yourself more vulnerable in your journey. Who is that person that you look to that inspires you to confront and challenge an equity list?

00:35:43 Liz

I have to.

00:35:43 Liz

Say This is the colleague who nominated me for this award, Martin Lee and.

00:35:48 Liz

Not only is he always open to discussions and answers all of my.

00:35:54 Liz

All of my questions big and small but he's really shown me just by doing so. I see the steps that he takes and the things that he says the way he presents himself the way he makes space for other people.

00:36:08 Liz

And realize that I can do that as well, so he's been a huge, huge influence in my journey.

00:36:15 Jay

Is there one thing that you would share with anyone at the college that you think would help them be more inclusive and and help the college be more inclusive.

00:36:23 Liz

I think what I'd share is that it's often the small moments. The small but important actions and interactions that are really valuable and.

00:36:35 Liz

We often overlook those and I know I've had the belief that if I can't do something. Big then I'm not important or I'm not part of this conversation.

00:36:44 Liz

But you have to start somewhere. And those small interactions can have much larger repercussions than you originally realize and so it's important that.

00:36:55 Liz

We all start small.

00:36:56 Sarah

Now I'm wondering if you can share with us an experience you had where a.

00:37:01 Sarah

Little bit of a larger thing where you.

00:37:03 Sarah

Had to confront racism, sexism, ableism or any other exclusionary ISM and and what did you do in that moment?

00:37:12 Liz

I've encountered sexism in my own experience and often. I don't respond because there's small moments and you wonder if they really happened. And if I'm in a space where I'm already getting the sense that I don't belong then certainly challenging that feels.

00:37:30 Liz

Feels scary, which just made me.

00:37:33 Liz

Realize that those.

00:37:34 Liz

Those same situations if I have an inkling that they're happening to somebody else require me to step up and just pay more attention.

00:37:43 Sarah

I think what you're sharing really echoes what I hear when I speak to some of the women in our technology program because they they come to me asking for advice lists.

00:37:54 Sarah

They'll come and say like this thing happened. Or someone said a joke and like I didn't like it and I kind of know it was wrong. But like I didn't do anything. So what do I do?

00:38:03 Sarah

Next time.

00:38:04 Sarah

Right, so it's that that paralysis, that kind of takes over or that questioning yourself that self doubt like well.

00:38:11 Sarah

Like maybe that was OK, 'cause nobody else seemed to react and I think.

00:38:17 Sarah

You know you being such an accomplished professor with all these impressive credentials still feeling that way speaks to this being something so much larger. This this common experience around confronting sexism and are or need to.

00:38:32 Sarah

Continue to do that.

00:38:35 Sarah

In my observation, listen, I'm wondering if this is the same for you. It's it's not just being able to intervene in a situation, but the real skill is in learning to know that a situation needs to be intervened, in that it's that feeling of was that wrong, like knowing, no like that was.

00:38:54 Sarah

Wrong like that shouldn't have happened. I find that's even trickier than figuring out. OK, I need to do something now and then going down the road of deciding to take action, right? I don't know if that's your experience as well like that.

00:39:03

Right.

00:39:06

No, it is it is.

00:39:08 Liz

When does somebody need me.

00:39:10 Liz

When was it a joke? When am I making a mountain out of a molehill?

00:39:16 Liz

So I think the intervention piece there is, is absolutely easier because it doesn't feel as risky again. If you're feeling like you don't belong and you challenge the situation feels like you're not making it any better for yourself, so to challenge a situation on somebody elses behalf.

00:39:34 Liz

Where you feel secure does does feel easier and I think it's extremely important that we're able to do that that we do, do that I think the difficulty is.

00:39:44 Liz

Identifying those situations I do want to step in when I'm needed and I don't want to overstep and make assumptions about where where my actions might be helpful or might be hurtful and be sensitive to the situation.

00:40:00 Sarah

Gets a a fine line between being supportive and being savior, and I think that's that's a great point list.

00:40:08 Sarah

Thank you for that and we really appreciate you taking the time to join us this morning to tell us a little bit about your choice.

00:40:16 Sarah

Your intentional choice to be respectful and create inclusive spaces for your student.

00:40:21 Sarah

And we really enjoyed having this chat.

00:40:23 Jay

It's great having a chance to talk to you Liz.

00:40:25 Liz

Thank you so much. This has been a wonderful opportunity. It's.

00:40:29 Liz

It's great work that you're doing. Thank you so much.

00:40:29 Liz

Great work that you're doing. Thank you so much.

00:40:31 Jay

Before moving on to our next guest. I wanted to give a shout out to Josh Garbo. One of the nominees for this award. He wasn't available today, but one of the reasons that I nominate.

00:40:43 Jay

Is because he's done a lot of work in helping with accommodations related to captioning, transcription ING test related on Iraq browser guard stuff and most of the sports being done off the side of his desk.

00:40:55 Jay

And I know a lot of people do that, but I felt that we needed to say something and I wanted to thank him personally for all that.

00:41:03 Jay

We're here with a meat tyrewala, and there's a story in your last name, so I'm going to get you to explain that.

00:41:03 Jay

We're here with Ameet Tyrewala, and there's a story in your last name, so I'm going to get you.

00:41:07 Jay

To explain that in a second, but wanted to introduce you to everyone. And, uh, meet is working as a program coordinator and professor in the Bachelor of Hospitality and Tourism, and has a Masters from Purdue and PhD. And I do recall he asked had we heard of it so.

00:41:24 Jay

That's that's awesome, but tell me about your last name. You had a cool story about it.

00:41:27 Ameet

Thanks for reading. James yeah, so this, the last name is actually tyrewala.

00:41:32 Ameet

A lot of times so people are like why is it tyrewala so that in India. A lot of times depending on your ancestral business or your lasting kind of you know reflected what balances business was.

00:41:44 Ameet

So, in this case, my ancestral business was selling tires and so that's the name Tyrewala and you know, I have some friends.

00:41:52 Ameet

Whose names were like soda bottle barrel, which means they used to pantzis business actually.

00:41:57 Ameet

He's selling soda bottles and so, yeah, that's the funny quality story for my last name, Yep.

00:42:04 Sarah

You were joining us today because you were nominated for the inaugural of Oakland College Inclusion Champion Awards. So congratulations for that.

00:42:12 Sarah

I don't know if along the way that you had the opportunity to hear what your colleagues had to say about you or why you were nominated for that award, so I'm going to take a minute and just read a couple things to you about what.

00:42:23 Sarah

Your colleagues had to save it.

00:42:25 Sarah

U Doctor Tirolo works to ensure that every single student is set up to succeed by advocating for students with difficult circumstances, such as students from underprivileged backgrounds, difficult living situations and linguistic barriers.

00:42:39 Sarah

By meeting with them.

00:42:41 Sarah

And referring them to college services to ensure they get support.

00:42:45 Sarah

So another colleague said Doctor Tyrewala strives to get to know people connected to his program on a personal level, and is most solicitous about the welfare of his students. He displays a genuine interest in the individual while respecting personal boundaries.

00:43:02 Sarah

So some pretty pretty special words from your colleagues, so congratulations.

00:43:07

Thank you.

00:43:08 Sarah

The first thing I want to jump into here is a conversation around respect. It's one of the colleges for core values.

00:43:15 Sarah

Caring, learning, integrity, respect. But we all have a little bit of a different understanding of what that word means, and I'm wondering if you can tell us what respect means to you.

00:43:24 Sarah

To meet.

00:43:25 Ameet

Respect to me means respecting the individual 's culture, respecting the individual choice preference preferences in terms of you know who they are.

00:43:37 Ameet

Respect kind of ties for me very closely to acceptance accepting them as who they are where they are from what you know what language.

00:43:45 Ameet

They might speak and what background they might come from and and and respecting that because that's when you actually gain. You kind of gain confidence.

00:43:55 Ameet

You know from them in terms of you know, yes, they accept me as who I am and you know they respect who I am.

00:44:00 Ameet

And and I think that's where the building blocks of a successful relationship kind of a student mentor. A student professor. The student coordinator relationship kind of starts and kind of grows from so with our program, which is a full year degree program that starts from year 1:00 in the first semester itself, where we get to know them.

00:44:21 Ameet

And as time goes by getting to them from where they are their background cultures. You know preferences and kind of building on them as it goes by.

00:44:30 Ameet

So by them, they are in the 4th year. It's almost like there is this respect, and then there's this mutual respect of they can come talk share.

00:44:37 Ameet

Their whatever they are uncomfortable with whatever is actually bothering them. Whatever is troubling them and we are here, there to support them without judgment.

00:44:48 Jay

You said a few words at all, and kind of at the same, and I don't know if you do that on purpose, but acceptance, preference, confidence.

00:44:54 Jay

I mean, those are the words that triggered and resonated in my head, and that's awesome. And I wonder.

00:44:58 Jay

When we were just talking about respect, are there some other values we've noticed that are not on a poster and celebrated like our core values? Any other values at the college?

00:45:08 Ameet

So while acceptance is not on there. I think I have been I have been in the UK. I've studied in the UK.

00:45:16 Ameet

I have walked the UK, I have been in the USI have studied in the USA. I have worked in the US. However, the level of acceptance to towards differences.

00:45:28 Ameet

Is just phenomenal in Canada and I think Algonquin very very?

00:45:36 Ameet

Much reflects that in its culture, where its employees have that culture of acceptance towards each other. No matter differences and no matter. You know within students or colleagues. So I feel that while risk acceptance is not a part of the.

00:45:55 Ameet

The 4 values the 4 core values. I feel that is very well reflected within the college itself and the culture towards the employees and its students here.

00:46:06 Sarah

Yeah, so you you mentioned there that you you've worked and studied all over the world. Now I'm wondering if you can think of a a time in your life when you first became aware of differences.

00:46:18 Sarah

Whether there would be racial differences or cultural differences or gender differences, was there a moment when it became very clear to you that?

00:46:27 Sarah

Difference was somehow.

00:46:30 Ameet

Yeah, so I when I moved for the first time you know from after that. I've did my bachelors degree in India and I moved the UK and that's when and I landed and suddenly you know the language was the pronunciations were different. The dialect was different. The food was different a lot of things.

00:46:50 Ameet

Were very new to me and as being first time traveling outside India. You know it was like whoa and you know when I used to talk.

00:46:58 Ameet

I used to sound funny. I still sometimes don't sound funny because I still I don't think I've got because I've been in so many different countries.

00:47:06 Ameet

I really don't have an accent right and so when when I kind of went to the UK. Yes, you know, there were challenges in terms of understanding what the other person is saying to you know, getting it to understanding.

00:47:18 Ameet

Cultural practices of the country and also there in no way trying to share my practices, but it was a little harder in the UK, but when I went to EU.

00:47:27 Ameet

S Purdue University where I actually was studying I mean, it was phenomenal in terms of the acceptance of International School.

00:47:34 Ameet

Since in the in in the terms of you know cultures and celebrating the differences rather than the differences being pointed out and kind of you know as being problematic kind of thing, so it was more like. Hey, the more diverse population. The better the sharing the more the experiences so I think and when I came to.

00:47:54 Ameet

Algonquin that just amplified to another level where?

00:47:58 Ameet

There it was awesome to kind of you know how to sit in a in a faculty boardroom and you know talk about your culture. Get your food to for them to share.

00:48:06 Ameet

You know in in in class when you or I actually have with hospitality, and we have students anywhere from Vietnam to China to India to you name it at least 7 or 8 or 10 different countries at any point in time.

00:48:18 Ameet

And when they contribute towards their experiences in this sector. In different areas that actually enriches not only the domestic students, but also the international students experience as large.

00:48:32 Jay

Can you think of any mentors that helped you come?

00:48:35 Jay

Looking at cultural differences or any kind of inclusion type of ideas.

00:48:41 Ameet

At Purdue I actually had a professor for doctor Barbara Almanza and she was actually my shoes on the board.

00:48:47 Ameet

On on the chair of the Committee for my Masters thesis. And she was also on the chair for my Masters for my PhD thesis as well. So she was a very strong influence from day one.

00:49:00 Ameet

You know she had an open door policy, uh, she understood already the cultural differences and barriers which international students have.

00:49:08 Ameet

Because in at at Purdue in their Masters program there is a good 6070% of international students.

00:49:16 Ameet

Any point in time the the pH D level goes even higher, right?

00:49:20 Ameet

And so that understanding was already built in about differences of understanding, perception language, and it was very it was I almost called her like my second mother.

00:49:33 Ameet

She was like mine because she understood and without being anywhere related to me from a very on a different continent, different country.

00:49:41 Ameet

She understood I could sit in the office and cry my eyes out because I was under stress. I was homesick and she would understand, and then she would make me understand the other side of things.

00:49:53 Ameet

That relationship grew and grew in my PhD and I I've spent about six years at Purdue and those have been one of my best years of my academic life, wherein I had a mentor who kind of guided me through all the way I'd Algonquin I actually had my chair starting. He's, he's left now Altaf Swaney.

00:50:14 Ameet

Right, he was also a very big believer of, you know, diversity and understanding where people come from different cultures and countries and their perceptions towards on this anything. So yeah.

00:50:24

Those 2.

00:50:25 Sarah

Yeah, so it's it's so important these people the influence that they have in our life and and I can see that you've kind of embraced this and you're paying it forward for your students as well.

00:50:36 Sarah

I'm wondering, I mean, if you can tell us about a time when you had to confront inappropriate or exclusionary.

00:50:44 Sarah

Behavior, whether it was sexist, whether it was racist, whether it was.

00:50:48 Sarah

Ableist can if any any of these challenging situations. Can you tell me about a time when you've had to stand up and confront inappropriate?

00:50:57 Sarah

Meet here.

00:50:58 Ameet

Yeah, so the country come from India. Usually it's hard to confront people. It's a little harder to be like hey, what are you doing?

00:51:06 Ameet

So that was hard initially. Honestly, and and and there were times when there have been instances of, you know, discrimination. You might call it or cultural differences which were not.

00:51:18 Ameet

Really celebrated but more like looked down upon kind of thing. But uh, I I still remember I was like I think I was. We were talking in class and you know, in one of my classes.

00:51:29 Ameet

And and and somebody mentioned that you know they they have a certain kind of cuisine and a certain kind of protein within the cuisine and that was considered to be a delicacy within the country.

00:51:42 Ameet

And you know how you know it was celebrated and eaten on special occasions, and someone in the class kind of reacted in a very.

00:51:50 Ameet

Yeah, we didn't react really well to it and I was pretty pretty vocal about it as to how and why would people eat that kind of food and and then that's when you know, I, I don't know why because it kind of just came out that it you know, while nobody is asking you to eat their food, but that doesn't mean.

00:52:09 Ameet

You know you can, you know you want to, maybe criticize, know you might listen to R&B music, but I might listen to reggae, and that's OK, you know, and I think that's when I think I first kind of stood across in my class and be like, yeah, it's not OK.

00:52:22 Ameet

So let's just respect each other. You have your thing. That's personal that thing, then that's how it should be, right? And I think.

00:52:29 Ameet

That people were taken back, saying, OK, he never usually would say that. So that was strange. But that kind of started the trend there and now when anything comes up across Union classes here.

00:52:39 Ameet

It's like you you nip it up right in the bud, saying Nope, before it takes any roots, this kind of conversation or this kind of behavior not accepted.

00:52:49 Ameet

Yes, you have differences. That's great. Don't like it? That's OK too. But it doesn't mean you kind of put the other person down.

00:52:57 Jay

Just thinking about what you said there in meat and some of the way you described it, nip it in the bud before it takes roots.

00:53:02 Jay

And I find that an interesting way to describe it, but it really helps me understand what you're saying.

00:53:06 Jay

I'm wonder.

00:53:07 Jay

Think if you had some advice for any student or staff or anyone in the college community about one thing they could do to make Algonquin more inclusive. What would you tell them?

00:53:16 Ameet

So I have been an international student all my life. I have studied the USF study in the UK, which is about 989 years of studying international right. And then I've come to Canada and as the international student, my experience and number one, which I would recommend to everybody in Algonquin, is listen.

00:53:36 Ameet

Rather than going into a conversation.

00:53:39 Ameet

With preconceived judgments and notions made about why the student may not be doing well about why the student is unsuccessful about why this would be slacking off, listen right because you may not know what's going on mentally.

00:53:59 Ameet

Emotionally, on a family level on a financial level.

00:54:04 Ameet

There are a lot of challenges for international students who leave their homes and come so far out to study in the land which they don't know about a culture which they don't know about.

00:54:16 Ameet

A college which they don't know about.

00:54:19 Ameet

It's a lot of change. It's a lot of lot of lot of differences. If you listen to them, if you give them the opportunity to express themselves because it's harder, it I come from a country where in teacher is considered God.

00:54:36 Ameet

India teachers consider to be guru where God and you don't question God. You don't go back and forth without you. Just listen.

00:54:44 Ameet

So then asking a student to be like OK, sit, and let's just talk to me. It's harder for students, so we need to give them the opportunity to express themselves.

00:54:54 Ameet

Take some time to settle down and listen. I think if we listen it will you know it'll it'll really helped and solve so many problems and make the student also feel heard. I think that's an important one I.

00:55:10 Ameet

Would say yeah.

00:55:11 Sarah

Well, that's that's powerful at an.

00:55:13 Sarah

Idea of listening and not assuming so.

00:55:16 Sarah

Thank you so much for joining us today Amy. Congratulations on your nomination. Thank you so much for what you do for our learners and and making our community a more inclusive place and for sharing your experiences with us today.

00:55:30 Ameet

I'd like to say thank you for listening. Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to share. I have actually been here for 9 years.

00:55:37 Ameet

I think I am in love with Algonquin, the culture, and I'm I'm a person who's very black and white in my conversations. Usually I if I don't like it, I'll tell, but I feel.

00:55:47 Ameet

I feel we are doing a great job and I think we have potential to do even better as time goes by.

00:55:53 Ameet

I think this is a great step. You know towards diversity, inclusion and kind of understanding and recognizing differences and celebrating them. I think is is is great so thank you.

00:56:03 Sarah

That was an incredible conversation that we've had so far this morning with all of our nominees for the Inclusion Champion Award Reef.

00:56:10 Sarah

We got lots of inspirational stories and experiences shared, but I'm so pleased that we are now joined by Catherine Rylander who was the winner of the inaugural Inclusion Champion Award.

00:56:23 Sarah

Welcome, Catherine.

00:56:24 Sarah

So let me set up a little bit of her her background and tell you a little bit about her so.

00:56:30 Sarah

Katherine Rylander is a graduate of the electrical Engineering technology program. She holds a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Ottawa.

00:56:38 Sarah

She has consistently found herself being one of the very few women studying and working in the electrical industry and has been dedicated to programs to encourage and support women in trades, technology and engineering. And it was from that place that she was the successful winner of the Inclusion Champion Award.

00:56:58 Sarah

So let me tell you what some of your colleagues and students said about you in that nomination. So I'm going to read a couple excerpts for you so.

00:57:08 Sarah

But one more students. Before I was a student at Algonquin, I visited the campus for the Fall Open House.

00:57:15 Sarah

In 2018

00:57:16 Sarah

This is why I met Catherine for the.

00:57:17 Sarah

First time I was.

00:57:19 Sarah

Exploring the different options at Algonquin College Ottawa campus offers. When I stopped by the electrical engineering technician.

00:57:26 Katherine

00:57:27 Sarah

She spoke to me for close to 15 minutes about my interest level electronics before sending me on an individual tour with a female student.

00:57:35 Sarah

Kaufman recognized my interests and uniqueness and encouraged me to pursue the electrical engineering technologist program to be my authentic self. So that's what your students said. So some of your colleagues.

00:57:47 Sarah

Submitted letters in support of your nomination. So here's another quote, Katherine. Anytime a student has a concern, Catherine will be there no matter how large or small. Catherine is always supportive and understanding of all situation.

00:58:02 Sarah

And another colleague said many people talk about the need to increase the number of women in STEM programs. Katherine just doesn't talk about it.

00:58:09 Sarah

She's willing to put in the work and try new things to create programs that are more inviting to women.

00:58:15 Sarah

So it's clear to me why you're the inaugural winner of the award, but we want to get to know you a little bit better.

00:58:21 Sarah

Katherine, so thanks for joining us this morning.

00:58:24 Katherine

Thank you for having me I'm smiling so big right now, listening to some of the nice things people have said about me.

00:58:29 Katherine

So let's let's.

00:58:30 Sarah

Start kind of at a high level question for you. So one of the colleges core values is respect. I'm wondering how you would define that term, Catherine.

00:58:40 Katherine

Right so respect to me means that I've you know, I admire I value. I appreciate someone abilities or qualities or differences. They they bring something new to my world and I respect that so that's my my definition.

00:58:57 Jay

Do you think the college has any unlisted unspoken values?

00:59:03 Katherine

Absolutely I I really gave some thought to this and it's the it's the value of belonging and that that is so essential at the college.

00:59:10 Katherine

And it really does a good job the college. I mean always tries to engage with others and allows people to find that group that share common interests. There's that sense of acceptance.

00:59:23 Katherine

And inclusion at the college. And I, I think that's really where we shine. We we bring that value value of.

00:59:30 Katherine

00:59:31 Sarah

Well, I think the antithesis of belonging is exclusion, right? And I'm wondering if you can share for me a little bit about why gender inclusion is so important for you.

00:59:43 Sarah

What was it what?

00:59:44 Sarah

Was that moment when you first became aware of gender differences and how did that shape your passion for?

00:59:51 Katherine

Gender inclusion, yeah, so gender differences. Obviously were defined and and and developed for me through the mentors and the role models that I had the the family and the the aunts. The uncles that I had the teachers maybe even through TV and movies. I don't remember.

01:00:09 Katherine

More specifically I've thought about this. I don't remember any guidance counselor teacher ever, saying well. You're a female and you should consider these careers, but I did get a sense through my exposure to just my culture and where I was growing up that males tended to be stronger and more sort of and interested in sports and they had a higher self.

01:00:29 Katherine

Steam and then women they were quieter and sensitive and maybe even less confident in their abilities. So I I really did get understand that women aptitude for helping people and and wanting to be in a helping profession so teachers and nurses and psychology.

01:00:49 Katherine

Well, where men would be interested in working with tools and things and technology and I just never even though I realized these existed and it was kind of clear to me through through the people that I interacted with that that was the case.

01:01:02 Katherine

I never thought these gender roles applied to me.

01:01:05 Katherine

I was just going to pursue engineering because that's what I was interested in.

01:01:09 Katherine

So I I did feel, though, that at the end of my high school career as I was you know actively trying to get into a good University and start my engineering degree and then going into an engineering career of sticking with.

01:01:21 Katherine

But when when do I have a family? How do I incorporate a family into this because I'm I'm the woman and I? I want to be involved as a parent and more so than.

01:01:31 Katherine

Then men would want to do men. Maybe want to support the family because they're the the money earners and so they're out of the house.

01:01:37 Katherine

So I remember having that debate in in high school going whoa. Why am I putting so much effort into my career when I'm either gonna I'm gonna have to either stop my.

01:01:47 Katherine

Career for a family so that that was when I really kind of was aware that. Hey there's a difference here. 'cause men don't have to think about this.

01:01:55 Katherine

You know men just go into these careers and you know they don't even think of having to make a big dis life decision. And so that was, I guess when I became aware that there was a big gender.

01:02:07 Katherine

01:02:09 Sarah

I can't tell you how much this story resonates with me, Catherine, that when I was completing my masters it just disbanded.

01:02:17 Sarah

As a Seminole moment for me, I was talking to a gentleman in a park and and he said to me, well, what are you doing here? Because I was in a foreign country so it was it's clear that I'm a foreigner.

01:02:28 Sarah

And then he said, you know, what are you doing here and I said, oh, I'm here studying. Is it already studying?

01:02:32 Sarah

I'm doing my masters in business and he looked at me and said, well why are you doing that? Why are you taking a seat in the university that a man should have? Because you're going to just meet someone, get married, have babies and not.

01:02:48 Speaker 1

I couldn't believe this, I just.

01:02:51 Sarah

That that is what I'm supposed.

01:02:53 Sarah

To be doing 'cause, I didn't get that message.

01:02:55 Jay

It still shocks me when I hear those stories that I know.

01:02:57 Katherine

Are happening I think though, that I mean we've made a lot of progress though, because women are looking for that work life balance and and being able to have a flexible schedule and to be able to have.

01:03:08 Katherine

But both and I think that's just so much more accepted now, and I think honestly, COVID has driven that movement on the on the bar a little bit further, because we understand that there's there's other commitments in our lives, and we're flexible. You know you can work.

01:03:24 Katherine

No after hours. Well, you know when you're.

01:03:26 Katherine

You don't have to be.

01:03:27 Katherine

In the office, yeah that type of thing. So flexible schedules have made a big difference for women in engineering.

01:03:33 Jay

Do you have a role model that influenced some of your thinking on the equity and what roles are that sort of thing?

01:03:41 Katherine

Oh, you bet. I mean, I have. What's the the greatest role models? So her name is Monique Fries. She was the first female engineering graduate from the University of Ottawa in 19.

01:03:54 Katherine

56 and she went on to become a biomedical engineer. I've taken some classes of hers. She was a champion for women in science and tech and engineering, and she in 1996. I couldn't believe this when I looked it up.

01:04:08 Katherine

In 1996, when I met her at the University of Ottawa 25 years ago, she took me in.

01:04:16 Katherine

She gave me a job. We were we're doing a lot of activism and and creating programs at the time it was called path makers that she had created and I was I was the coordinator for the path.

01:04:27 Katherine

Makers program where we had students in the university.

01:04:31 Katherine

At Carlton Anotado, you going into classrooms in high school and just talking just just? We didn't exclude the the boys in the class.

01:04:39 Katherine

The girls in the class so you know we're all together the boys could see female role models at the front of the class. You know, women that were studying in engineering roles at the university, and so that was the program.

01:04:51 Katherine

But she gave me an opportunity to get involved with and she was at the time, the incerc.

01:04:58 Katherine

Industry chair for women in science and Engineering and in 1996 or 1997 they created 5 national chairs to kind of move this issue forward, and it was well. It wasn't great, but I I was looking up an old document of hers and it said in 1996.

01:05:18 Katherine

25 years ago there were two challenges that persist. One was the work life balance for career women and the other was achieving fair respect and recognition for women engineering work and well. Yeah, we.

01:05:29 Sarah

And then we fixed it, right?

01:05:29 Sarah

Then we fixed it right?

01:05:31

And now we fixed it.

01:05:33 Katherine

And wouldn't, yeah, exactly and.

01:05:35 Katherine

Here we are. 25 years later. I really do believe that there's a lot of discussion around fair, you know, a pay for equal work, equal pay for equal work, and that that's definitely a discussion that's that's in their conversation these days.

01:05:49 Katherine

But the work life balance I just mentioned it. That's something that's really made a difference for women. Going into engineering is to.

01:05:55 Katherine

Be able to have.

01:05:56 Katherine

Flexible schedules you know and and work from home arrangements and that different things that still the team recognizes the value of the woman and doesn't exclude them, makes a schedule or an arrangement and a work arrangement that works for them so that they can be involved.

01:06:14 Sarah

As the Inclusion Champion award winner for 2020 Catherine, I'm hoping that you can share some advice with our listeners or a little bit of guidance around what one thing you think that I can do or any of us can do to address exclusion at the college and make Algonquin.

01:06:34 Sarah

College and even more inclusive.

01:06:37 Katherine

I feel like you were just hoping that I had an answer to this because I don't know really what the the secret is.

01:06:44 Katherine

'cause we've been we've been working on this for a while specifically you and me, Sarah, but but I've been involved with the WIST program and when then wheat and then now we saved you a seat. And we've we've.

01:06:56 Katherine

Implemented a lot of programs at the college.

01:06:59 Katherine

What I'm doing is reaching out and creating space where women feel belonging in my coffee clubs that I that I run every month.

01:07:06 Katherine

So I think that I mean I don't know in general, I'm just very, very narrowly thinking about how to encourage and support and be inclusive for women in technician technology trades areas.

01:07:19 Katherine

The college, so very specifically.

01:07:21 Katherine

Instead of thinking about all the different minorities and all the differences that we're bringing in all the you know the diversity of our student population.

01:07:30 Katherine

I am being very specifically thinking about how I can support women and that through through just putting on events and coffee clubs and things that they they're invited to and they feel that.

01:07:41 Katherine

They belong in there with others are like minded. So again I think I'm just bringing this back. My answer just to to creating that that space of belonging that the college is so good at doing and that's going to create a more inclusive place.

01:07:56 Jay

I just wanted to dig a little bit there just.

01:07:59 Jay

In my role working in student support services so I'm not in a technical program of study. Is there something I can do to support in my everyday work or with either students or staff? Just women participation and inclusion?

01:08:14 Jay

In the college community.

01:08:16 Katherine

So I did have a bit of an issue this semester because of the Student Council meeting that I had.

01:08:17 Speaker 1

The big.

01:08:22 Katherine

And the male students were upset that women were getting special treatment. They were getting opportunities that that the men weren't getting.

01:08:31 Katherine

And I think as you know, even my colleagues, I didn't feel like I was getting a lot of support from them or that they didn't see you know the importance of the fact that we were.

01:08:43 Katherine

Offering special programs and special events and special coffee clubs for women to make sure that they felt included. And so I think as just general population and what I would really like for my team.

01:08:54 Katherine

There's ten other people in my department and they're all males. What I need for the male community at the college to do is to be supportive of the fact that we're doing special things for women and to advertise them and to tell other people about them and to be proud of them. And the fact that we would have, you know, entrance awards.

01:09:14 Katherine

And some of our programs, and that they're not available to men, celebrate that. Celebrate the fact that we're making an effort to make sure that we're getting women into these programs and understanding the importance of diversity and why we need to have women around.

01:09:31 Katherine

The contribution that they bring, and so I think, just as any faculty member or any employee of the college, I think you should just be aware of what we're doing to support and encourage and recruit women into these programs and advertise and be proud and tell people about it. And and certainly when somebody says, hey, that's not fair.

01:09:51 Katherine

That they're getting special treatment. You would correct them and you would say no, we're doing this because this is going to be, uh, you know, change the industry and we need to do this and this is, you know, this is something that we're we're encouraging.

01:10:04 Katherine

So yeah, that's what I would say.

01:10:07 Sarah

Well, Katherine, thanks for your passion. And I mean I can hear it through through your voice and we can see it through the all the actions you're taking to make the college a more inclusive place.

01:10:19 Sarah

So thank you for sharing some of your experiences with us, and please continue to inspire young women to go into places.

01:10:27 Sarah

That someone else thinks that where they shouldn't be, but we don't have that same opinion. So thank you, Catherine.

01:10:34 Katherine

Oh, you're welcome, thanks for.

01:10:35 Jay

Having we want to thank all of our guests. This is one of the best podcasts or broadcasts I've done some of that before that I've been part of that's such a genuine message from each speaker.

01:10:46 Jay

It really helped me think about the college community and the support that's here and it's people like this that make me proud to work at Algonquin.

01:10:55 Sarah

I completely agree that Jay and it it is.

01:10:58 Sarah

Not just the people we work with, but how much those people also care about and focus on people. So Melody spoke about.

01:11:05 Sarah

Boat sharing stories and the ability of telling those stories to connect. People Liz and Ameet both talk about making space for people and inviting them to share their different experiences and being respectful of that. And Catherine really spoke there at the end about the need to pull people.

01:11:25 Sarah

In to these important conversations who aren't there yet. And all of that focus on people is, I think, really at the heart of create.

01:11:35 Sarah

Meeting spaces where people feel like they belong.

01:11:38 Jay

I totally agree. What a community that were part of this is amazing.

01:11:42 Sarah

All these amazing people, but in particular today was all about our incredible nominees. Melody Wilson, Liz van Moo and Amitabh Wala, who were the inaugural nominees for the Algonquin College Inclusion Champion Award. I want to thank them for taking time to chat with us today and share their experiences.

01:12:03 Sarah

And of course, an extra special thank you to Katherine Rylander, the winner of the award and all these people were able to come on and share their passion, and I hope you enjoy.

01:12:13 Sarah

Joyed tapping into that passion for diversity. Inclusion as much as I did today. So thank you for listening and thank you to our production team at Pop up podcasting.

01:12:24 Sarah

And of course, thanks to Jay for joining me along the way as a member of the inclusion and Diversity Circle and as a member of the Algonquin.

01:12:33 Sarah

College community.

01:12:35 Jay

Thank you Sarah for including me on this project was a really great project.