

PAMELA HARRIS: The Center for Minorities in the Mathematical Sciences presents Mathematically Uncensored,

ARIS WINGER: where our talk is real and complex, but never discrete.

[Music]

ARIS WINGER: Hey everybody. You're listening to Mathematically Uncensored

PAMELA HARRIS: Where our talk is real and complex, but never discrete.

ARIS WINGER: How are you doing?

PAMELA HARRIS: Good! Episode six!

ARIS WINGER: That's right. One day we're going to run this so smoothly that, yeah, it won't be, although I'm going to, I mean, it's one of these things where it's always an adventure. Like what, like one day we'll just be able to go sit in a studio and just do that. We actually might be in person and be able to do this.

PAMELA HARRIS: Can you imagine how fun that would be?

ARIS WINGER: I just miss you in general. Like, I can't believe like as close as I can be to someone who's like a hundred hundreds of miles away, I guess I feel that way towards you.

PAMELA HARRIS: It's like we see each other so often. Actually, wait, we haven't been in the exact same physical space in like a year

ARIS WINGER: Since Baltimore, right?

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah

ARIS WINGER: We're there for

PAMELA HARRIS: September of last year. So 14 months, 15 months.

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: That's wild.

ARIS WINGER: Wait, I didn't see you at JMM, at all?

PAMELA HARRIS: I don't think we saw each other at JMM.

ARIS WINGER: Okay. Okay. Okay. Yeah. That's wild.

PAMELA HARRIS: That is, yeah. That is very interesting to think about all the, all the things we've been accomplishing remote, you know,

remotely working remotely with the pandemic. So what a reality check that was.

ARIS WINGER: Yes, that's right. That's right. Yeah.

PAMELA HARRIS: So how was your week?

ARIS WINGER: It was good. Yeah. So the semester is ending. It ended like last week or so.

PAMELA HARRIS: Lucky you

ARIS WINGER: Yours is not over yet?

PAMELA HARRIS: No, we have this week and finals next week.

ARIS WINGER: Okay. Yeah, we started August 10th. So that was actually nice. I'm one of these people who likes to get started early and finish early, like yeah, let's just do it. If we're, if I got to do it, let's do it quick. Right. And early. Yeah. So this has been. I wouldn't even say a different end of the semester. It's just that, you know, it is, it has been a tiring semester to really do stuff differently. So yeah, I mean, I got evaluations back and so, you know, just really thinking about, so it's just a combination of getting evaluations back and also getting, you know, students who missed the final. You know, I had one or two students miss the final. And so, you know, it was, you know, they were then asking me, could they, what could they do if this was a week after, you know, the final was already given out?

PAMELA HARRIS: And you had already entered grade

ARIS WINGER: Oh, yes, yes, yes. Grades are in and everything. And it's just like, so there are what I mean. So I took some time to really struggle about, you know, you know, what can I do? And so all of these things came to me because first of all, let me step back that, you know, the way that I look at a college student is kind of different maybe from how a lot of people look at college students. So when I look at a college student, I look at somebody who, whether they realize it or not is trying to change the trajectory of their life. As it stands right now, like particularly at my school, I got a young, a lot of older people who are really coming back to work. Right. But even when you're talking about young people who are in college, just because everyone told them they had to go to college, they're on a road to try and transform their lives. And so I, so for me, that. It gives me this orientation of, yeah, for me, that gives me the

orientation to being an advocate as much as possible, because I know that people are here in this space trying to change something really big about their lives, right. And so there are what. But then, right, so having that conversation, having that orientation about what college is, and then now having somebody to say, oh, no, no, no, I'm sorry. I missed the final, please. Please. Can I do anything? Right. And I fulfilled all of my obligations. Right?

PAMELA HARRIS: Right! You've washed your hands, you've finished the semester

ARIS WINGER: Should this have been a competing perspective?

PAMELA HARRIS: Oh my gosh, this so should have been a competing perspective

ARIS WINGER: I've done my quote. I've done my quote responsibilities. But, but you know, you, and I've been talking about compassion and, you know, there, there was a document that we'll talk about later in which we said in this document that, you know, compassion sometimes has to go beyond your boundaries.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yes

ARIS WINGER: That when we think about compassion, that it is not something that, oh, let me just have compassion up to this level. There are times when you must give compassion beyond your boundaries. And so that is when, for it to be authentic. And so I've really been thinking about compassion versus I've done my job versus, you know, I, you know, because, and, and the other thing that I struggled with is that if this person had said it the right way, then I might've done something differently. And so I'm struggling with that too, because am I not supposed to just go ahead and if I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it. If I'm not going to do it, I'm not going to do it. But this person just said, I'm sorry, I missed, I just missed the exam. Right. If they say, I'm sorry to miss the exam because of A, B, C, COVID, and all this other stuff. And I'm like, you know what, let me go do this and do this, but this person just said, I missed it. Right, but, so now I'm privileging people who have the power to tell me their story. Right? Because now this person doesn't. You know, I don't know why this person didn't say exactly why they missed it. Right. But I don't give them credit for not telling me. Right. And so then I don't put forth the effort. So all of this stuff has been fucking with my mind the last, you know, 10 days or so. Cause it's just like, again, as we've been saying, who is it that you want to be? And I've just been struggling with. I'm tired. And, oh my god, I want to defend this person.

PAMELA HARRIS: But also, there's gotta be a point at which you also set a boundary, you draw a line and you say, I'm sorry. At some point I have to hold the line. And so, interesting because you've already submitted grades. So let's just be very, you know, very clear what happens now. You'd have to file.

ARIS WINGER: Oh yes, there's some work I'd have to do

PAMELA HARRIS: You know what I'm saying? It's like, so this, this is one of those cases where extending grace is actually quite difficult. Not, not because you don't want to, but because you had already submitted grades. So now you've got to go to the registrar.

ARIS WINGER: Oh yes

PAMELA HARRIS: You got to fill out forms, you got to get an incomplete. You probably got to write a new exam. You got to grade a new exam, you got to enter new grades, forms. And so this, yeah. So the level of, of extending grace to these, this student, this particular student, is actually much more involved than the normal things I usually say, which is, you know, a student needs an additional 24 hours, you know? Okay. If it makes sense, grant it, blanket to all the people in the class. And then there's other times. Yeah. Whereas this is just maybe too much. Is this too much? Are we hypocrites? We're telling all these people they got to extend grace and then we struggle with it too.

ARIS WINGER: That's right. That's right. Well, and again, you know, I, the way, the way I'm trying to go is I don't want to make excuses for why I can't give grace. Right. I don't want the reason to be that, oh, that's, that's, that's going to inconvenience me. So let me, let me not give you grace cause I'm going to be inconvenienced. So let's be clear. We're talking about two or three hours. Total work, right. Two or three hours, somebody missed an exam. And so I do want to be the person, because of what I think college is, to do something I just couldn't will myself to do it. And so, you know, it's, yeah. So I, and I know I've got colleagues who had just like, it was end of semester, end of story. End of semester, end of story. Grades are in, end of story. And you know, I'm not there. I don't want to be there. Right. Because I think the story matters. I just didn't hear what the story was. I just didn't hear the story. So.

PAMELA HARRIS: But here's the thing. Sometimes the story can also dictate how you act, because not knowing the story allows you to imagine that the student is in the worst possible scenario, and so you're likely to then extend grace. But what you're saying is that you actually want the details.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah. And people listening to me, I'm going to need your help because this is hard. Right. Because you know, you know, this. Getting flack for this is going to be difficult. Yeah. So I'm going to be real about it. Yeah. So then, so what I am talking about is hearing the story because it helps me overcome, you know, the three hours I'm going to have to put in. Right. It helps. So it's, so the question becomes, at this point in the semester, I'm exhausted, whatever. Right. And the semester is over. You know, I need a compelling reason to get off my ass. Right. I mean, that's the problem, right. And that, you know, ideally I would be like, okay, no, let me run and get this done. And again, it's the story that would have helped me here. But let's be clear. It's not like I couldn't have asked for the story. Right. This person writes me an email and I could have just been like, okay, what's going on? Right. Definitely classic Pamela Harris, classic. Tell me what's going on. And yeah, I was just like, you know what I saw, and there are a lot of ways where I was, in the exhausted sense. I saw all the check marks to be able to get out of doing it. I saw it, because I had, because in my 20 year career of teaching, I've heard over and over and over again, grades in, semester over. Too bad.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yes

ARIS WINGER: And I am fighting against 20 years of having that orientation. And so, yeah, I mean, so, yeah. So I'm struggling this week about whether, have I failed a student? Forget about whether that student's failed my class. Have I failed a student? Yeah.

PAMELA HARRIS: That's rough

ARIS WINGER: Yeah, I know, So I'm wrestling with that. I was, I was not expecting to get an answer to that today, but I appreciate you listening.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah, I don't have an answer. But I do have fails this week. Because you know, I've been extending grace all along. Students have asked me for extensions for this, for that, for all the bangs. And I have built in, to the course, homework drops. Okay. We're in the last two weeks, of sorry, the last two homework sets that have to be turned in and they can drop half of them if they want right now, the ones that are remaining. So basically there's two types of homework. There's homework that I grade for completion. That's the homework that we do together while we're in class and the zoom meetings with the breakout rooms, like we're doing that problem set together. And then sometimes they're a little longer. And so they do have to spend a little time outside of class working those problems, but then there's the WebWork when we're, it gets graded for correctness. But you have

unlimited tries. So I've really set it up so that if you, if you try, you will succeed in this class. There's no exams. So there's no exams. It's really the class. There's a ton of homework, right. We're going to do half of it together. It gets graded for completion. Did you do it? I don't even check if the answers are correct. And then the, WebWork is checking the correctness. So, a student reaches out and says, you know, and they give me a story. Compelling! And I look at the student and I'm like, I, and then I was like, but this student hasn't used their drops. This is precisely what these drops are for. Use your drops.

ARIS WINGER: Okay.

PAMELA HARRIS: And I didn't extend grace and I said, use your drops. I said, I totally get it. Thank you for letting me know that this is happening. I'm really sorry about it. You know, this is precisely why I built in the drops. It sounds to me like a 24 hour thing is really not helping at all. You just need to use the drops.

ARIS WINGER: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: But I really didn't see, like their story. Their story actually convinced me the grace wasn't the right move. Because what I would have done is delayed the inevitable based on their story, that they weren't going to be able to complete it even with an additional 24 hours. And the amount of pressure, that I imagined that they would be under, because now they ask for an exception, an extension, and now they couldn't complete it under the extension. And now they have to come back to me and be like, oh, nevermind, I'm gonna use my drops.

ARIS WINGER: Right.

PAMELA HARRIS: But isn't as ironic that like the story led me to believe that the best and most graceful thing that I could do was say, my friend, don't worry about it. I built in these drops. Let's use those drops.

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes. But, but the, the drops were always well intentioned.

PAMELA HARRIS: They were, they were precisely for this purpose.

ARIS WINGER: Okay. Okay.

PAMELA HARRIS: Precisely for this purpose. And even though the student prefaced the email very, very well, like Professor Harris, I know you don't give, you know, I know you don't give extensions, you know, you, I know you've been so kind in the past, giving them out. I figured I'd

ask again. Here's what's happening. You know what, framed it, completely made sense. I understood it. I related to it quite well. And I made the call that I didn't think it was going to help. Also they hadn't started the homework. Like they hadn't done it at all. Like, you know, it just wasn't going to happen. It was a week long thing that you were trying to cram in 24 hours.

ARIS WINGER: 24 hours. Yeah. Yeah. No, I think you're good. I think that's, that's what the drop is for now. I think you're good.

PAMELA HARRIS: Listen, as you were talking, I'm like, I'm a hypocrite. This whole time. I'm telling Aris and other people you extend grace, extend grace. And then a student comes to me and I'm like, you know how my course is set up. The grace is already built in, use the grace that was already built in. And I could have just extended by 24 hours. But again, it was like the opposite. Because you wanted that story to extend grace. Whereas again, like I said, the story was the thing that led me to believe the grace wasn't the right thing.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah. Yeah. Oh no. Let's be clear that I, you know, that the story was going to be the make or break of, of, of the grace. So again, if this person has said that they, you know, were off in Cabo. And they missed the final because of.

PAMELA HARRIS: No

ARIS WINGER: It was not just any story. Right. It's one of these things, but again, yeah. It's yeah, it's, it's difficult because again, like this person now may have to pay for this course again, may have to wait to take these other courses, right. There's this, because there's a story there that, you know, that by the way, for me, was enough for me to go ahead and do this, it's just that now at the point where I was. Yeah, it was just, it was just not where I am. It's just not, I could not muster enough to go ahead and go through this three, four hour process because there's something that that's, this person's responsibility. But oh, then I hear them. I hear them. They say, but wait, I mean, this person is an adult. Yeah, they'd be like, it's their responsibility to get in on time. It's and, and I've heard that too. And to that, I just offer that, you know, particularly for younger students and as I get older, I just turned 43 December 1st. As I get older. I have more and more leeway for young people. Like it's like the young people get younger and younger and younger. In other words, you know, when I hear my colleagues say that some 19 year old needs to get their shit together and then they go home and their life's in shambles.

PAMELA HARRIS: You're bringing it

ARIS WINGER: So, yes, I'm talking to you, I'm talking to you, some of y'all out there. So I got no time for looking at young people who were telling to get 15 credits of stuff together. And then, you know, if they don't turn in something on time, then you won't turn it, but you, you can't pay your light bill on time. Like, come on. Come on.

PAMELA HARRIS: You know, what's one of the most beautiful lessons I learned from moving from a place like West Point, which is very much about following the rules and the guidelines and like the red tape of, yeah.

ARIS WINGER: And I want to talk to you about that experience in depth at some point, because I cannot wait to hear that. Yeah.

PAMELA HARRIS: Oh my god. All the things. But moving from a place like that, that really values, that is very rigid. To a place like Williams, where we make exceptions left and right about everything.

ARIS WINGER: You don't give tests!

PAMELA HARRIS: I don't give tests! Right. And so that transition was wild in the sense that I went from, you know, believing that I needed to follow everything, you know, to a T, to then learning that things, you just have to ask. Yeah. You just have to ask. You know, professor, can I have 24 hours, you know, Oh, I missed this deadline, you know, for some funding three weeks ago. Can I still send it? And then they're like, yeah, yeah, yeah. Just send it in to me. Yeah. So, yeah, so it's been a very big change in culture for me, but what that does lead is it creates a culture in which exceptions are the norm. And that doesn't mean that they are something that I, as a person of color feel comfortable asking for, because I never want to feel like it's, I'm being treated special, right. That exceptions are being made just for me, because look at me how, you know, I just don't have my shit together. I don't want to give anybody a reason to think that they're making this assumption because I'm Latina and well, you know, she didn't know better. And so, you know, we gotta, we gotta coddle her.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah, no, I, and sometimes I would rather, you know, to that point, sometimes I would rather just not, to take the consequence than to be late and reinforce a stereotype about black people. Yeah. You know what I mean? Like yeah, of being late. So yeah, no, there are all sorts of issues in particular being a person of color and in situations like this, but I've also, I've always struggled with deadlines in this sense for my students that I've seen. And I've been one of these people that are no, not in on time, zero. Right. And I'm glad I got past that, because you know, it's this fight back against a system that forces us to put numbers and letters and numbers, letters,

numbers, and letters on people's performance and value. Right. And so I've really been super lax on deadlines because deadlines is not for me a marker of whether you understand the material. Right. I've met so many people turn in stuff that's great after the deadline that like, yeah. So my, my way of rectifying that is that, you know, I give some, some percentage penalty for being late. But after that, it's the only like 5, 10%. Because after that, it's just like, I just want to see if you understand and whether it was in on this day at midnight or whatever is not a big concern to me.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah, no, I, I am thinking about the fact that yeah, those deadlines are really set there for us. Right. They're set there for us to give some sort of structure and some sort of pacing to our courses, but we, we know that we learn and we process differently, you know, in terms of like, just content, like, depending on how difficult the content is, you might need more time. Sometimes you'd get it really fast. And so those are super arbitrary. Just arbitrary.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah. Yeah. Now this semester I had no deadlines except for tests. Right. So all of the homework was open and just like, particularly this semester, it's all there. And they were so shocked by this because they kept saying, well, when is this due. I was like, we're working, player. Like we're coming, this, this, this, this, you should just stay with me as much as you can. Right. In terms of I'm going to cover this topic, you should do the topic then, but if you're falling a little bit behind, you got time to catch up. It's it's good. That way.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah. That's great. Yeah, I set it up so that, you know, I gave, I opened up everything just like you just said, every single thing, every homework they had since day one. Entire set of homework. That I've described all of that, all the videos, all the questions, everything was available from day one. I said, you can get, you can, you can decide that you're going to do nothing but math for these three weeks. And you can finish the course.

ARIS WINGER: Yes, yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: But I'm going to set some deadlines to keep you on pace with me.

ARIS WINGER: No, that's interesting. I might do that. Yeah. I might do that because, you know, as you know, I had a couple people who were just like, yo, I can just wait.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yes, that was, I didn't want, I didn't want to wait. You know, like I'm going to wait until three weeks. I don't need to,

it's not, due. I know some folks procrastinate until the deadline, like somehow deadlines become like this way to work, right? Like, oh, the deadline is at 3:00 PM. That means I start at 1:00 PM. But if the deadline is not until five months, you'll be not like my concern right now. Problem for future Pamela.

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: So, but that's interesting. Maybe we can talk a little bit about, so, you know, we had our pre-show production meeting, and one of the things that we thought a little bit about is this struggle as we're having our conversations to continue to center people that are of color.

ARIS WINGER: Oh yes, yes, yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: We're not talking to white people on our show.

ARIS WINGER: Yes, no, no. I am directly quoted last week and people, people, you know, we got good response about that saying with a shout out to white people, to tell them about how, how being an ally and, and, you know, that's, it's interesting because thinking about this passive versus active, right? So maybe thinking about reframing this as, I guess the two things, but reframing this as here's what we, as people of color should be looking for in an ally. Right. In that sense, putting us at the center. Right? So that when we consistently keep thinking about white people, white people are thinking, then we are not centering ourselves and we are already not centered in this world. Can we just have an hour and a half in this show in which we're centered?

PAMELA HARRIS: No, but that's the problem. That's precisely the problem that when do we have spaces where we could just be, and that's the point of this podcast, but even we struggle with just being present in that moment and having that conversation and not then centering white people and being like, this is what we need from you, white people. Right? Like talking to them directly. Whereas what you just said is the thing that was missing, which is you and I having a conversation about what it is that you and I need. Yeah, what I look for in my allies. Right. So it's, it's yeah, it's really subtle.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah, and powerful.

PAMELA HARRIS: And I'm mostly, yeah, I'm really thankful for us, you know, kind of debriefing after every show and thinking about how, without even intending it, without even thinking about it, that can be a default that we fall into.

ARIS WINGER: That's right. And that's that's that is the power of white supremacy in a lot of ways. Yeah, that's right. That's right. So, I mean, you have no idea. I've been thinking about years and years about the JMM and what does a space for us to look like at the JMM? Like, what would it look like? And what would the, you know, in a lot of ways I can't help but do it, but because it's part of it, what does the backlash look like? Right. As we, as we say, I want to go to the JMM and I want a space, whether it's just for 20 minutes, 30 minutes. A room, whatever it is, particularly during these times where, you know, people of color can just go ahead and congregate. And what that looks like and how it gets received. And, you know, just that whole discussion, right? Because the question becomes, do we only get spaces of our own on the, on this podcast and virtually, or do we get spaces for our own, you know, physically in places, this is a hard question. I don't have the answer to, but we, we have to be consistent. If we think that we need spaces like this, then, you know, at, at a place like the Joint Math Meetings, then, you know, what does that look like? Or is it necessary, right?

PAMELA HARRIS: And it's interesting to me to think about the backlash, because again, who are we centering there? It's not even like what it is that we need. What kind of space do I want to have at these conferences, because it immediately, my mind goes to, oh, but can we do that? Can we actually do that? Because then I started imagining getting all the emails, all the hate emails, reverse-racism.

ARIS WINGER: That's right. That's right. And so it is one of these things that, that is unique to that we have to, we have these immediate reactions of, okay, what is this going to look like? Right. Instead of just focusing, let's just do the thing that we know is best for us.

PAMELA HARRIS: But then maybe it's not going to happen at JMM. And I say that because. You know, I don't think about, I don't have this conversation when I think about SACNAS. I just show up! And it is my space. You know what I mean? Like, I don't even think about white people in that room.

ARIS WINGER: Right.

PAMELA HARRIS: So like, that's why I love going to SACNAS. Right. Cause like I just show up and I get to be me and I get to just not be not, not even be thinking about this conversation. You know, it's so weird. I hadn't thought about it. I'm like, oh, I love it because I see all my friends, but no, it's the fact that whiteness is not at the center

ARIS WINGER: Right, right. That's interesting.

PAMELA HARRIS: But yeah. So I think the comment that we had, you know, from, from the production meeting was that, you know, we need to figure out how to put ourselves first and second, and rather than like in the third person, it's so difficult. It's so, so difficult

ARIS WINGER: Because we've been trained. It's been, we've been socialized. Absolutely. No. I mean, I am the, whatever you see from me, I'm just a bad copy of my grandmother, Martha Brown. Right. I mean, she, you know, is my hero and raised me since I was 11 after the death of my father and you know, her and my aunt did that until I left for Carnegie Mellon university. So by the way, that's all of Howard, they were still raising me through my undergrad in a lot of ways. Staying there and in their house. And so, but this is a person who had put white people first all the time. Because she was cleaning their whatever, and doing this. Right. And then, you know, she would always, you know, talk, you know, as older people, they were always talk in the negative sense, and that white was right, and all of these things. Right. So I come up in a space where I always have to be thinking about as Toni Morrison says, the white gaze. How are they watching us? What is the right and how she, Toni Morrison has been fighting against that, had been fighting against that her whole career. And we must do the same. Yeah, we have to do the same thing.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah. That's. I mean, for me, it's about just the way I speak and I don't, I don't even mean like intonation or, you know, like cadence. I don't mean that. I literally mean like erasure. Like erasing an accent. Like being cognizant that if, if I could just pretend to not have one, if I just worked and practiced and like got rid of any kind of semblance of any Latinx accent when I spoke English. That then that would change my life, you know?

ARIS WINGER: You mean improve your life.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah! And so I, yeah, for the positive, change it for the positive. Because here's the thing. I walk into places and of course, you know, people will be like, oh, where are you from? I get that all the time, because they know, apparently culturally, culturally ambiguous is the right word. And so, you know, I have people come up to me and like start speaking in a different language that I don't know. And then I'm like, oh, hi. And then they try a different language. And I'm like, no. You know, Spanish? And they're like, and then they'll speak Spanish back. Right. But somehow that. Like being cognizant that people didn't really, couldn't identify exactly where I'm from, allowed me a way to hide. And if I perfected

my English, it was easier to hide. And so it's, it's been the way in which I've, I've just hidden my whole life and tried to like cocoon myself in some sort of safety by just virtue of not having an accent.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah. Safety from what? Safety from

PAMELA HARRIS: From deportation, like immediately, that was like the first and most pressing one. But also safety from what I imagined were just stereotypes that were going to prevent me from succeeding. Yes. Yeah. I think that's really the one, you know, the assumptions, the assumptions that other people would have about me if they heard an accent.

ARIS WINGER: if they knew. Yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: Right. And I'm very, I'm very aware of this through my father and my mother, because they both have very strong Spanish accents. My, my dad, particularly his, his English accent has a very nice Latin flavor to it. He is brilliant. You know, he is a brilliant man. He was, he wanted to be a doctor when he was a kid and his father died when he was 15 years old. And he was the second oldest. There was three, three older, sorry. He, he has an older sister, older brother. He was the second oldest son. And he was the one that decided that he needed to step up and really just help the family. And so he wanted a job and, you know. So he did all these things that prevented him from reaching a potential that he might have had if the circumstances would have been different. And the, the conversations I've had with my father as we've lived in the United States, have always been shaped by the assumptions that people make based on how he speaks English and that they assume that because he has an accent, he must be dumb.

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: And here's my father. Who doesn't have a high school diploma, doesn't have a GED. And he is the right-hand person running this cleaning company, you know. And we have these conversations about, he says to me, just like last week we were talking about having people, judge us and think we're dumb. And then he's like, it's easier for you now because you have a PhD. And by default of having a PhD after your name, you have proven without a doubt that you are smart. He said, now imagine how hard it continues to be for me when I need to work and collaborate with people who have master's degrees in economics. And they come at me and they're like, we'll see what we really should do with this cleaning company is X, Y, and Z. And my father was like, we did that 10 years ago and it didn't work. Here's what we actually need to do. And you know, he, he is somebody who doesn't shy away from telling people that they're wrong and that their

education actually maybe in practice is not the thing that's worked for this company, but his accent has been the thing that sometimes gets people to question his intelligence.

ARIS WINGER: Yes

PAMELA HARRIS: And so having grown up in that environment, like the primary importance for me was okay, so we just got to fool folks. We just got to fool people that we're smart. And it's not actually proved that you're smart, it's just, just fool them. And the way you fool them is by speaking, just like them.

ARIS WINGER: Yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: Just like, sound just like them, maybe dress just like them, you know? And then maybe you'll be let in and then you amass a little bit of power and then, you know, kind of yeah. Go from there.

ARIS WINGER: Right, right. Wow. That's that's incredible. That's incredible. Well, yeah. I don't know. I'm yeah, I hear that. And yeah, I mean, I've been a, I dunno what the right phrase is, but I've committed that sin for sure. Right. That when, when accents are not the norm, then there's work to be done to, to not make these assumptions about people. Right. And so, yeah, that's, that's work we all have to do.

PAMELA HARRIS: But actually these play a role in a lot of our professional work. So maybe this gives us a nice segue into two things that we really want to talk today about. So the first is evaluations, right? You touched on this a little bit, that you gave out your evaluations.

ARIS WINGER: Yes

PAMELA HARRIS: I'm reminded of being in graduate school and having one of the, one of my fellow office mates. He was from, he is from Vietnam. And I remember when he arrived into the graduate program, he had to take like the TOEFL, I think it was called, right, like second language proficiency. And I remember the, one of the graduate professors said, oh, we're going to put you in an office with Pamela because she talks a lot. And so you'll get to practice, you'll get to practice your English with her.

ARIS WINGER: Wow

PAMELA HARRIS: Here's the thing. It was, it was wonderful. Right. I adored him. He was really wonderful and he was really caring, and really wanted to like, be a good teacher. And so we talked a lot

about, you know, pronunciation of words. And it became very clear to me that I always just understood him just fine.

ARIS WINGER: Yes

PAMELA HARRIS: So in fact, I was the worst person they could have put them with because I don't have a problem understanding accents. I've been understanding accents, my whole life, really, they needed to help put a white person with him who could have corrected it and not been like, well, I understand everything you're saying, I don't know what you're or complaining about. Like it backfired. But it was a huge issue. You know, that these teaching evaluations that he was getting, that I was getting were, you know, racist and sexist in different ways.

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes

PAMELA HARRIS: And we have to deal with that shit, because then we go into the job market and we have to like, what do we do? Preface our teaching evaluations and say, well, you know, the reason why I'm getting these low marks is because I actually have an accent and English is my fourth language.

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: And what does that do to your job prospects?

ARIS WINGER: Absolutely correct. Yeah. No, because again, who gets to be the judge? Who gets to be the judge here, right? About what's right. Yeah. I always struggle when we normalize our, our evaluation numbers because of something we can't change. Yeah, right. Because I mean, the accent is just the accent, right. So, you know, if, if, if an accent is preventing something from happening or understanding from happening, this is, this is everybody's issue. Right. So everyone's got to, everybody's got to get to work. Right. So I think that too often, students are like the accent's the barrier. And it's just like, dial in.

PAMELA HARRIS: Right. Yeah. I mean, can we, can I tease a little, because some of these times as these students that'd be watching Japanese anime with subtitles. Cause I would be like, don't be watching these French movies with subtitles and then get mad at your, you know, math prof with an accent.

ARIS WINGER: That's right. No, that's a good point. Yeah, no. So yeah, I mean, I get to be old. Back to my day, you know, we weren't doing that. Right. I mean, in my high school, we had a bunch of different people who were teaching, with different accents, and I just never

thought twice about it. Right at the time I just had to, I was just like, I've got to understand what this person's saying. So let me, I'm leaning in and I'm trying to understand what they're saying. And it took a week. Yeah, or two or whatever it takes. But then at some point I just understood what was going on. So it's just an added dimension. And so, yeah, I'm not just saying just deal, but everyone. So what students may not understand is that people are working on this.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yes! We take classes! Constantly I've been practicing this accent

ARIS WINGER: Yeah, right. So, yeah, so, I mean, they have to have some grace in that sense too. Yeah.

PAMELA HARRIS: What about these jobs? So we're in the middle. Well, maybe towards the tail end of the job market.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah. So I've just been fortunate that like, I have not had, you know, these types of, but look, I still remember, my heart starts to beat a little bit quick now, still, when I first went around this time and put in all these, all of the applications and I just remember being at the copy machine. I guess they don't do that. Oh my God. I'm really old now.

PAMELA HARRIS: No, you're really old.

ARIS WINGER: I had to do this shit by hand. Print it out. Yeah, no, y'all got it easy now.

PAMELA HARRIS: I'm lying. I'm over here lying. I had to go to the administrative assistant and give her a list of graduate programs where she needed to mail my letters of recommendation too. Yes.

ARIS WINGER: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that. Let's come on over here. That's right. So yeah, so, but no, but I still there's this notion that you're finishing and it's just like, okay. I don't know where I'm going to be next year. Right. So, yeah. So shout out to all the people who are going to be on the market. And we were going to talk a little bit about that, right?

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah. Maybe let's segue into that. So one of the things that we've been thinking a lot about is how might we, as people of color, be presenting ourselves differently in the job cycle or in these job materials that we're putting together. And so let me just be clear. What I'm saying is that maybe we could do a better job putting these documents together and that we've gotten some comments from folks who are on the receiving end of applications or statements, and they're noticing some discrepancies in the, I don't like the word

quality. But just let's say the way that things are organized, the way that things are formatted, who's writing letters of recommendation for you for these jobs. And so I think we have the opportunity to just think through, how do we make a plan to make sure that yeah, we've done all the math. We've gotten this PhD. But now the important thing is getting this job.

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yeah. So this makes me think of an experience I had even at my current institution, which has just been absolutely fantastic in being supportive of me. I went into my faculty mentor with my portfolio for a previous year, and I went in with a bunch of garbage, right. I, I worked on it at the last minute and I come in with it. I was like, here's what I did last year. Right. So this was, I sent it to them and then, you know, a few weeks went by and then I went to meet with him as was the plan. And I sat down and he's like, you know, this isn't you, right? He points at that. And he's like, I know you've done more than this. I know that this is not, this is not you. What I'm seeing on this paper. Right. And he was right. He was right. Right, right. And so, and so this makes me think of this situation only because when we, we have to, and I still struggle with this. Right. Because I'm in it. And then I don't want to take the time to sit and stop and write this and write that and tell everybody how great I am. Right. But what I came to learn is that I must take the time to, this is just part of the job. My presentation to the world matters. How I show myself to the world plays a role in where I end up, in the opportunities I have. So that when you were mentioning, you know, that it's not, that it's not up to par. The way I think about it is, it's not representative of, of the stuff you've been doing. It's not representative of the hard work you put in. It's not representative of the level and the potential that you have, right. And therefore, when you're doing these materials and with this, some of them are where they need to be. But when you do this, when you look at it at the end, you can say, is this representative of me and my best self? That's what you got to ask yourself,

PAMELA HARRIS: What we're really up against, it's not a lack of content. It is a lack of

ARIS WINGER: Right

PAMELA HARRIS: It's, it's so I guess I would say not a lack of, but an abundance of humility

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes. That's a big, that's a big part of it. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, so this is time to shout.

PAMELA HARRIS: From the rooftops!

ARIS WINGER: Right, because let's be real, we're talking about 50, 60, \$70,000 for our people with the first job. Right. Shout out to my people who are getting 45, some of those people too, but right. Yeah. So we're talking about tons of money and it, particularly for people who are, this is their first job or their first tenure track. I want us to remember the big goal, right? Again, we're talking about a million to \$2 million over the course of your lifetime, right. And that, you know, these salaries don't go down. So your starting place is crucial. So you want to, you know, again, print, present yourself. So please think of the big goal. And when you look at your materials, say, wait, is this representative of the big goal that I'm trying to have?

PAMELA HARRIS: So one of the things that happened, I think it was maybe three years ago, we were hiring. And somebody who applied to our job did something that I had never thought of doing. And I thought, they're so bright. What they did, is they, they knew me. And they went to all of the professors, websites at my institution and they said, so, it looks like on average, your assistant professors publish X, this many papers a year. They do this kind of service. They do this thing. They gathered data. So then when they were putting their materials together, they knew what somebody who's already in that position two, three years later looks like and how they then would want to format and present themselves so that they already look like somebody who's well ahead in their career. And I thought that was genius because the thing that I remember doing as I was filling out these materials, the very first time I ever did this. First off, I just googled, right? Like CV template. You know, the first one that looked pretty, quote unquote. And then I thought, okay, I don't know how to do a teaching statement, so I will google teaching statement. And then I was like, oh yes, that sounds about like me. And then I closed it. And then I was like, all right. So the kind of thing you have to say is like, you like working with students, I love math. I grew up and learned division and you know, and then you just like, tell this little story about it. And then I was like, well I can do that. And so I didn't, A, I didn't get actual feedback, right. I just like searched on the internet and kind of copy paste the kind of formatting that I was going to use. And then I also didn't know how to tailor based on the kind of job I was applying to. That insight came after many, many years of being on job market. You know, like just reiterate, like iterating that process of polishing my materials to then finally have the perspective that, oh, if I'm applying to a teaching institution, then the way that I want to order my content and my CV is going to be very different than if I'm trying to get this research post-doc.

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes, yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: But at the time I didn't realize that this was actually something that I should do.

ARIS WINGER: Right, right.

PAMELA HARRIS: I just like filled it out, put it together and hit send. And then I wondered why I did so poorly that first year, no one calls me back, you know, did nothing. I stayed an extra year you know, as, as a graduate student, I mean, I got a fellowship, but I let's. I didn't get that fellowship at Marquette University, you know, because of my job materials. I got, that got me in the door, but then it was the interview that really went quite well. And so we might be in a position where like, I know for a fact, if I get in that door, I will get that job. Let's be real. You interview me, you will want me. But on paper I don't present as well. Or at least I didn't. Well, I think what we're trying to say here is that those two things have to match because if you don't present who you are, on paper, they're never going to get to meet you in person.

ARIS WINGER: Yes, that's right. That's right. That's right. And so, and this is tough because you know, people who are listening, who are in this position, they haven't been on committees and they don't see what it looks like when you are looking at 200 papers and you have to pick 12. Right. And let me just say, you know, off the record, but uncensored, that yeah. If your shit isn't catching my eye quick, and there's just this. Yeah. Let me look at this one, look at this one, let me look at this one. Right. And so, yeah, it's just so informally terrible sometimes. The way that people choose and pick, you know, which, which something to pay attention to. So, but what I'm hearing you say is a couple of things, right. Or what I'm thinking about is a couple of things. I'm thinking about feedback, like you were saying. And I'm thinking about the website.

PAMELA HARRIS: Oh my god, the websites are key.

ARIS WINGER: Oh, these two things. Yes, absolutely. So, and I bring these things up only because I struggle with both. So yeah, I mean, it took me a long time to really think about feedback because there was this element of not trusting and like, and so I had to find someone that I trusted to provide me the feedback. Right. So it took that. Right. So, yeah. So first of all, you should get another set of eyes, particularly a set of eyes that has been through this before. So that they can just tell you very, because it's so easy for someone to say and so impactful for them. Like, oh, no, no, no, don't do that. Oh, no, no, no, no. Switch the order, this material. Right. Just is that,

what does that require? That requires less than 15 seconds of copying and paste and you saved yourself two or three rejections, right? Impactful. And then the other thing is the website. I mean, absolutely. Now what's, what's powerful about this is that you now get to create a space in which you can look absolutely amazing.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah.

ARIS WINGER: You know, like you get to pick it, you get to put the pictures, you get to put the description, you, this, the website is crucial. And some people, when you put the website on your CV and they go there, right. Then that's the new CV. Right. And so, and then you can put videos, you get to put, you know, stuff, presentations, you get to put whatever you want on your website. The website is an absolute game changer for when I was around right, in the space.

PAMELA HARRIS: And you can customize, you know, your link. So it could be PamelaEHarris.com, right? Like you can put your name on your website. And so of course that costs a little bit of money, but hopefully with, you know, with.

ARIS WINGER: It's \$12 a year.

PAMELA HARRIS: I mean

ARIS WINGER: I love y'all but don't tell me you don't have \$12 a year or you can't get somebody—I'll. Well, should I? I was about to say

PAMELA HARRIS: Listen,

ARIS WINGER: We'll have a raffle

PAMELA HARRIS: We're getting an audience

ARIS WINGER: Google domain. This is part of the show is brought to you by Google. Google domains. Yeah, \$12 a year.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah. Yeah. It's definitely needed. I want to see that you've personalized things. And also, can we talk about the pictures that people be using on their webpages. You know, put a professional photo. Listen, you know, your phones have fantastic cameras nowadays. Yeah. Okay. I have been struggling with not having a decent professional photo now that I've lost some weight, but it's not like I could just go to Sears, you know, to get a professional photo.

ARIS WINGER: Now you sound old. You've beaten me, you said Sears.

PAMELA HARRIS: I hate you!

ARIS WINGER: Whatever old issue we were having, you have won it, it is over.

PAMELA HARRIS: Actually Sears closed down. We don't even know. Okay, fine to a photographer, professional photographer, but yeah, you, you know, you can't do that. And so I actually just recently, I Googled how to take a professional photo from home. And there's still like really wonderful steps that you're supposed to do. And they also tell you, like, turn your shoulder this way and then turn your head this way. Right. And then they show you with images, the difference in the kind of quality of the photo that you can take. And I was like, I'm pretty happy with this new professional photo that I have

ARIS WINGER: Your photo looked fantastic

PAMELA HARRIS: That was from me!

ARIS WINGER: Are you serious?

PAMELA HARRIS: Yes! You see what I'm saying

ARIS WINGER: You've got a little side gig going

PAMELA HARRIS: The one that I used on that webinar, I liked that picture.

ARIS WINGER: I felt bad being next to you with that picture, I got to get a new one, but you did that yourself? I'd pay you \$19.95 for that.

PAMELA HARRIS: \$19.95! I'll send you the link. I'm gonna send you the link for how to do these, you know, add home professional photos.

ARIS WINGER: Wow.

PAMELA HARRIS: That's that's where we need to go. Right. Especially right now that we have the opportunity to be home for extended periods of time. Doll up, clean up, shave, do what you need to do, and then follow some online thing on how you take some good, decent professional looking photos.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah.

PAMELA HARRIS: It's the first message that we send out to the world when they see these pictures. And we already know that there are stereotypes against us. So let's not give anybody anything to say other than what a nice professional photo got it.

ARIS WINGER: Yes, that's right. And so in a lot of ways, this era is the first era we have to really have impactful ways to tell our own

narrative about who we are, right, too often in visually stunning and engaging ways where before it was just like, let me just show you this piece of paper, right. And read the black and white.

PAMELA HARRIS: And also the school might provide you with a web page, right. Where all the graduate students are listed. And maybe there's no picture, it's just like an avatar, you know, and says like up and coming photo or something, you know?

ARIS WINGER: With the ugly URL

PAMELA HARRIS: With the dot.dot and like just random. And so what we're saying is that's not good. Okay, that is not good. You want to have your own webpage, that has information about your research, information about your teaching, information, about, you know, programs that you've been involved with. Outreach, activities you've participated in. The truth is that our people are doing a shit ton during their graduate school. And we can talk about that at length about what they should and shouldn't be doing. But what we're saying is you're doing it, you feature it on your webpage. Now I'm of the mind. I have a colleague who does this a lot that I really love and I've started doing this. So when I was traveling, any young person that I was watching a talk for, I would take some pictures of them. Pictures of them, especially if they're my friends. So for example, a dear friend of mine, Andrés, came to visit me at Williams, not this past, spring, the spring before. And he gave a lecture in my class and I, I took pictures of him during the lecture. And I was just like candid shots, you know, just him pointing and explaining, you know, and just like, I tried to take quite a few of them. And then he gave a colloquia and then I took pictures of the colloquia and the board and stuff.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah

PAMELA HARRIS: And then as soon as the, you know, while the talk was going, I would just send him the pictures. And then I caught that he put some of them on his website. And so those are things that we can do for each other. When your friend is at this seminar, take pictures of them. Don't ask them for their permission. Just take the picture and send it to them. Don't post it anywhere. Right. Just give your friend a little. You know, a little gift, a gift of here's you presenting this work, but then you know, those pictures, you can edit it, if you need to, you can crop it, you can do whatever, but it's really nice to have some action shots that, of course you can't get yourself, cause you're the one giving the talk. Right? Those are things that I think I I've learned that from my white colleagues that

they can take pictures and then they send it to each other. And I was like, oh, that's how they have such nice action shots. Sadly, now I've just been taking screen captures of people presenting, and those are much harder to do.

ARIS WINGER: That is right.

PAMELA HARRIS: So another, another tip in terms of these statements, right? So we have research, we have teaching statements, you have a CV, you probably have to think about a diversity statement. Here's the thing. We need to work on having them be formatted the same. You don't want, and these are very small things, but they send the clear message about quality and that you've spend time thinking about these documents and polishing these documents. So things to be on the lookout for: headers, you shouldn't never, ever, ever, ever, ever submit as part of your application materials, something that just lists teaching statement, and then you just write. I want to see your name on the file on the header, the footer. I want to see page numbers. I want to see contact information. This needs to be everywhere because just like Aris said, when you're on a hiring committee, I've been on many, now. You will see so many that you're going to be middle of reviewing one. And you'll be like, wait, who the hell was this?

ARIS WINGER: Who is this?

PAMELA HARRIS: I had read that before and I liked this. Why did I like this? I don't even know who this was. And so you are looking to make yourself stand out and you do that by polishing your documents, make them look like a cohesive packet.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah.

PAMELA HARRIS: If you use 12 point font and one use 12 point font and the other don't mix and match, if you cite things in a particular way, cite them consistently throughout, right? These are things that, again, I know we're tired. I know we're busy. I know we're working. You know, what, what is the English saying? The candle from both ends. But my friends, that makes a huge difference

ARIS WINGER: Absolutely. Yeah, because again, on their own, these things seem like small things that we can overlook, but together they create a package for you that, you know, that may push you across because what happens is that these, that these decisions often turn on the smallest of things, right? That yes, that someone may bring you up or not bring you up based upon, you know, how you're executing your presentation of yourself.

PAMELA HARRIS: And, you know, let's, let's remove the veil a little bit. So being on these hiring committees has been super eye opening to me in many, many ways. One is that I would, I would love to tell listeners that we have a set criteria by which we measure, and look for things. And then just our criteria and that we'd like, remove all bias from the process. But in all honesty, what happens is someone likes you.

ARIS WINGER: Yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: Someone likes you and they will fight to the death for you in convincing somebody else that you are the right person for that position. And so what we're offering here is that you want to give no reason why somebody might say that you're not.

ARIS WINGER: Right.

PAMELA HARRIS: And putting a pocket together, sends a message about who you are. And if it's kind of scattered all over the place, then the default is that you,

ARIS WINGER: yeah, that you are scattered all over the place

PAMELA HARRIS: So we are trying to polish these, these pieces of paper in such a cohesive narrative so that it is very clear, on paper, what it is that you bring to the table and why you are the right candidate for the job. But, you know, I, you know, I wish, I wish I could say, and I could report that, that it was all, you know, very clear how we're going to evaluate. But that is a moving target.

ARIS WINGER: I mean, let's just be clear, we're was talking about people. Right. You're talking about people and people have their opinions. People have their feelings and people are working a job in which they only are on this committee once in a while. Right. And so you're meeting every n weeks, but somebody, this is the last thing on their list. They got a folder with a bunch of applications. They don't want to look at them. And then they're trying to get this shit over as quickly as possible. And so they're in a room with a bunch of people and then somebody says, oh, this person's great. And if that faculty member is trusted, then that person becomes the favorite. And then mail, you have your little application up in here. And the question is, you know, have you done enough to stand out when you're already not the favorite. You're already behind. Yeah. Right. So if you aren't formatting correctly, then you have no chance. This is one of these things. So this is a, I mean, we're, we're telling a bleak story about this, but this is also the reality. Now this is just not true of mathematics. This is true across the board. We know that jobs, you

know, most jobs are given out according to who you know, right. That speaks to this other piece we've been talking about earlier and other episodes about connections and making sure that you're talking to the right people and going out to see what, what did you call it a few weeks ago? It wasn't Casa Blanca. It was Swan Lake.

PAMELA HARRIS: Oh yes, you've got to go see Swan Lake

ARIS WINGER: Oh, yeah, because you know, the graduate students that you're talking to now might be somewhere else and it was done in committee in the future. Right. Is that it's that type of connection stuff we're talking about. So, but at a base level for the things you control, how you're, how you present yourself. Top notch. Not only because it's the most effective way of getting hired, but because you deserve to talk about yourself at the highest level

PAMELA HARRIS: That's right.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah, absolutely.

PAMELA HARRIS: And so when should folks get started working on these? Immediately

ARIS WINGER: Yeah, it's already too late. Yeah.

PAMELA HARRIS: So for me, it's interesting because I think, again, back to when I first applied, when I was a graduate student and I started putting together materials, I think like two weeks before the first job was due.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah.

PAMELA HARRIS: Like you said, no one ever looked at it. Like, you know, I just, I didn't know that I should be getting feedback. I just thought, oh, this is something that I should know. And I think that's one of the things that's very difficult about being a first-generation scholar. That we just are in a dark room. Yes, with a very dim light, trying to find our find our way when other people have, you know, what is, what is the lighting, like the light for the boats? Oh my God, what, what are these things?

ARIS WINGER: A lighthouse?

PAMELA HARRIS: Yes! You know, the lighthouse, other folks live in a lighthouse. They don't worry about this. And I'm over here with my little candle, just trying to figure out the way, getting super lost. And so the thing is that every piece of writing that you have, you should be getting multiple sets of eyes on it. Okay. And I know that

this feels really uncomfortable to send an email and say, would you give me feedback on this? But I can tell you that tons of people ask me for feedback on stuff. And I read it. And I read it and I'm like, move this here, do this here, blah, blah, blah. Okay. You know? Right. Do that, send it back. And then most of the time they don't send it back. And then I'm like, oh, okay. All right. I guess that they implemented it. The truth is like send it back! I want to know that the 30 minutes I put into that document, you put into that document.

ARIS WINGER: That's right. Okay. No you know what's going to happen. mu@minoritymath.org. You're going to get a bunch of people

PAMELA HARRIS: But then also, if there's some white people on the call, they better start donating to my time. You know, \$30 for every CV I review. Venmo \$30, I'll put my Venmo at the end, and I will review a minority mathematician's CV.

ARIS WINGER: Wait, you got a lot of side projects. You're reviewing CVs, you're taking pictures, professional photos.

PAMELA HARRIS: I mean who's going to do it? Ain't nobody doing it. We gotta do that for each other

ARIS WINGER: That's right. That's right.

PAMELA HARRIS: That's the value of community, right?

ARIS WINGER: That's exactly right.

PAMELA HARRIS: The people that I do, that kind of stuff for is people that I care about. If I care about you, I'm writing you letters of rec, I'm editing your documents. Actually, look, I can show you something that came in the mail today. I was just talking about my dear friend Andrés who came to give the talk at Williams. He sent me chocolate.

ARIS WINGER: Wow. That looks beautiful. Yeah. When we get on TV, we'll be able to see that stuff

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah. Yeah, I know. Right. But yeah, so I got a beautiful box of chocolates from my friend, you know, for, as a thanks. So, so I am happy to receive gifts

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Okay. Good.

PAMELA HARRIS: All right, friends. So polish the shit out of your documents before you submit that don't give these people a reason to put you to the bottom of any pile

ARIS WINGER: That's right. And all the more reason to not wait till the last minute to do it because the polishing process. You should leave some time when you plan this out, first of all, you should plan. But you know, when you plan this out, you should lead time to polish, for sure.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah. And once you also, the website, the website thing needs to happen. The second you walk into a graduate program, I would hope you have it. Even before that, as an undergrad, just to like, get it started, even if there's not a whole lot of stuff on there. Just your coursework, you know, the tutoring you did on the side, whatever. There's things you can always put on there. And it's much easier to edit something that you already have started and then you just keep up with it, rather than just creating it from scratch. And the big time consumption is right at the beginning, as you're putting these things together for the very first time, but don't let that feel so daunting, but then you don't do it.

ARIS WINGER: Right, right. Well, yeah, that's right, because of the right mindset that this is for me, the website is a lifetime thing, it's going to be in your lifetime story, it's chronicling your entire career in a lot of ways. And so, yeah, this is an investment to a companion piece to your professional development, right. It's following you along the way. So it is like you have like an autobiography being written as you go. And then the question becomes, how well do you want it to look. And the answer is good. Yeah. You want it to look good.

PAMELA HARRIS: All right. What about these interviews? Do you have any tips and tricks because you know, what are, we're going to release this and then we're going to go on a short hiatus over break. When we catch up with folks, they're going to be in the process of getting ready for, or, or during these interviews.

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes. Just, no, I mean, for me, you know, so I, in a lot of ways it does depend and on the type of job you're trying to get. So from the teacher perspective, you know, really just being clear, knowing the place that you're, you know, applying to and what their values are and thinking about what your values are. Right? Because look, I mean, this is going to be some places where you don't fit, right. So, you know, there is this balance again, of like, just trying to get any job because you need to eat. Right. And also trying to get the right job that's going to be for you so that you don't, you aren't in a bad place. Right? So, so the way to mitigate this is to really think about, you know, because, when you're talking to an institution that has certain values, and then you have those same

values, then you click in ways that are not, that are authentic. And it really gets you a long way to getting this job, right. And so that requires that you know, a lot about what this institution is. And that, you know, a lot about what you are about in terms of being a teacher and what you want to do in terms of, you know, helping students in research and in teaching itself. So, you know, I know that we have these documents about your research statement and about your teaching, but really being very clear about why you're interested in what you're interested in and then finding a place that has those interests that match, is the ideal ideal, right?

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah

ARIS WINGER: And then there's some other things that you have that, you know, you're talking and then, you know, there's just some bare bones things that you need to be thinking about just in terms of having an interview. Right? So obviously you're polite and you're listening and you're active. And that you also, when, you know, when you're asked, do you have any questions? You're going to have some questions, right? Because having hard, deep questions is one of the biggest ways of showing that you're interested. Right. So, you know, too many people are saying, no, I think I'm good. That means you're not interested. Yeah.

PAMELA HARRIS: What a wonderful way of framing it, because I couldn't quite figure out what it is that bugs me, when people come to Williams, or wherever I've been on hiring committees. And then you say, what questions do you have? And they're like, well, no, I think you answered everything. And they haven't asked me anything and I had just talked and then it's exactly that, it's that I read it as, oh, you really don't care. You really don't want to be here. You've already made up your mind that this is not the right place for you.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah. Because contrast that to, yeah. I was reading your website or I spoke to, called the office the other day. Right? And I don't understand why, why is it like this and this and this and this. And, oh, I was reading a paper you wrote and right. Like, come on. That person cares. That person has that. Yes. That person has their foot in the door already.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yes, yes, yes. Yes. That's beautiful. I love the, I saw on your website that you participate, right. It's like, oh you looked me up. Oh, you. Oh, yeah, no, I think, I think you're absolutely right. And you have to have certain things in your back pocket. So let me tell you, in my experience, during one of my interviews, I got a sense based on what folks were saying to me in these small interviews.

And I'm kind of skipping the process of thinking, not of the short, very quick meetings, I'm thinking more of the campus visit. But there might be a way that we can use this question in short interviews. But I got a sense throughout the day that things that they were really concerned about, they weren't quite telling me. That, that it felt like it felt too surface. Like it felt like we weren't really getting a lot of the information about like, tell me really what it takes to be successful here. What are the things that I should be thinking about as I prepare for a career here? So finally I just came with it. You know, I had this opportunity to sit with the chair of the department and they said, yeah, do you have any questions? And I said, actually, I would like to ask you what might be in my application packet that has raised any red flags. I would love to have the opportunity to discuss that with you.

ARIS WINGER: Oh that's powerful.

PAMELA HARRIS: And it was like, it was kind of like, I slapped them a little, right? Like there were, you want me to tell you what's wrong with you? And then the question was. Or the comment was, well, we're concerned about hiring, not just you we are concerned about, everyone is their research productivity. You know, we're very teaching intensive, you know, would you be able to continue doing research at the level that you've been doing research? And so then I was like, oh, I was like, oh, you don't have to worry about that. Actually. You know, I have this conference, this conference, this conference coming up, I have a research project with this new mathematician. You know, the things that you don't see on my CV there on the, in the pipeline, that'd be very fruitful. I was like, so thank you so much for that. You know, I'm also interested in blah, blah, blah. I think I can collaborate with Professor X and Professor Y in the department. So I actually, I understand how that's a concern. I, I definitely don't see that being a problem for me if I'm here.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

PAMELA HARRIS: So that is key. We need to go there. We need to be able to ask these hard questions because, it's better that you have the chance to address it while you're there. Then they have that narrative of, well, you know, my concern is this, and then they don't have a way to say, you know, for you to respond.

ARIS WINGER: Right

PAMELA HARRIS: So you do want to have almost like that last word, address anything that they might think could be a problem, why they might not want to hire you.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah. So some people may not resonate with this, but it is kind of like moving, like trying to buy a new house. Do you know what happens? How you go up and down a house before you actually buy it? The questions you ask, the things you want to know about the basement. Yeah. And the type, and the water and how much the water bill is, and the roof. How old is the roof? Yeah, I mean, as all these things about where you plan on living for the next, however many years, so that if you're going to a department, god, you got to do the same thing. You got to ask about this place. And again, it shows your interests and by the way, people are not going to forget you if you do that, right?

PAMELA HARRIS: That's right

ARIS WINGER: Yeah

PAMELA HARRIS: They do not forget you. Yes. And also, you know, but also have fun. I mean, I am a weird, weird sick person. I have been told. I love, I mean, there are things I love in life and I love interviews. There is something really weird in feeling extremely validated by people liking me. I got to know about their grandma and their dog. And like, just, just like getting to meet new people is really what it is. And so, something about interviews are just like, so, such a joy to me. Just to like go travel, meet people. And they pay for everything? Wild. And so also figure out a way to, to feel like. And it's hard. It is hard because yeah, your, your job and your future feels like it's completely on the line. But I think what Aris I'm hearing you say is that you are also interviewing these places. You have a lot to offer them. So don't shy away from that by not asking questions, by not feeling interested, right. Like go there and make sure that you could thrive there.

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes, absolutely right.

PAMELA HARRIS: Also we're happy for those of you listening and have job postings, you know, send us some money. I mean, send us your advertisement and tell us why your place is the right place for minority mathematicians.

ARIS WINGER: Oh that is right. Because yeah. I mean, the wall is up and you gotta climb. Yeah. So we have standards, right. And so, yeah, we, we are not. I don't think we have in our mind to go ahead and just put up anybody there's something about, you know, why, why is it that you would be a good place for mathematicians of color and underrepresented individuals? Yeah.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah, because you see these advertisements. There's some straight up bullshit, you know, we're to teach a four, four load, meaning four courses per semester. And they must be excellent at research and outstanding at outreach. And we're also looking for somebody who's underrepresented in the mathematical sciences. And it's like, excuse me. And what do you I have to offer?

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes, yes, that's right.

PAMELA HARRIS: What are you going to do so that I am excellent at my teaching and I'm excellent at my research?

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Yes. Yeah. So that's good. Yeah. So yeah, please, man. Minoritymath.org. That's the place to be for these types of, yeah. And so yeah, we have to, we have to make sure that we're representing and that what we put out there is representative of our mission. Right? So it's just to support those people.

PAMELA HARRIS: Are we ready for our tweet of the week?

ARIS WINGER: Yes. Our, our people at [Aperiodical](http://Aperiodical.com). I mean, if you can believe it, I was telling some people that we were featured in [Aperiodical](http://Aperiodical.com), which is a website that features mathematical podcasts and you know, the four of us. Right. However many there are, but like, yeah. Shout out much love to them for repping us out there in the tweeterverse. Is, did I say that right?

PAMELA HARRIS: Yes

ARIS WINGER: I did. Okay, great. Yeah. So, yeah. Great. And so, yeah, no, I mean, we really appreciate taking the time to highlight us in this space and yeah. Thanks. Thanks to them for sure

PAMELA HARRIS: Excellent. And then we have a spotlight for this week. So we have a new website. So indigenoumathematicians.org, they are brand new and out. It is a fantastic website. Please check them out. And they're also looking for other native or indigenous mathematicians that they might add to their feature, their features page. And so if you, or someone who belongs on that list, please contact them at indigenous.mathematicians@gmail.com. So, thank you, Rebecca, Ashlee, Kamuela, Marissa for all of the work that you all are all doing to support students, mathematicians.

[Applause]

ARIS WINGER: No, look, this is history in the making. I saw that photo on Facebook, I think it was. I'm just so, so excited. So yeah, we've got to support them because this is, this is decades. This is decades.

We want this to blow up as much as possible and create this visibility. This is exactly what we're about. I'm just like so hyped about this and really wanting to support it as much as possible. Because this is supposed to be around long after all of us are gone. It's supposed to be a timeless representation of a group of people who've been doing mathematics in this country, before any of our asses got here. That's right. And so this is long, long overdue, this type of space. So let's, let's support them as much as we can

PAMELA HARRIS: And our 5% change, 5% change. Was that, what did you do?

ARIS WINGER: Yeah, I'm working on some resolution to the dilemma. I started this show with, right. I mean, I just, you know, so for me it is. I think it's probably going to be searching for the story, at least asking for it. I've just got to do my part and really fighting, you know, whatever space that I'm in. Because one of the things I didn't do was I just didn't acknowledge at the time, at the time I didn't acknowledge that I was tired. Right. Yeah. So how, how would this have been different if I said, you know what, I'm tired. Let me get some sleep and wake up tomorrow and look at this. Right. The whole thing might be different. So I'm thinking, I am thinking about mechanisms in which I can pause and acknowledge how I'm feeling physically and emotionally and how that might impact, you know, the decisions that I'm making in terms of particularly helping a student.

PAMELA HARRIS: Excellent. I think that's fantastic. We need more of that. More self-reflection is to hear you say, yeah. So my 5% was interesting. I have been giving a ton of talks. Just the, the talks and one in particular last week at Bates college, shout out to the Bates scholars, STEM scholars. And one of the things that I realized is that when I give these talks, it's me talking, right, of course, as a talk and I show up and I talk. But I, we leave 10 minutes at the end for students to give questions. Okay, 10 minutes. So they could pick your me blabber for 50. And I was like, no, no, I want to know their questions. And then I will answer them basically live. And so it took me hours and hours and hours to put this talk together because they sent the most amazing questions. And so my 5% change was just being really raw and honest with my answers. And they asked me to record, right. Because like, It's easy. They were like, can we record. And I was like, Nope, cause I'm just gonna say the things. And I don't want the pressure of like, the PG version, because people are going to watch later. And the one thing that I think really resonated and I've been trying to be cognizant of being okay with talking about this, and we've talked about this before, is the overworking. You just hit on it, right? You might've made a different decision in how you extended

grace had you not been so overly tired. And so I'm just talking about it. I am tired. I am tired. And we are overworking. And anytime that I stress out about something, I am somebody who gets up.

ARIS WINGER: Me too.

PAMELA HARRIS: And just, yes, even when I am beat up and really just need to go to bed. Yes. You know, and I'm like, no, no, no. Cause then I can't sleep. And then I'm like, nope, I need to retrain myself. This is really more of a 5% for me. So if I retrain myself that when I am tired, I am tired. And that doesn't mean you continue to work. That means you take time off you, you sleep, you eat, you take care of yourself and then you come back even stronger. So that was my 5%. I'm going to try to keep it up.

ARIS WINGER: Excellent.

PAMELA HARRIS: We end with announcements. Sign up for stuff on the Center, so minoritymath.org. We have a blog, of course our podcast.

ARIS WINGER: Subscribe!

PAMELA HARRIS: And yeah, you got to subscribe to it. We're on every platform, I think at this point. Yeah. All right. Request for submissions. So keep sending us your activities so we can add them to the resource page. Still looking for a producer, you're listening and watching a small part-time job. Hit us up. MU@minoritymath.org

ARIS WINGER: Yeah, we got, we got on this Friday advocating for students of color and your department. No, this is in the institution, right?

PAMELA HARRIS: The mathematical sciences.

ARIS WINGER: The mathematical sciences. And so in the community. So, yeah, so we'll be there at the AMS on December 11th, working there, hard. And that crew is the last one there. It's part four, part four. So yeah, so it's just been incredible working with all of those people and really doing, having some hard conversations. So we'll wrap that up, hopefully have more in some other form, but this is the end of that particular program. So I'm excited about that and kind of feeling. It's a bittersweet feeling, really.

PAMELA HARRIS: Yeah, it's absolutely bittersweet. I feel like we've build some good relationships, um, with people there. I mean, I've definitely gained some good Facebook friends, shout out to Kim. I've been liking all her posts, it's been wonderful. And we actually are going to release.

[Drumroll]

PAMELA HARRIS: We have a big announcement, big announcement.

ARIS WINGER: That's right. You say it!

PAMELA HARRIS: No, I can't! You started this, you say it.

ARIS WINGER: So as a response to the webinars, yeah. We, we've decided to go ahead and release a book that Dr. Harris and I have put together in response to the webinar. That will be debuting on the 11th in tune with the last, the last webinar of this series. And so, yeah, it is, you know, in a sentence or two, it is 10 plus hours of her and I talking about the questions that were left unanswered in this webinar. So it's raw, it's difficult. It's funny in some places, it's emotional and it's just, yeah. It's like this podcast on paper in a lot of ways, but it's, it's more real than that in the sense that, you know, when it's coming from. There's something special about it coming, the questions coming from the mathematics discipline, right. And people who are really trying to wrestle with how to advocate for students of color. And so what's the title?

PAMELA HARRIS: "Asked and Answered: Dialogues on Advocating For Students of Color in Mathematics"

ARIS WINGER: Yes, yes. And, Oh, what an honor to, to just sit with you Pamela and have these conversations and, and learn from you, be challenged by you. And yeah, it was one of the highlights of my career, really

PAMELA HARRIS: Well, there's much more work left for us to do.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah. That's, yeah. And that's the ironic thing, because, you know, we finished this thing, you know, recently, and it's like, that's great, but

PAMELA HARRIS: But now . . .

ARIS WINGER: And this is the punchline, you know, throughout the book, it's just like, the work never ends. The work never ends. We do this. Yeah. And then there's just more to go. Right. That's right.

PAMELA HARRIS: So we hope that, you know, our friends and our families. Enjoy reading. Our book is there'll be on the lookout. It will drop on Amazon. So you can Google our names on Amazon and the book will be available for purchase.

ARIS WINGER: Yeah, we'll have it at the website as well. And yeah, so the 11th, so those people who are listening now who are going to be joining us on a Friday, we'll hopefully be talking about it then as well.

PAMELA HARRIS: Well with that, we call Episode Six, a wrap.

ARIS WINGER: Thank you. As always, you've been listening to Mathematically Uncensored

PAMELA HARRIS: where our talk is real and complex, but never discrete. Bye everyone!

ARIS WINGER: Have a good one!

[Music]