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TRANSCRIPT

Pedagogies of Care, Access, and Vulnerability: A Conversation with Mimi Khúc, PhD

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Sika: So hi, Mimi, thank you for joining me. Just to give you a recap, one of the reasons why I wanted to have this conversation with you is as we've gotten into this transition to working from home. I think I was already thinking a lot already about disability justice in particular and accessibility and now that my team in Diversity Training & Education has been doing these like, check-in hours with faculty/instructors and as we start hearing the feedback that they're giving or some of the questions that they're asking, some of the questions they're not asking...it came more and more of a desire to hear from folks who had already been thinking some of these things before this transition and of course might be thinking more deeply about what this means now that we're all separate or in different places. So just to start off, how are you? Who are you? Tell us a little about yourself and the work that you do. And what has the transition to physical distancing been like in your experience?

Mimi: Sure, thank you so much for having me. So, my name is Mimi Khúc and currently I'm the scholar-artist-activist in residence in Disability Studies at Georgetown University. Um, the "how are you" question is hard, it's a tricky question...but what I find interesting is that we knee-jerk and say "fine," right, that's a part of our habit when we answer that question and I think people are falling out of that habit right now. I think we have some permission to say that we're not fine and to say that things are hard, which I think is actually a good thing...to give ourselves permission to take stock of how awful things might feel right now. So I'm not fine, but I'm managing, physical distancing as well, staying home, helping my daughter with online school which is its own nightmarish situation. I homeschooled for a little bit in the past and swore never to do it again. So now I'm non-consensually homeschooling while also trying to teach online at Georgetown. So, juggling a lot of things; and I think a lot of people are juggling a lot of things right now. And one of the things that has become clear to me with this physical distancing and quarantine is that productivity is a hell of a drug. I think people continue to tie their worth to how properly productive they are. I mean that's how we usually think about our work, right, we're supposed to be doing things, supposed to be accomplishing things, especially in academia. We really invest in this idea of productivity as a way to manifest our worth as a person, and as a scholar, and as a student. And that has been hard, I think, for a lot of folks to shed during this process. People are clinging onto it and unable to stop working or give themselves a break from working even in the midst of a global pandemic and I think that really shows how deeply invested we are in ideas about productivity

and what it means for us as people. We are terrified of being called lazy, is what I've found in my work in terms of mental health and disability studies. “Lazy” carries a lot of connotation for a lot of communities, racialized connotation, and we sometimes are unable to resist the stigma of “lazy”; and so we work harder to prove that we're not lazy. And I think in this moment because work is being taken away from some of us or it has just become too much to manage...um, we are even more scared of being called lazy. And I'm hearing that among colleagues, anxieties among faculty, and then definitely among students. I'm hearing students really worried about being unable to do their work and then being punished for not being able to do the work, and then feeling all kinds of shame for not being able to do their work. And I think that this helps us think more about our pedagogy. I think it reveals the contours of our pedagogy—what do we think teaching is actually for, what do we think it has to look like... And in this context where we're all having to work very differently, overloaded with all kinds of burdens, especially if we have dependents that we have to take care of, stressed out about being sick or our family members getting sick—what is teaching supposed to look like in that context? And why do we choose the things that we do when we create assignments and goals and objectives...what is it that we're trying to accomplish? And I think this context really helps us rethink that or question, interrogate maybe what we haven't intentionally thought about before. Does that make sense?

Sika: Yeah, it just...so much of that makes sense and I think there's a lot of uh...a lot of questions formulating even as you were talking. And part of my question was thinking about what have those conversations looked like between you and your students...but I think maybe before we get there, cause a lot of the conversation that I've been having with instructors has been so focused on their students...and I find that there's this…when we talk about well, how are *you* doing as the instructor or what do *you* need to scale back on, that conversation feels a lot more jilted. It seems like people sort of have this internal sense that maybe I need to slow down or I need to pause or whatever it is that helps them feel a little bit more grounded or centered, yet there's this sort of need to brush over that and just get to “What is the assignment that I need to adapt for this particular context?”

Mimi: That's a great observation. I think academics have some of the most difficult time thinking about what they need and allowing themselves to need things, allowing themselves to say something is hard and not always pushing through. I think grad school and the contours of academic life in the tenure track all tell us to work as hard as possible and push through and not require any kind of supports or take any kind of breaks because that's anti-productivity, right. We're not producing enough articles, we're not doing enough work if we're taking breaks and taking care of ourselves. And I think asking faculty what does it mean to find balance right now forces them to ask that question for themselves they may not have asked before, and then as you're observing...the answers are...you said, not fully developed or not really thought through?

Sika: Right, right, it seems like…um...it's that feeling of like, “I know that I should answer this question because you're asking but I really just wanna move on.”

Mimi: “I'm very uncomfortable with this question,” right, because if I reveal that I'm barely even able to check my email because I'm so stressed out or I'm sleeping a ton or I'm not sleeping and I'm baking a ton then that might mean that I'm lazy and a bad person and I'm not doing my job.

Sika: mmhm mmhm

Mimi: So giving ourselves permission to not work, I think, is very challenging as faculty. And it's actually tied to how we think about students as well. So from what I’m hearing from colleagues and from students is that there is some compassion for students in terms of the upheaval of their lives, the trouble with technology, not all of them having access to stable internet, all of those changes that are now becoming obstacles for their participation in online courses...and students are saying that their teachers have some compassion for it, they're trying to make some kind of room for those kinds of difficulties. But—the students are saying—there is not a sense that a lot changes though in the classroom or that expectations change that much. There are small accommodations being made but not access, which is something that my students— because I'm teaching a class on Intro to Disability Studies—are developing a language around... thinking around accommodation, access... What's the difference between those two? What does it mean to try to create access for folks? How do we use disability studies and disability justice principles to understand needs and what's going on right now and student need. And so, they are very willing to criticize their professors for not working to enable access for all students. And some of the language they're using is—"they just...my professors just don't care. They don't care that I am stuck at home in an awful family environment that I don't want to be in. Or that I don't have access to any of my books, or that I have ADHD and had all these structures in place to support me at Georgetown but now that I'm home I can't recreate those things and so I'm having so much trouble concentrating. My parents are harassing me about why I can't do my work because they're like 'you don't have COVID. why aren't you just doing your work?’” So they feel unable to express those things to faculty and then they feel faculty are unable to hear those things. And I think that a lot of that stems from, again, this investment in that we're supposed to be working, even through major major crisis and that work has to look a certain way, it has to look the way it was before to be meaningful, instead of rethinking our relationship to work in this moment. I think it really reveals how much we're invested in ideas about normalcy, like what normal is supposed to look like and when something deviates from normal, how much flexibility do we have...And so people are being a *little* bit more flexible. they're recognizing something is not normal about the situation, but for DS folks and disability justice folks who interrogate "normal" on a regular basis, the idea that we only need a little bit of things tweaked right now is um...kind of, ridiculous. Does that make sense?

Sika: Yeah, I mean it's resonating so much cause I think even on the staff side, you know, there's this sort of platitude going around right now that's something like “you're not working from home, you're experiencing a crisis and trying to work” or something like that...

Mimi: Yeah, I've seen that go around too, which is much more helpful framing.

Sika: Right, and it IS. And I find that departments or messaging from the university or whatever will put that as a tagline and then there's like, tasks underneath that, right.

Mimi: “Annnnd now here are the things you need to get done.”

Sika: Exactly, so I think it could be really helpful to explore what exactly does access mean in the way that you teach it? What does care mean? How is that different from small accommodations or adaptations, how is it more expansive?

Mimi: Great questions, and I love you zeroing in on the word care too because students say professors don't "care"—what does that actually mean to say that they don't care? And then what does it mean to try to create access? So I approach access as enabling full participation for all students, which assumes that everybody has needs and that those needs are a collective responsibility for us to try to meet so that everyone can participate as much as possible in the classroom space. So those needs can be what we normally think of as things that qualify for disability services and accommodations, kind of the official things that we can get documentation for and get some accommodation for, the things that are legible to what I have always called DSS services—I think it's called DSS at UMD? *[note: it’s called Accessibility and Disability Services at UMD, or ADS.]* But folks' needs are much more wide ranging than the ones that are documentable. So for instance, how do we document the stress of—not that your family is necessarily sick right now—but that they might be, they might get sick? [Or] you have a family member who still has to go to work or regularly puts themselves in some kind of exposure because of necessity of being a first responder or just having to have income for the family? So nothing officially has happened for you to document, right, but that stress can be all-consuming. And that becomes an obstacle to participation in a class. And so if we expand “need” to include that and expand “access” to think about how do we help somebody participate in a class when they're going through something like that, then we're enabling more access. Then we're actually addressing student needs beyond things like time and a half on an exam. Which, I don't want to belittle, like that could be very helpful for a lot of students. But only a small fraction of students can get some kind of documentation to say that they need this particular accommodation and that that accommodation meets a need that is stable and predictable, that will happen all the time, right. But our needs are not stable, are not predictable. We have family members get sick, crap happens all the time, we get into car accidents...we have breakups—heartbreak—we have friendship drama, all kinds of things and those things make it difficult for students to participate. And so when students say that professors don't care, it's not that professors are unfeeling or not expressing, articulating some kind of compassion for difficulty. I think many do say "I'm sorry this is so hard for you" or that "I know things can be really tough right now," but that that care doesn't translate into a couple of things. It doesn't seem to translate into policy changes in the classroom that

remain fairly punitive, and that remain universal, meaning that this is going to be the same rule for everybody no matter what, and if you have some extenuating circumstance that I as arbitrary authority professor deem as "legitimate," an "excused absence," right, then I will create an accommodation or an exception for you. That's not the same as saying everybody has needs, we need to navigate them all the time, they're shifting, can we be flexible and think about how to meet those kinds of needs? So policies in the classroom, like deadlines, amount of work, all of that....keeping it as something called universal can feel like “uncaring” to students, especially when they are dealing with some kind of upheaval. And the other is I think a culture of not talking about life being hard. So if it's normalized that nothing should be going on in your life that is hard and of course we don't talk about it because saying that you're struggling is a sign of weakness, right, there's stigma around that, is a sign that you're not strong enough to do the things that you need to do, you're not working hard enough --

Sika: That it's unprofessional.

Mimi: -- Unprofessional, right, right, so that kind of culture where we stigmatize need and vulnerability...then that feels uncaring when students are experiencing need and vulnerability but don't feel like they can disclose those things, don't feel like those things will be allowed and don't feel like they won't be punished, they won't be judged, evaluated, and receive lower grades because of those things.

Sika: So what does this look like in your classroom, cause I can already hear the voices of some instructors, sort of like...Actually I think there was a post about this because there's all these Facebook groups about, like, “Teaching in the time of corona”. But I remember that there was one particular faculty member that was like "I feel like my university expects me to be my students' therapist right now and that's just too much work for me, I can't check in with every single person" and I think she had a class of a hundred, or something like that. So, “what does it mean to be responsive to needs while also maybe being practical?” I guess is the question that comes up for some folks.

Mimi: Yeah, I think that's a really good way of framing it especially in terms of boundaries and our own capacities as instructors. I think that's a much more helpful way of framing it than...I'm going to pose an alternative, the way I've heard it framed when there was resistance to the idea of being more flexible for students. I've heard a lot of anxiety about students lying and asking for things when they don't actually need those things or, "pulling one over" faculty which is why some faculty demand documentation for stuff. And that anxiety I think is different than the one that you're articulating. That first anxiety about students lying I think...I don't know...I'm not going to psychoanalyze that one right now, but that is there and it's very prominent. I hear it a lot. One of my answers to that is just, I don't care if they're lying. They don't have to disclose their lives to me, and clearly there is a need - something is going on in their life so that they feel like they can't do something. And so they're asking for an extension because they need it. Whether or not their grandma actually died I really don't...it really

doesn't matter. If it's true, that's awful, if it's not true, well, they didn't trust me enough to tell me what's going on in their life and that's fine with me and giving them that extension doesn't harm me in any way. But your question about balance I think is trickier because how much do we give as faculty emotionally...emotional labor and then our physical labor and then our labor of grading and emailing and there has to be a balance. So some of that I try to accomplish on the backend, meaning in terms of how I create my class in the first place even before COVID, before this pandemic. So, I don't take attendance...which I think is scary to a lot of faculty because they're like if you don't take attendance then, how will they come? But part of the reason why I don't and I don't do like 'you can have x number of excused absences' is because I feel like that's very arbitrary. Like, why should they only get 2 excused absences -- you can easily be sick for more than 2 times. I get sick all the time during semesters. So I build in non-punitive ways of tracking participation. So I grade participation, but not whether your butt is in the seat or not, and then, I try to give multiple formats for participation. So come to class participate, come to office hours participate. If you have to miss class we can think about alternative assignments to kind of get you to engage the thing that we engaged in class, but not like busy work to make up anything. It's like if you want to participate on this particular topic, here are different ways that you can do that. I also build in sick days for myself in the class. So I tell students ahead of time that I will definitely cancel class 2 times on average every semester because I get sick, because I have kids and they get sick and kids are disgusting and so we get sick from the kids. So, giving myself permission and building flexibility in the classroom in the syllabus so that if I have to cancel class it's not the end of the world. Things can shift by a day, I build my own flexibility in. That lowers the load for me and then when they have to be flexible by missing class, there's room for them to kind of re-engage without feeling like they're super behind because I build a lot of time into the syllabus. In terms of being students' therapist—because students do want to talk to me a lot and disclose to me, and I encourage them to come talk to me, but I don't...I have a lot of therapists, I love therapy and I have a lot of therapists, but I don't see myself as my student's therapist because one, I'm not licensed to do that. But I don't think that it's a clear dichotomy between like either you are a professional therapist or you don't talk to them at all about their needs. There's so much mentoring work that faculty and staff do in student affairs for students all the time. So I think we have to rethink the teacher in terms of what kind mentoring we can do and how much care we can give that feels sustainable for us and that provides something for students. So I can't give students all the professional care that they need, but it's not that hard to just be like "I'm sorry that your life is hard, let's think about ways of in the class to respond to that and then outside of the class, do you have structures that you can access for care?" And I can ask them that question without feeling responsible for taking care of all of their needs. I can kind of direct them to think about how to build structures outside of the class that support them and then in the class think about the structures that we can do to support them for the class. But it doesn't mean that I take care of all of their needs. It IS a lot of work still. It's a lot of emotional labor, and I don't know if you could do that for a large 100-person class like you mentioned. But not all 100 students are gonna come to you. And I find that, I've taught classes from 8 students to 65 students—I think that's the largest class I've taught—and the number of students that come talk to you, at least for me, have been pretty

manageable...I had a TA in my larger class and students would go to the TA as well if the TA expressed encouragement around coming to them to talk about flexibility and needs and access, so. It's been an okay balance for me.

Sika: So, I would love to hear a bit more about your teaching style, especially this um -- cause part of the reason why I was drawn to you to have this conversation was seeing the joint Instagram page that you have for your Intro to Disability Studies class going right now. So could you talk about where that idea came from and how it's going? How does it connect to some of the things that we've been talking about so far in terms of access and care?

Mimi: Yeah, so when Georgetown announced that they were going remote...This happened, I think, around March 11th or something, it was during Georgetown's spring break. And so we had several days before we came back from spring break to go remote. And I said no. I am not trying to figure out how to change my whole class to remote learning in 4-5 days, plus my students are all freaking out right now, I'm sure. And they're all traveling and trying to find their way back here or trying to find their way back—some of them flew directly back home and left all their stuff, y'know, in their apartments in Georgetown and so this was way too much upheaval for us and honestly, my class should not be the first priority for any of my students nor for me. It's like, dealing with this crisis and understanding what's happening in the pandemic should be a first priority. And so my response first was to take two weeks to adjust. I gave my students an extended spring break, they asked for it. Students actually organized at Georgetown to ask for an extended spring break. They didn't get it, but I decided to implement it myself in my classroom. And so I gave them two extra weeks of spring break because they were also being asked to move out of Georgetown during that time and it didn't make sense to restart classes while students are in the process of moving. And during that time, I had to then think about—what is the point of my class right now? What is the point of students participating in this class during a crisis like this? And it only made sense to continue this class if the class would actually help them through this moment and not become an additional burden or an additional stressor in their life. And so how do I revamp this class to make it helpful for them to understand what's going on and to survive what's going on. And I recognize that that's not going to be easy for all classes. For my class in disability studies, it made a lot of sense to take the content of the class and then shift the form of it to make sure that it gives students critical tools for thinking about what's happening in the world. So this is where I came up with the Instagram assignment. And this was inspired—I've seen other faculty do this. I have a colleague named Rona Kapadia at University of Chicago—sorry, university of Illinois at Chicago—and he has an Instagram page for his grad students and they create memes and post there and I thought, okay what if I created one for my students, a shared account where they could document what's happening in their life. Oh, and another colleague Jigna Desai at University of Minnesota was creating a kind of photo archive with her students. And these are some of the shared resources that get shared around social media, the Facebook groups around teaching during corona. So I saw these resources and I thought how could I adapt this for my class and if we created a shared Instagram, students could take a picture and

write a caption that talks about how they're feeling, what's going on in their life, and apply course concepts. So, questions of access, questions of need, questions of ableism: What does ableism look like right now? Where are we seeing it? How does it intersect with other things? How are we building structures to meet our needs? What do you need right now, what do your family members need right now? So that's the prompt that I gave them and then an image description which is sort of best practices in the disability studies world. And I thought of this as an archive of access, an archive of feeling, right. We would document what we're feeling, but we would also document what kinds of accessibility that we need and want and are seeing right now. And the students have blown me away by this Instagram account, because they are applying their course concepts directly to their life—which is for me, the ultimate goal of any class, like to take the course and use it beyond the space of the classroom and beyond the time of the semester. So they're doing that already and they're being super vulnerable and they're actually sharing about their lives and their fears and their stresses in ways that I think discussion threads don't always capture or even in-person, face-to-face discussions don't always allow them to be that vulnerable. For some reason the social media space, even as it's a public account they feel more vulnerable or feel more able to be vulnerable in that space. And that assignment for me felt like it fulfilled a couple things: it's small and manageable, they post once a week, it uses course concepts, it asks them to apply. And then because they are reflecting on how they're feeling, I'm hoping it actually meets a need for them, it helps them process what is happening around them, so it's helpful to them not just meeting some kind of arbitrary assignment requirement in my course. So that Instagram account has been what's giving me life, reading it. And I feel more connected to my students that way. I also get to see what's happening in their lives. And I get to see the contrast between what they're saying life is like and what the university is telling me that students are saying life is like. Cause we get those official emails from our universities kind of saying “Now it's week whatever of remote learning and we're all doing so great and faculty are doing all these great things to help their students, students are saying that they're enjoying this this and that” and blah blah blah blah, and it's a stark contrast to what students are actually writing on my Instagram account with them about what their lives look like. And so, I feel like that allows a window into something that these other more official channels don't.

Sika: That sounds amazing. We are in the last couple of minutes. So before we go, I wanna make sure to ask about tarot. Can you talk a bit about what is the role that tarot plays in the work that you do broadly but specifically in this class or in the classes that you teach?

Mimi: Yeah, thank you for that. So part of I guess how our conversation got conceived of is I’m assuming my work with *Open in Emergency*, which is my hybrid book arts project on Asian American mental health that includes several art pieces -- oh, i just realized it's behind me, right there -- it's a box, it's not a book, and it includes five critical arts pieces that intervene in how we think about mental health from an arts and humanities perspective, drawing on Asian American studies perspectives and disability studies and one of the original pieces is a tarot deck, which confused a lot of people at first. One, like, what does tarot have to do with intellectual work, academic work? And then two, what does it have to do with

mental health? Which was a question that, when I made this project—it came out in late 2016 in its first edition—and we conceived of this project by thinking of what are Asian American mental health needs? What are the conditions that shape Asian American mental health and then what are the forms that we could devise to address those mental health issues? And tarot became one of those. Tarot cards were traditionally used as divination practice but if you look at traditional tarot cards they um, come from a medieval - they're medieval Italian playing cards. They come from this European, white background. What does that have to do with Asian Americans? And while we can find meaning in them, I thought what if we had a deck, Asian American tarot deck, a deck that was made by Asian Americans for Asian Americans, drawing on Asian American experiences and Asian American studies knowledge? And so we just decided to make one. And so we created a deck, renamed most of the tarot cards, I solicited artists and writers to visually render these images but also theorize them and write text on the back of each card. So we published that in 2016 and then that I use in my classroom, and many folks have - we have a teaching program and a lot of people course-adapted the issue to teach about all kinds of things. And so, with this tarot, what I'm having my students do and what I actually have had them do even before COVID is to do tarot readings for themselves as an assignment. So draw one of these tarot cards, read it, and think about how these particular force - for instance, if they pull The Model Minority, or if they pull a new card we have now is The Emergency that theorizes structures in place around the discourse of an emergency...which i think is very relevant right now, right. “What IS an emergency? What is a national emergency, what does that mean? What gets deployed when we say something is an emergency? How does it feel to be in something called an emergency?” And I have students read these cards and think about how it resonates with their life and what kinds of tools it gives them for rethinking what's happening. And so, this draws on Asian American studies but in a very different form and very different genre because it is - the text on the card are like prose poetry, so it's using the arts, but it's also drawing on theoretical concepts from academic fields through language that is much more poetic than how we normally see. And then the cards actually tell you to do something, so like, think about this or take a moment to reflect on this, and so they're actually interactive. And I find them as amazing wellness practice tools but also pedagogical tools, teaching students to think about how to apply these kinds of frameworks and questions and modes of inquiry to their own lives. So I have my students right now doing tarot readings for themselves, using the tarot cards and reflecting on them. And I actually created a weekly care series that I've been posting on my website for Georgetown since I’m supposed to be in residence even though I’m not there right now, I’ve been thinking about how remotely to do mental health work at Georgetown, and I thought a weekly series where I give self care prompts based on the arts work that I do would be helpful. So I sent out a prompt with a couple tarot cards and asked everybody to give themselves a tarot reading with these cards and see how it shifts your day, your week, how you experience your relationships with other people by taking these ideas and applying them to your life.

Sika: Yeah, I'm loving the self care prompts, I've been following those.

Mimi: Oh, thank you!

Sika: We were talking about self care in one of our check-ins with instructors and I was like, “you know I - everyone hold on a second I need to share my screen and bring up this tarot card image--”

Mimi: [*excited noises*]

Sika: [*laughs*] “--so we can all respond to it.” I think it's --

Mimi: Which one did you share?

Sika: The Student.

Mimi: The Student, I looove The Student.

Sika: Yeah, I mean folks really resonated with it and just with the imagery, and I think it was helpful, too, to not just be talking conceptually about even like what we're feeling or experiencing but to be reacting to something that's maybe a little less linear as you're looking at the image. So that already has been helpful at least to me, and I'm sure to others. Okay, but last question since we're about to wrap up. And I wanna say I love this conversation, so glad that I did it. It's one of those things where I’m like “ah, I really wanna talk to Mimi Khúc but I don't know what's going on in her life or if she'd be willing to,” so I’m really, really grateful.

Mimi: It's really great.

Sika: Thanks. So as me and my team in DTE are thinking about what do these types of conversations look like moving forward. This is the first one, but we're definitely thinking about doing more...and what the framework has evolved into is thinking about sort of, whose voices are maybe getting a little bit lost in the fray or we wanna hear more from? Especially on our campus, for instance, a lot of the conversation has been about faculty and students, particularly undergraduate students and we know that there's many more people on our campus that are not a part of those two categories. Or even within those categories, you have like tenured faculty versus adjunct faculty and the differences of needs that are happening there. So the question for you is whose voices do you want to uplift, who are you paying attention to right now that's really helping you think, feel grounded, feel joy, have insights as you go through this time of constant transition?

Mimi: That's a great question and kind of a tough one. I think....So in general my approach is always to listen to the voices of the most vulnerable cause I feel like that reveals the weight of social forces being pressed down the most. Those who are most vulnerable to those forces are gonna tell us what it's like

best. So in the case of the university that's, like you mentioned, students and contingent faculty, adjuncts. And I'm an adjunct, I identify as contingent faculty. I was an adjunct at Maryland for 5-6 years...and those who are most vulnerable are going to experience all these changes in the scariest kinds of ways. The precarity they already experience gets compounded. But it's twofold. I feel like those who are most vulnerable reveal the contours of violence, structural violence, for us most clearly. They also for me provide the most hope, because it is the work that vulnerable populations have to do to build community and build sustainability for themselves and build structures of care for themselves because those in power often don't build the kind of structures that we need. So, I know that we're hearing a lot from students but I find that we don't actually listen to students as much as we think we do. Well, let me shift that...I think student affairs folks listen to students a lot in my experience. I think faculty don't listen to students and then I don't even want to get into what administration does with students. I find that listening to students is both the most heartbreaking and hopeful thing that I can do. Because they've always been the canary in the coal mine for me, their voices when we listen to them tell us so much about what forces bear down upon them, the way the university becomes both a translator and an administrator of social forces. And if we let them, students tell us what hurts, what they need, and what we might do to make the world a better place.

Sika: Well, thank you so much Mimi. I think...there's nothing else to say after that. [*laughs]*

Mimi: [*laughs*] Thank you. I hope it feels helpful. I don't know if I gave a lot of concrete things, but I hope the conversation is helpful for just rethinking our relationship to work, to productivity, to need, to allow ourselves and students and everybody to say we need stuff right now, we need help, we need support [and] how do we take care of each other in these times.