

Namita Gupta Wiggers-transcript (1)

Timestamp	Speaker	Transcript
12:51.70	perceivedvalue	(Audio fades in) Because it also didn't make sense. It was like an enameling show and I was like oh I've never even enameled before but they trust me to try it like ah.
13:00.73	perceivedvalue	And obviously was eager. Yeah, that's really funny. Oh yeah, and so I answer some people call me Rachel some people call me Sarah um.
13:03.00	Namita	Ah, oh my goodness. Yeah, that's oh yeah, that's that would be a good reason to put both names in.
13:17.44	perceivedvalue	Or they use all 3 and I love everything? Well you're kind of that way to Amida like I don't ever I don't think I ever refer to you as just amida I say amida cup to wiggers. It's like such a good name. You know like it rolls off your t
13:30.80	Namita	Um, well when I did jewelry I had my whole name just a banner with just my name on the back and it looks really cool graphically because there's a lot of angles and then a couple of really good curves with the g's.
13:46.00	perceivedvalue	Um, right? Oh yeah.
13:49.26	Namita	And so like as ah as a design thing I was like oh I like how that looks. But yeah.
13:53.10	perceivedvalue	Yeah, it's so funny because you know when I interviewed you on behalf of snag that was twenty sixteen I believe I'm or 2017
14:04.90	Namita	Um I think it might have been later I think it might have been 19
14:09.87	perceivedvalue	Oh yeah, what am I talking about I was already doing the podcast and I started the podcast in 2017 wow Sarah um, but we didn't really talk about your history. Um I guess I didn't really understand that you were a jeweler jew
14:25.70	Namita	Yes.
14:27.55	perceivedvalue	Until on my outline you notice that um, which fascinates me and also makes me very happy because you're somebody I look up to in the craft field so much and I'm like oh she's one of us like awesome. Um and also really m
15:02.10	Namita	Yeah.
15:05.66	perceivedvalue	And I think that just really informs it sometimes and I don't think it's a bad thing but sometimes I am like little taken back a little when I like at craft organizations people that are working. There are really involved have like neve
15:25.11	Namita	I get it I get it and and this is actually it's interesting because it's something that comes up sometimes in our program. Um, shall I just continue I'm assuming you're recording at this point. Okay, good.
15:25.39	perceivedvalue	You know.
15:33.60	perceivedvalue	Um, yeah, keep going Yay I Usually go with like um, a casual roll in well I guess you know maybe we'll do let's say hello to listeners hi listeners. How are you? um.
15:40.87	Namita	Super.
15:49.20	perceivedvalue	So I'm sitting here with nunita guto wiggers now namida um, we have prepared for this conversation in many ways I'm very excited. Um, you know you're somebody whose career could be like a 5 part podcast series. Um in
16:36.42	Namita	I do I do and it's it's interesting because I'm doing a I'm going to speak to the Mfa and applied craft and design class on Wednesday it's a program that started at Oregon College of art and craft and Pnc and is now at.
16:47.30	perceivedvalue	M.
16:54.74	Namita	Pnc Willamette University and they wanted me to come in and talk and I said you know I think what I'd like to do is to bring an essay that I'm working on and show the parts and pieces and talk about it in process said becau
17:09.47	perceivedvalue	Um.
17:14.80	Namita	You know the way that that our art schools are structured you bring in somebody who is well known in their field. They give their artists talk they talk about their trajectory but they're showing the work that has been recognize
17:19.96	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
17:34.20	Namita	And there isn't anything that helps somebody understand how you go from being a student really to getting that first opportunity to turning those opportunities into the next opportunity and I feel like that that's a really, that's
17:45.40	perceivedvalue	Right.
17:53.11	Namita	In terms of professional practices. Um I think there's an opportunity to help people understand. Also when people talk to me about writing I mean they say what do you? You know? how do you feel about being a writer I'm lik
17:59.31	perceivedvalue	And here.
18:06.86	perceivedvalue	Yeah. I relate to that I relate without the podcast I'm like I Love when the podcast is Released. Do I like sitting in a room Editing. No Absolutely not yeah.
18:12.88	Namita	Ah, so.
18:22.20	Namita	Um, no, no and I think it's so helpful for people to understand that we all struggle if if I write something and there aren't tears somewhere along the way in frustration that I'm not getting it where I want it then? um.
18:33.82	perceivedvalue	Um, yeah.
18:35.75	Namita	I know I'm not finished and the piece needs to be continued to be worked on.
18:40.64	perceivedvalue	Wow yes, to that so much. So yes and you're um, not night you're going to be like a little experiment for me because I do have so many things I want to talk to you about and we're going to focus on 1 aspect today but um, li
19:23.86	Namita	Sounds good.
19:34.68	perceivedvalue	Um, so today you know I've been I'm in a huge professional transition and so that's kind of informing who I'm talking to and why I'm connecting with people and I think when I saw the Facebook or the posts. Announcing the
20:22.91	Namita	Sure so the program is the ma in critical craft studies at Warren Wilson college and it is the it's a low residency program and that means that we meet for a short period of time in a 2 weekek intensive. And then the semester r
21:04.28	perceivedvalue	A.
21:15.58	Namita	University of wisk of Wisconsin has material studies. Delaware has material studies. There are a number of places where you can go and get connected to craft as connected to decorative arts or material culture or art history
22:24.47	perceivedvalue	Oh wow a few years ago I got nominated to apply. It's funny. You have to be nominated to apply to the emerging voices. Um for the American Craft Council award and I remember the hardest question I had which was what i
22:41.63	perceivedvalue	I Didn't think it would be so hard I was like I don't know I Just it's it's my life. It's my community can I just say that you know I don't think I wrote anything profound when you mentioned I know when I'm crying or whatever I k
22:57.20	Namita	Ah, oh that's so interesting. That's so interesting.
23:00.52	perceivedvalue	Could tell that it wasn't good like when I did my core fellowship application I felt it felt it in my gut like I cried I put everything into it and I didn't have the same feeling um because it's hard to define I mean it's hard to define cr
23:24.29	Namita	Well and if you define it tightly you create a box you create ah something with walls that people can push back on and say no, it's not that and then you have to defend yourself.
23:28.18	perceivedvalue	Here.
23:36.12	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
23:38.60	Namita	And so it becomes trapped in the same kind of academic game that has always happened of this person's right, This person's wrong here's why here's why not and I'm not interested in reinforcing and reinscribing that I'm m
23:51.41	perceivedvalue	Here.
23:57.68	Namita	And breath craft is long. We've been doing craft as long as people started to put things on their body to cover themselves so that they didn't get cold if we take a different view of craft then it opens up all these other possibili
23:59.28	perceivedvalue	Right.
24:05.57	perceivedvalue	Um, yeah.
24:16.32	Namita	Examine. Okay, what does it mean to be involved as a small-s scale Jeweler in you know, working out of your home as opposed to a jeweler working for swarofsky creating pieces that are sold in a more production-oriented d
24:30.95	perceivedvalue	So.
24:32.40	Namita	And then you can have a different kind of conversation and I'm more interested in that conversation than I am figuring out which 1 is actually craft or not.
24:35.95	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
24:42.37	perceivedvalue	I like that I appreciate that and so with that in mind you were the founding director of this program now. What does that mean in terms of that. Um, yeah.
24:56.30	Namita	Well so what it what that means is that I was responsible or I am responsible because I'm still I'm still in the position until June of 23 um I am responsible for shaping the program.
25:09.70	perceivedvalue	Here.
25:11.80	Namita	So figuring out curriculum hiring all the faculty the workshop faculty teaching fellows you know, choosing the students from the applications teaching which was not part of my job description. But I have ended up teaching 2
25:23.20	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
25:30.79	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
25:31.41	Namita	Needed to be um I'm responsible for all the administrative side of things but I'm really responsible for creating what the program is and that comes through curriculum and who you choose to bring into the community from fa
25:38.48	perceivedvalue	A.
25:48.48	Namita	To continue this conversation and to think through the questions together.
25:52.37	perceivedvalue	So as someone who has been really thinking about my career goals and objectives I mean this sounds like a very dreamy job. Did you go to Warren Wilson wilson college and say hey I have this idea. Would you be willing to v
26:12.71	Namita	Well, what actually happened is there was a think tank that the center for kraft put together with Warren Wilson college in 2016 and at the time I was working independently I was doing a lot of curatorial work writing. Public s
26:41.39	perceivedvalue	Oh can I interject real quick because I don't want to assume that people know what the center for craft is can you tell them where Warren Wilson and center Kraft are.
26:51.14	Namita	Absolutely so center for kraft is located in Nashville North Carolina and it's been around for more than two decades. It is the place in the country where you can find support through funding for grants and through grants and
27:43.56	perceivedvalue	Okay, and are they ah officially affiliated together. Okay.
27:46.66	Namita	No, this was a partnership. This was a program that was the think tank came out as a partnership because Warren Wilson college at that time had just finished a grant cycle with a funder and with winigate foundation. And un
28:48.44	perceivedvalue	Okay, and I can link that guys.
29:03.96	Namita	And I walked away thinking this is great and I wrote a 4 page letter of what I thought the possibilities were of doing something that was a different kind of craft program than what I was seeing happening in schools sent that t
29:45.61	perceivedvalue	Is here.
29:58.90	perceivedvalue	Yeah, so then did so you technically had to apply to be able to become the director then or since Okay, okay, you planted the seed but you still had to apply I like that.
30:05.79	Namita	Yes, yes, there was a definitely definitely? Um I don't know how many applications they received. But I know that there were several people who interviewed and um and then I I was.

30:19.21	perceivedvalue	Um, yeah.
30:23.80	Namita	Fortunate to be selected and and you know I'll tell you when I did the application I went all out I thought you know I know what I wanted when I was in school and I wanted a program that recognized the globe that recognizes
30:27.61	perceivedvalue	Um, yeah.
30:41.82	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
30:43.74	Namita	And I also wanted a program that brought critical Race theory into the structure of the program itself. So I put together a proposal that was pretty direct and that's that's basically what ended up becoming the program. They
31:05.30	perceivedvalue	Before we move forward I Um I would really like if you could share your pronouns and describe yourself to listeners as well because um, we didn't do that and I think that's also really great aspect to kind of point out as some
31:19.68	Namita	Sure so I use she her pronouns and I am the daughter I'm american born I was born in Cincinnati Ohio and I'm the daughter of immigrants from India.
31:22.86	perceivedvalue	Is.
31:28.49	perceivedvalue	Here.
31:36.83	Namita	I grew up in Ohio in Jersey in Texas and I've also lived in Chicago and Portland so I've lived in lots of different places. Um my being ah of indian heritage is very important to me and it's something that.
31:55.96	Namita	Surprisingly has not been a part of my craft world experiences in Studio craft. So this program was a way for me to try to create a space for more parts of myself to be visible.
32:02.94	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
32:13.98	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
32:14.67	Namita	Um, there are no there right now there are no directors or leaders of craft institutions or programs in the country that are of my Asian heritage at this time I'm the first South asian.
32:28.20	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
32:33.37	Namita	In the United States to direct non-co collecting ah to direct to collecting art museum that was not ethnically specific and that was when I was at museum of contemporary craft. So my background is coming from lots of differ
32:49.26	perceivedvalue	Um, and I always like to ask may I ask what your age is okay.
32:54.40	Namita	Sure I'm 55
32:58.99	perceivedvalue	Because I mean for me when I listen to conversations as we were talking about when someone has an artist's talk and they're like I've done all these things and I'm like I'm 37 what have I done with my life. Um, it's nice to ha
33:11.95	Namita	Absolutely.
33:16.78	perceivedvalue	In your fifty s you're making this profound work happen and it's exciting to see it's exciting for me to think about what I can accomplish in the future still because I think there's a lot of doom and gloom about like if you haven
33:35.90	Namita	Well Sarah this is something we should share then that um I started out in museum education and then I transitioned to I went back to graduate school and I was working on my ph d I left that. And worked for a product design
33:57.85	perceivedvalue	Yeah, yeah.
34:08.62	Namita	Didn't want the chemicals and and I had I had been miscarrying and we wanted to be sure that that we kept a safe environment. So from I stayed home with my kids for 5 years it was the hardest thing I've ever done.
34:20.66	perceivedvalue	M.
34:27.36	Namita	Had an amazing garden at that time because that's where I poured all my creative energy. Um, and it was not cleaning the house because I have no interest in that. Um, but I didn't start.
34:31.24	perceivedvalue	Right? right? right.
34:42.24	Namita	I had never curated when I got my position at the museum and I'd never run a graduate program when I got this position. Um I taught as an adjunct but um I was 37 when I got that job at the museum of contemporary craft in
35:02.90	perceivedvalue	Yeah, and I love that you had never curated when you got that job that is so cool to hear.
35:10.00	Namita	No, no, never had curated a thing I worked in museums I mean we worked in a children's museum in Houston and I worked as the museum educator at the blaffer gallery for 3 years and I started a program.
35:12.76	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
35:24.86	Namita	That is still there and has changed a lot since I started it but it was called uh reach and it was a focus on high school students and connecting high school students to the museum and to the art to the idea of art education
35:32.50	perceivedvalue	A.
35:43.91	Namita	At a college level. But no I'd never I'd never curated anything but I grew up going to museums and spent a lot of time thinking about them I didn't even know there was a job called curator until I got to to to.
35:47.69	perceivedvalue	Okay.
36:02.15	Namita	So I started studying art history I Never really I went to museums my whole life and I had no idea how things got there. They just I just didn't think about it and there was no one in my world who was ever saying This is how th
36:02.92	perceivedvalue	Love that? yeah.
36:18.92	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
36:21.37	Namita	But and photographers but nobody in my world ever did that as a job so I didn't even know it existed until I got to to to rice to rice university.
36:26.84	perceivedvalue	Yeah, oh I love that it's like the first time I ever exhibited work was my end of year show for my first year at the fellowship at Penland and I hung all my work up and I felt so proud and like nervous because I'd never done it be
36:52.22	Namita	Oh no.
37:03.13	perceivedvalue	And I totally cried and then had to like rehang things. Um I love that I love that? Okay, so getting back? Oh yeah.
37:10.36	Namita	So I'll I just have to tell you we didn't we didn't do sixty to center. We did 58 yeah
37:16.88	perceivedvalue	Oh Wow. Okay, so you really could do whatever you want I Also like I did throw a little bit of a fit. There are some necklaces I didn't move and I was like I'm the artist I want my necklaces to hang here that I just left them.
37:30.67	Namita	Absolutely and I believe that at some point that's where museums have to stop and say okay, let's let's figure out what the issue is that sixty to Center doesn't have to be the the standard and it's it's yeah yeah.
37:46.22	perceivedvalue	Yeah, seems arbitrary I don't want to do it and also I don't like the math I don't like doing the math. Um, so that is amazing so you apply you get the job. Ah, thank god you're not like um, old white man in his sixty s thank you
38:04.96	Namita	I appreciate that every day. Ah.
38:22.36	perceivedvalue	Where do you even start like where did you start creating the program at it seems overwhelming.
38:26.64	Namita	Ah, it's such a good question. You start with the people you know are ready to experiment and you start with looking at you know I knew that I wanted to have a certain kind of curriculum and that's what's in place I wanted. /
39:03.11	perceivedvalue	Here.
39:11.52	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
39:19.95	Namita	Thinking about it and putting it back out there into a really different kind of conversation. So I wanted to create that and then I wanted it ah to be a track that was um called practicum not a thesis. This is not a thesis This is a
39:33.20	perceivedvalue	Okay.
39:38.88	Namita	Research methods that people have learned to the subject and the questions the research question that somebody is trying to understand and most of them have taken the form of ah of a paper an extended paper a couple o
39:55.37	perceivedvalue	A.
39:58.51	Namita	And this year one person will be doing a film. So ah yeah, yeah, it didn't have to be a paper but I think it would be fair to say that writing is the primary way we teach people how to convey what they're doing words are.
40:00.12	perceivedvalue	Oh that's cool see they could do whatever they want. It didn't have to be a paper.
40:16.96	Namita	Words are the primary tool and medium for expressing thinking in this kind of a program. So the person who's doing the the person who's doing the the film is writing a paper. Also.
40:21.88	perceivedvalue	Right.
40:28.89	perceivedvalue	Mary and I thought about you know I kind of daydreamed about this type of program sounded like something that for the first time in my life in some ways I thought oh I think I could flourish in that like maybe that's something
41:03.65	Namita	You have to prepare ah that would be amazing. Yeah, um, one of the students came in thinking that they were going to do podcasts and they ended up doing an exhibition using sound recording so it was Michael Michael Ha
41:05.55	perceivedvalue	Yeah, yeah.
41:19.10	perceivedvalue	Um.
41:20.35	Namita	And looking at Appalachian Craft so there's a way that what you're talking about and and and you know Sarah it's also really important too I think that bringing up podcasts as part of research I think.
41:23.37	perceivedvalue	Right.
41:36.46	Namita	Important to mention that in our program we teach our students How to do oral histories and interviews and how to think about listening and podcasts are considered as much a research tool as the written word in our progr
41:54.44	perceivedvalue	Ms.
42:13.60	Namita	Um, and also people who are willing to try to teach in a new format. Um, and the third thing is to be willing to teach collaboratively. So over the course of the 5 years our faculty our core faculty.
42:14.20	perceivedvalue	Um.
42:22.32	perceivedvalue	Oh yeah.
42:29.14	Namita	Share our syllabi together. We review them together. We discuss how they connect together places where you know. For example, you know Tom Martin and Sarah Kludge are teaching about aesthetics but they teach the sa
42:44.97	perceivedvalue	Here.
42:48.50	Namita	Brilliant and by knowing that each of them is doing this. It just strengthens the opportunity for the students to be able to make different kinds of connections because the faculty are aware of it. So this is not how teaching hap
43:01.65	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
43:07.15	Namita	Unnerving for some people but it's something that I think comes from craft in that craft is about collaborative learning. It's about exchange and I want academia to work that way too.
43:15.27	perceivedvalue	Right.
43:21.88	perceivedvalue	So when I thought about and we're discussing this program in death because you are going to be transitioning out of this incredible program that you have created in the position that you've held the last five years because u
43:40.14	Namita	Correct.

43:57.79	perceivedvalue	I Wanted to do the research Grant application for the center for craft and design. But um, there were some barriers in it for me in terms of like how to apply as like a podcaster remind me I want to ask your opinion on that bec
44:10.23	Namita	Um, okay sounds good.
44:17.11	perceivedvalue	When this program My first um question that comes to mind is what was the intention Beyond. Of course you know teaching about craft and these ways of learning together and teaching together in collaboration. But when s
44:45.17	Namita	So it's a complicated question and I think um, it's complicated because it has to do with place and local economies. There are some students who have gone through the program Matt Lambert being a great example. Ah wh
44:51.49	perceivedvalue	Um, okay.
45:01.25	Namita	To further graduate studies and phoenix booth also has gone on to further graduate studies so we can prepare students for further work in academia if that's what they want and we can get them help them prepare for that. V
45:24.94	perceivedvalue	Oh yep, might know we Wereville.
45:35.96	perceivedvalue	Right.
45:40.11	Namita	Mike is not taking this this master's degree and doing all this work in order to find a new job in a new city mike is doing it in order to add to his own learning and skills and tools to figure out what to do to document local histo
46:09.45	perceivedvalue	Oh wow.
46:15.24	Namita	Was using the archive researched in the archive created a project through the program and learned how to do something to then be able to do that kind of a position in addition to his glass blowing work as well. Um, other pe
46:26.72	perceivedvalue	Um, yeah.
46:34.20	Namita	Develop writing skills and we've have a couple of students who are interested in. They don't want to lose their studio work every single one of our students by the way has craft in their lives. Um, not all of them have bfas or n
46:47.72	perceivedvalue	That's amazing.
46:52.11	perceivedvalue	A.
46:53.54	Namita	that's that's I think an important thing to to understand in terms of who is doing this work and then what kind of positions are open for them so they're applying it where they live. Um, there are also students who like Sarah Kr
46:57.60	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
47:11.11	Namita	Was able to secure the wingate curatorial fellowship for curating at arizona state university after ah, wingate fellowship at the Asheville art museum and so she's been able to move through different curatorial roles in that rega
47:29.27	perceivedvalue	So it's broad. No, it's good.
47:30.93	Namita	It's a long answer. It's ah it's a long answer. But I think it's because what's complicated is that the structures and systems and how we understand a degree to work is that the degree opens up a platform for you to move to s
47:47.69	perceivedvalue	Right.
47:50.13	Namita	And I think that this degree offers that for some people and it also offers the opportunity for you to deepen and strengthen what you're already doing where your feet are hitting the ground and that local focus I think connects
48:18.12	perceivedvalue	Yeah, yeah, um, also Aaron Decker did it right? No, he didn't.
48:21.85	Namita	No aaron didn't end up doing it. He thought about it and we talked a lot for several years but he he did not end up applying.
48:32.83	perceivedvalue	Ok, ok, ok, um, so can we give insight to the financial aspects of the program for listeners. Um, because I mean when a program closes.
48:38.97	Namita	Sure.
48:45.86	perceivedvalue	It's usually comes down to finances on the institution's part and I'm going to make the assumption although you know assumptions aren't good. Um that that had a big part to do with Warren Wilson's decision to close the pr
49:03.92	Namita	Sure the program began at \$22000 per semester plus \$4000 for the residency and so the total cost would have been 22 plus 22 plus 4 plus 4 plus 2 for the final residency now the program costs 22500 the residency is 4310
49:24.36	perceivedvalue	Okay.
49:39.19	Namita	For the last three years is fifty Five thousand seven hundred twenty dollars so that's for the full two ah years plus final residency.
49:44.45	perceivedvalue	Um, and okay and then it's like any other program where people can apply for financial aid and scholarships or is.
49:54.87	Namita	Financial aid is a little trickier because there aren't as money financial aid things offered for graduate programs. But there is financial aid available. So everybody had the option to do that and in terms of scholarships.
50:02.26	perceivedvalue	Okay.
50:11.10	Namita	We received support from the wingate foundation for scholarships but I will be honest with you. It's limited. It certainly didn't cover a full ride for anybody. We tried our best to give everybody something to help out. But.
50:13.73	perceivedvalue	Okay, right.
50:24.23	perceivedvalue	Um.
50:31.20	Namita	And some people were given higher amounts based on financial need and and so forth and merit. Um, but ah, it never covered the full amount in any way shape or form.
50:46.30	perceivedvalue	So as founding director I mean you're hiring people you're you are the visionary behind the program. How do you decide how much a program costs. Oh interest, got it.
50:57.98	Namita	That's not my decision. Yeah, that's not my decision My my role in that is to give the numbers to the the people on campus who are supposed to be responsible for making those decisions.
51:13.20	perceivedvalue	Okay.
51:15.50	Namita	So I did the research I made a proposition and then it was taken to my boss at the time who was the vice president for academic affairs and the vice president for enrollment and marketing and the Cfo and and the financial a
51:29.14	perceivedvalue	Got it.
51:33.51	Namita	Person who is in charge of financial aid and together they were to vet and um determine the costs based on the research and the proposal that I made um I'm going to be honest with you that that.
51:46.33	perceivedvalue	Right.
51:53.24	Namita	Process In this case didn't go as well and as smoothly as I think it could have um and that was because of various administrative things going on on the campus. So the amount of the tuition.
51:59.67	perceivedvalue	Okay.
52:12.80	Namita	What ended up happening with the tuition hike that happened in 2020 that ended up becoming the decision of the cfo who is now no longer at Warren Wilson she left the summer but she determined that what needed to be i
52:31.74	perceivedvalue	So You launched this program and in the middle of it. The pandemic hit and the pandemic had a huge effect on everything any small business Any academic program etc. So um, can you speak to in your. In your opinion. Do
53:05.90	Namita	It's a great question I think what didn't happen because of the pandemic is that I wasn't visiting conferences. Um, we we met in person for the first time at.
53:15.50	perceivedvalue	Here. Right? We're right.
53:20.39	Namita	The snag conference the society of North American Goldsmiths conference. Um, one of the biggest assets for marketing was my my connections through through the field and I usually go to multiple conferences and um.
53:39.74	Namita	That's a place where people see me and talk with me and ask me questions and find out what they need to know so that they can talk to their students and help their students apply and so forth that all had to go online and t
54:13.99	perceivedvalue	I didn't even think about that I don't even think I put that on your outline about marketing and how you were probably like the key aspect of it or ambassador for the program. Wow.
54:16.40	Namita	And.
54:24.33	Namita	Well and Sarah you know in some ways I think I had it better than a lot of people I've talked to a lot of my colleagues who are chairs of programs craft-related programs and this is a whole other topic that at some point you s
54:33.75	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
54:43.25	Namita	Who like who are have these jobs and what they're doing and and no I was responsible not just for the curriculum and hiring faculty and making sure and teaching and making sure that students were cared for and and and p
54:43.89	perceivedvalue	Um, yeah.
55:02.72	Namita	Semester courses. But I was responsible for the marketing I had I was the contact for the fundraising folks who were supposed to be responsible for fundraising for us I served on the graduate council.
55:12.72	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
55:17.42	Namita	I worked with financial aid if they needed support and assistance. We do all of our own tracking of budget. Warren Wilson does not do quarterly profit and loss reports. So it means that we have to have a ghost budget that w
55:26.98	perceivedvalue	Okay.
55:36.57	Namita	System where the finance department uploads numbers and things but coding takes a lot of time and so it's never completely in sync. So we have to have a ghost budget that we run in order to make sure our expenses are s
55:46.92	perceivedvalue	Right.
55:55.81	Namita	Our marketing team um to direct the look of our advertising and I have to say Ben Lingle is amazing and helped us develop the look for all of the marketing advertisements and materials. But then um.
56:15.91	Namita	Program manager Jesse shiers and I were responsible for placing all the advertising I run the instagram Jesse runs the quarterly newsletter and things like that. But those are all parts of the job in addition to um, you know dir
56:27.87	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
56:33.36	Namita	Ah, the curriculum.
56:34.58	perceivedvalue	How'd you good Lord Ah how'd you negotiate your salary like did was it a salary that you rear like oh this is I mean you probably didn't have a lot of side hustles At this time it doesn't seem like you would have much time for
56:48.43	Namita	You know, let's just say that I'm a girl who doesn't say no really? Well so I did have a lot of side hustles and little side jobs and and that's an interesting thing. We should talk about in terms of transition and why I do that? um
56:51.43	perceivedvalue	Right.
56:58.90	perceivedvalue	Right.
57:05.21	Namita	Ah, the job when I received the offer I negotiated pretty hard and that was because um I I asked for funds to have a research fund of \$10000 for research and development.
57:20.28	perceivedvalue	I say.
57:22.31	Namita	With the idea that that would support any kind of books or resources or conference attendances and things like that that I would need to do to figure out. You know if I'm trying to build a program that brings critical Race thec
57:40.19	perceivedvalue	Right.
57:42.17	Namita	Can't just be at the American Craft Council Conferences or at snag or places like that I need to go to other places because those are predominantly white spaces and I need to go to places where I'm not going to be in only w
57:46.72	perceivedvalue	Right.

57:54.40	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
58:01.80	Namita	So that I could go back and forth to the campus 6 times a year including for both residencies. Ah, and then also some academic travel for marketing and going to conferences to promote the program and so forth. Um, but I
58:20.84	perceivedvalue	Okay.
58:33.69	perceivedvalue	Oh good for you? Yeah power negotiation man it's important and I don't feel like we talk about it enough like I feel I really struggle with that where I am just I feel like I've worked so hard and I just want these experiences so b
58:36.29	Namita	It felt really good. Yeah yeah.
58:52.84	perceivedvalue	It's hard not to just say yes immediately because you're so afraid that it could be taken away. Um and stand your ground right.
58:56.82	Namita	Yes, or that it's not going to happen again right? You're afraid Oh if I say no, they won't think of me again next time or it won't happen again and you know it's it's hard. It's hard.
59:07.71	perceivedvalue	Um, yeah, yeah, or somebody else will do it for cheaper and yeah, especially with podcasting and I think people like really um I have I have a hard time explaining. The amount of work that goes into this and how valuable my
59:26.32	Namita	I Completely understand that I think the Hidden the Hidden labor of our field is something that needs to be discussed. Yeah.
59:40.16	perceivedvalue	Yeah, yeah, so when did you first hear rumbings about because I miss I don't know how universities and schools or how your program specifically how they um.
59:56.28	perceivedvalue	Track its profitability or etc like did this University Or College sorry tell you that you had to have x amount of people enrolled each time or looking at how many applications you were receiving was that a way of them kind of q
01:00:15.80	Namita	It's a great question. Those are definitely metrics that I think everybody uses I think that's pretty common in this situation. It was clear that well we had a new provost come in in 2020
01:00:15.14	perceivedvalue	That makes sense. M.
01:00:29.70	perceivedvalue	What's a provost.
01:00:31.19	Namita	So the provost as I understand it is basically the person who's in charge of the academic side of things and um, you know, essentially run so before that the position was vice president for academic affairs. The provost is ten
01:00:44.36	perceivedvalue	Okay.
01:00:50.83	Namita	Shaping vision for the president on and implementing new initiatives and and takes I think more of a leadership role than perhaps a Vp um as a title would imply I Think that's what it is. Ah.
01:01:03.16	perceivedvalue	Ok I mean I've only ever heard that term on like an episode of the gilmore girl. So like sure. Yeah, let's go with that. Okay.
01:01:14.32	Namita	But but um, yeah, it's I mean basically he's my boss and you know and um, when he came on I explained to him that ah the program when it was when it was initiated was vetted through faculty.
01:01:18.88	perceivedvalue	Okay, yeah.
01:01:31.69	Namita	So the faculty body had to vote on this program and say yes we want to have this come through. Um, partly so that the academic side of it is is you know that that it's been vetted by your peers and your colleagues who are c
01:02:36.95	perceivedvalue	Here.
01:02:47.23	Namita	And Lyn said no we can't wait. We have to launch it faster so everything that was meant to be a year and a half of planning vetting getting everything ready meant that we had to launch the application that fall. With all the info
01:03:14.47	perceivedvalue	Right? right.
01:03:16.51	Namita	So while the administration across the campus is figuring out what's going on. We're developing marketing materials and promotional materials and doing all of that at the same time. It wasn't ah it was less than ideal. It was
01:03:26.28	perceivedvalue	Yeah, sounds a little rushed.
01:03:33.73	Namita	Um, the good thing was we had already had our accreditation approved with 0 comments or feedback which I understand is a big thing. Basically you have to write up what the program is going to do you send it to an acc
01:04:01.77	perceivedvalue	Ass is so that's like the Fda for like a new drug to like put it in context of somebody outside of academia and on your first trial. You got the vaccine approved bave. This is great.
01:04:08.80	Namita	That's a great. Yeah yeah, that's totally a great analogy. Yes, absolutely.
01:04:17.78	perceivedvalue	Okay, that I owe it? yeah.
01:04:17.98	Namita	I Like that Oh my God I'm going to totally keep that story. That's a great way to talk about it. Um, so in some ways we talk a lot about how we were flying the plane while we were building it at the same time it was It was a lot
01:04:30.80	perceivedvalue	Yeah, that sounds stressful.
01:04:35.67	Namita	So with that to get to the question about admission and finances and enrollment and all of that It was really clear the first year we had a lot of interest when the program was announced it nearly broke the campus server bec
01:04:48.37	perceivedvalue	Oh my god.
01:04:50.53	Namita	And um, it was the most wide it is the most widely shared story from Warren Wilson college in their entire history. So that first year what happens is you get a lot of people who are risk takers and entrepreneurs who apply righ
01:04:58.30	perceivedvalue	Here.
01:05:06.93	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
01:05:09.75	Namita	Saying I want to I want to be on the ground I want to try this the second year you have a plummet and we didn't get a whole lot of applications and in speaking with colleagues people like Lydia Matthews who has founded a
01:05:14.87	perceivedvalue	M.
01:05:29.22	Namita	And a number of other people. This is a common thing and then you have an increase again the third year well the thing is the third year is when covid hit and so yes, we had an increase but it was a very different situation and
01:05:33.21	perceivedvalue	Right.
01:05:48.20	Namita	And their social world and then their academic world was all in this box and that was really hard and it became very challenging so to be more specific to your question those were factors. It was really clear when the provost
01:05:50.99	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
01:06:06.00	Namita	That we needed to have a more formalized business plan that was vetted through all the departments. So 2020 was crisis mode for the college to adapt to covid 2021 was crisis mode to adapt to the college and you know ev
01:06:09.84	perceivedvalue	Here.
01:06:25.22	Namita	Is is struggling financially too. So There were things that were being addressed. There. So What happened in 21 is I asked the provost to have a meeting with a senior cabinet and we presented a plan that showed what the er
01:06:48.77	perceivedvalue	Um, yeah.
01:07:02.95	Namita	And I'm being very transparent and open here with you and with listeners um with a job that I still hold So I'm trying to be very careful in how I phrase all of this Oh I won't no.
01:07:03.91	perceivedvalue	Yeah.
01:07:09.97	perceivedvalue	Yeah, no yeah and and please do' not say anything you even have the slightest gut feeling about. Yeah yeah, okay.
01:07:21.62	Namita	No I won't I won't so what ended up happening is the meeting ended up shifting to the wingate. Both the the um the wingate write up and grant report as well as the wingate proposal that was going out next and. I spent the
01:07:48.70	perceivedvalue	Right.
01:07:58.36	Namita	Was not my responsibility. It was the responsibility of the admissions department and that they needed support they needed help they needed marketing dollars I had a budget and I was putting money in and and doing a lot
01:08:12.65	perceivedvalue	Right.
01:08:16.75	Namita	Meetings and things like that. So March comes along and I have a meeting with the provost and the provost says based on us coming into this next phase of the pandemic I'm going to let you know that we have 3 years to g
01:08:41.92	perceivedvalue	Okay, and that's a mixture of first and second years. Okay sorry I had it in yet. Okay.
01:08:52.87	Namita	Yeah, no, that's a great question. It would be per class per cohort as we say um and we have ah 8 students right now. Well we have 7 students in the class of 23 right now. So the provost said this to me. I was continuing to v
01:09:25.30	perceivedvalue	And.
01:09:29.52	Namita	So what I hope comes through in this is that there were decisions that are made outside of my engagement. My having been a part of them. Um, there were ah.
01:09:39.87	perceivedvalue	Right.
01:09:46.93	Namita	There were requests to examine the finances that didn't get met and and requests for support from other administrative functions that were challenging and didn't happen.
01:09:50.89	perceivedvalue	Right.
01:10:03.22	Namita	And this is this goes back to what I said before about at the at the inception of this program. It was not vetted through the administrative circles and the reason I'm being this honest and direct is because we are seeing so me
01:10:10.44	perceivedvalue	Right.
01:10:19.50	perceivedvalue	Um, yeah.
01:10:22.24	Namita	And the problem is that the people who are implementing the programs and responsible for the students and the student experience are not always being engaged in the decision making and it is coming from people who are
01:10:57.98	perceivedvalue	Right? Yeah, that's a really big disconnect. It's.
01:11:01.35	Namita	It is It is and this is where I think that if you know a lesson to be learned from this is something that I see and I suggest it everybody who is a faculty member get into the budgets learn how budgets at your institution work. F
01:11:22.80	perceivedvalue	Hey.
01:11:37.14	perceivedvalue	Bright.
01:11:39.72	Namita	Bottom line that's a different kind of language and it's something that I think we need to be doing more.
01:11:47.79	perceivedvalue	And I you know it's something that I really think about a lot is that these institutions they're businesses. You know they're not I mean at some point you have to really grapple with the fact that um, you being a student is.
01:11:52.94	Namita	They are.
01:12:05.79	perceivedvalue	Ah, paycheck for them in some ways and um, it's hard to think about it in that way when you're really passionate like when something's so intertwined with your passions to want to so think about both sides of it. But you rea
01:12:31.68	Namita	It's a great question. Um, at my insistence it was announced within a week
01:12:36.93	perceivedvalue	Okay, oh your insistence I like that where they're gonna like try to like leave it secret for enrollment purposes or something like that.
01:12:50.98	Namita	So I will say that there were the factor that led to that was that april first was when all of the incoming students were required to deposit for the class of 24 so
01:12:51.96	perceivedvalue	

01:13:07.40	perceivedvalue	And.
01:13:09.99	Namita	This decision was made in the week preceding that so they needed to have time to ah to hear and process and understand that they had been accepted to a program that was no longer continuing.
01:13:24.28	perceivedvalue	Right? Good for you to like that is the next part of my question. Um I mean I don't hold a degree So I don't really think about when places like um.
01:13:25.77	Namita	Thank you.
01:13:39.79	perceivedvalue	Oregon College of art is that the name of the school I remember within that one closed a lot of people you know because I'm so close in the craft community were posting about it and the thing that I think about is what does
01:13:42.56	Namita	Oregon College of art and craft.
01:13:59.61	perceivedvalue	Um.
01:14:00.61	Namita	It's a great question. Um, what happens is that institution. Well let's use OCA C Oregon college of art and craft as the example because that institution closed what happens is.
01:14:08.92	perceivedvalue	Okay.
01:14:17.65	Namita	And I don't know who it is but somebody in town is basically responsible for helping with any kind of transcripts or school records those become those are very important and so somebody is stewarding those I have no idea
01:14:26.90	perceivedvalue	Bray.
01:14:37.51	Namita	If you go to the western North Carolina archives there are the academic records from Black Mountain College are there and not all of them are available but the ones where they've been able to reach a person the person who
01:14:42.62	perceivedvalue	Oh yeah.
01:14:57.80	Namita	See what people took as their classes and things like that. But um, someone is taking care of that. Ah Warren Wilson college will be responsible for any kind of of registrarial transcript work or things like that that need to hap
01:15:37.44	perceivedvalue	Okay.
01:15:52.83	Namita	And then next year Anna Helgeson will be working 1 on 1 with that one student to complete their degree under the supervision of the dean of research at Warren Wilson college
01:16:03.00	perceivedvalue	Oh interesting. So they so badly wanted to be a part of the program that they still signed up knowing they'd only get 1 year of like this full experience that you have created and then they continue on for their second year in a
01:16:16.77	Namita	Yes, yes, yes, so their coat.
01:16:22.21	perceivedvalue	They get a discount for the second year sorry I had you know it's certainly should be cheaper I'm going to advocate for that person just say I hope they're giving you a discount I'm going to say it is.
01:16:24.10	Namita	I I don't know I don't know I I advocated for it. But it's out of my hands. but but I I would hope so but I like I said it's out of it's out of my hands that becomes a decision of the Cfo now the interim cfo and we have an interim
01:16:49.63	perceivedvalue	Right.
01:16:56.50	perceivedvalue	Ah, how you doing I mean I feel like it's must not be fun to think about. But also you must be so proud of what you've done I mean 5 years it's a lot of work.
01:17:10.26	Namita	I'm today I'm okay and it's partly because I was listening to I one of the people I follow on Instagram is chef Jenny Dorsey and she does a lot of of deia work through food.
01:17:11.73	perceivedvalue	E.
01:17:20.17	perceivedvalue	Oh okay.
01:17:25.39	Namita	And and um, she mentioned this person named and I'm going to mispronounce his name but Ogi Ogas and he's a neuroscientist and he's Written. He's co-written a book on the dark horse and achieving success and fulfillm
01:17:49.60	perceivedvalue	Right.
01:18:01.77	Namita	Colleagues and and the core faculty and the workshop faculty and the teaching fellows and the mentors have achieved in um, opening up a space for really different kinds of of craft research to take place.
01:18:19.68	perceivedvalue	Right.
01:18:21.59	Namita	And that's what I'm really proud of you know that that there are different kinds of things people are doing that don't just slot into the structures and systems that have been put in place so they're not having to write about. Th
01:19:04.50	perceivedvalue	This.
01:19:15.34	Namita	Think through what does it mean to teach what does it mean to teach collaboratively and what does it mean to build a new program that's been the exciting part for me.
01:19:28.77	perceivedvalue	Yeah, have you thought about um well course you've thought about it. Sorry that's dumb thing to say but do you have any real idea of like what you'll transition to next like do you have something in mind or you kind of just. (