CT/d Dialogue 3: Remaking, Relearning
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Kathleen Fitzpatrick: Thank you so much for inviting me to visit this amazing space and this incredible cluster of interests and people. I'm really excited about where this is going to go. I'm starting with the notion of crisis, but I don't want to linger here. Though I refer to crisis in my title, it's really only sort of to gesture toward its inevitability.

Conversations about the university are in large part driven by the state of the university today, which is in what Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon have suggested is a state of permanent crisis. Now, what Wellmon and Reitter end up arguing in their book *Permanent Crisis* is that we rely on that sense of crisis, particularly within the humanities, in order to determine our purpose. What we are doing is fighting back against this crisis. And in particular, we're sort of gesturing toward the ways that we're swimming against larger cultural tides in thinking about the role of the university and society today, as well as the role of the humanities and the arts within our universities. But I also want to note that there are some particularities to our situation today that are worth paying attention to, that the crisis today is of a different order than what it has been. It's worth noting, for instance, the labor crisis, as more and more good positions within universities, with job security and adequate salaries and full benefits and above all academic freedom, are increasingly getting sucked into the gig economy. And this, of course, works hand in hand with the economic crisis that our institutions are mired in. As public funding provides a smaller and smaller portion of university budgets, the costs of higher education have shifted radically from the state to individual students and families. And as those costs escalate, the pressure on students to think of higher education as a market exchange grows. And then of course in the middle of all of that, there is the political crisis, which has been brewing for decades, but which has taken a particularly acute turn in the last few years. The attacks that we've seen on critical race theory, for instance, on the moves to ban books from libraries, the attempts to eradicate tenure, the growing interference of politicians in the curriculum, all of this provides evidence of a growing backlash against the critical functions that the university serves.

Okay. We have at hand some of the means of responding to these crises that are faced by our fields and our institutions, and we can demonstrate through the ways that we do our work a better path for the university at large.

So I've argued at length in a book that has this pretty image on its cover, *Generous Thinking*, that the ways that we might build stronger connections between our institutions and the many publics that we serve include a range of forms of public facing scholarship, community engaged research, open publishing processes and more that might help us build our connections and really think about the value of the university and contemporary culture. But all of that, making that happen and valuing it and supporting it really requires deep institutional change. And in particular, a new model for academic leadership via collective action. And we need that new model for academic leadership, not least because the model under which we currently labor is, with all apologies to the provost, irreparably broken. I want to be clear in what I'm saying: There are some extraordinarily good people doing extraordinarily good work in upper administration and other campus leadership roles. It's not that the people need replacing, or at least not all of the people (though I can think of a few!). And in fact, the exercise of replacing our leadership has become a sort of institutional deck chair rearranging.

The problem lies instead with the structures within and through which they work. And that's the model we need to contend with, a model with the board and the president and the innumerable vice presidents that comes to us directly from the hierarchical organization of corporate governance. And those structures are ill-suited to serve the operation of non-profit entities in general, as we've seen recently in the extensive literature reimagining what nonprofit leadership might look like. But those structures are doing grave damage to the purposes of higher education. And this is why our mission statements die a little every time somebody says that the university ought to be run more like a business. I mean because all of our institutions have been run like businesses for decades now. What someone means when they say this is that we need to be keeping a clear eye on the bottom line, that we need to be relentless in our pursuit of innovation, that we should be eliminating the product lines that aren't producing sufficient revenue, and we should be keeping our frontline labor in check. And those are things that have been happening on campuses for decades and which have contributed to the sorry state that many of our institutions are in. But even worse, I think, are the unspoken parts of "like a business," the individualist competitive models for success that are foundational to corporate structures are actively preventing our institutions from flourishing. And this is true not just at the micro level, where every individual student and employee is required to compete for resources all the time, but also at the macro level, where our institutions are required to square off in the marketplace rather than develop the kinds of cross-institutional collaborations like this one, for instance, that could lift the entire sector rather than creating the sort of rankings-driven lists of winners and losers that we're surrounded by today.

This is the core of my argument, that universities are not meant to be profit centers and they shouldn't be run that way. They're rather shared infrastructures that are dedicated to a form of mutual aid in which those that *have*, in this case knowledge, support those who *need* with the goal of producing a more just and equitable society. All right, so Dean Spade, of course, has written extensively on mutual aid and defines it as "collective coordination to meet each

other's needs, usually from an awareness that the systems we have in place are not going to meet them." Those systems, in fact, have often created the crisis or are making things worse. And this is supported by Peter Kropotkin's early-twentieth-century work on mutual aid. He notes that the mutual protection, mutually beneficial cooperation, have all been as important to the development of both human and animal societies as the Darwinian mode of competition for survival. And in fact, like history loves to focus on the role of conflict in society, it makes for a much more thrilling narrative than does cooperation. Kropotkin indicates the significance of mutual aid for our subjects of study. And I'm not going to read this whole quote, but you see this emphasis on the notion that the development in our fields was at its peak during moments at which mutual aid was its strongest. So the development of these aesthetic softer subjects— it's not just that competition leads to greater engineering, but that in fact even engineering gets greater support through mutual aid—is particularly important for our fields, for the humanities, for the arts, for design, above all, for transdisciplinarity, for creating that kind of cooperation and coalition building that we need. So, if we are going to press the university toward that kind of coalition building, if the ideal model for the university is not the corporation, but the cooperative, where everybody involved has a stake in the successful outcome of the whole, we really need to rethink the model of what academic leadership within a cooperative might be. And cooperative cooperation, coalition building, and leadership don't necessarily seem to go together as concepts; but all of our ideas about leadership really have filtered through the business school at this point. And they come to us directly from those corporate entities.

We believe in leaders who are strong visionary individuals who are capable of seeing the future and pressing an institution toward it. But I will share some stories from my own institution about what happens when that singular individual at the top of an organization is either no longer capable, no longer interested, no longer willing to lead it in the direction that it needs to go. And when the layer underneath is in constant competition to influence that top figure, leadership is a matter of creating change. And not only can it happen anywhere within the org chart, it doesn't have to happen at the pinnacle. It's in fact most effective when it gets done and when it emerges through a grassroots process of coalition building. So it's not for nothing that John Kotter, emerging from a business school even, notes that the vast majority of organizations today are overmanaged and under-led. And this is the situation in which academia finds itself. We are no exception there. And we are in a place where many of our institutions have this inability to change precisely because they're fighting for their survival, first and foremost, rather than for what their communities could be. So how do we reorganize ourselves in a way that will enable us to create the kinds of change that our campuses need?

I did an interview not too long ago with Chris Bourg who is the university librarian at MIT. And she said to me in the context of that interview: "The leadership skills for the future of higher education are 100% coalition building and relationships." And at every level through our institutions, our collective success depends on thinking and acting like a collective, upon our being able to develop and rely on the relationships that enable us to establish and achieve the shared goals that we hold most dear. And that process really requires a kind of interrelation that's not merely personal, but also, and of necessity, thoroughly political.

And in that sense of politics, I'm really drawing on Iris Marion Young who argues that the concept of justice coincides with the concept of the political. And that every effort must be made to enhance collective evaluation and decision-making if we're going to create the possibility for just institutions. And for that reason, I really want us to take a hard, hard look at the ways that shared governance on our campuses has eroded into bureaucratic busy work, leaving most of us feeling less than enthusiastic about the prospects ahead. And a lot of that has happened through a process of depoliticization, which is a core principle of management, getting things done by minimizing input and eliminating controversy.

So we come back around to what could be. What could the university become? And what I want to suggest is that our institutions are wholly dependent on mutual aid in order to flourish. And that they have enormous amounts to gain from its full realization. We have all suffered enormously under the competitive corporate regimes to which we've been subjected. And if we're going to make change, we're going to need to make it happen by modeling better paths, starting within our fields, within our departments, within our colleges, and finding new ways to build the relationships that can lead to the radical undoing of academic hierarchies. And I am going to stop talking there. But just want to say thank you again and I'm super excited to see where we go from here.

Sloan Leo: Hi everyone. Nice to see so many friendly faces and some old friends and new friends, alike. So I want to start by saying that when I use the term queerness today, I'm not just talking about queerness as a sexuality or an experience of gender, but queerness as a way of orienting and understanding the world and the way that ourselves, our interiority, and the way we're positioned in this larger social milieu. I've been thinking a lot about what does it mean to queer as an action? And what does queerness mean as a practice that can be incorporated or understood or hold space for our work in the world of design? So when I started to really grapple with some of the questions of remaking and relearning, what came to me was this idea of the queering of place and the queering of time. A university is a site, it is a place and a time that invokes a set of assumed social contracts, which I think that Kathleen has actually alluded to a lot in her remarks. And when I'm trying to queer something, I tend to look around and say, "Well, where is this odd? Where is this disrupted? Where is this non-normative or emergent?" And, oftentimes, we look to nature.

The studio that I run is called FLOX because flox is actually an enzyme that when combined with DNA gives DNA permission to change. And so I've always been kind of bio-mimetically oriented. And so the images that I've pulled from for today are what will anchor the rest of my reflections. The image on the left is of polyvagal theory. The center image is riparian zone. And the third image is a mycelium network.

So let me just go through some brief understandings of each of these to ground us and hopefully inform today's conversation. Polyvagal theory is this idea that there is a vagus nerve that runs up and down your spine and controls your neuroception. So before you have a

behavior, there's preconception. So that little kind of quiet cognitive moment of like, is that the direction I want to go in? And then the action. But before that, there is a neural response that most of us can't hear, especially in a city like New York. And so the idea of what is the role of care of getting to a place of slowness and being able to hear that which is so almost imperceptible in our current structures, I think there's information that lives there and that the university, in part because of its role in the production of knowledge, oftentimes is churning in such a way that we can't feel these slight things that are emerging. We can't really get to each other. And so we miss the sweetness and the possibilities by the virtue of the loudness, the movement, the chaos.

The second image is of riparian zones. And a riparian zone, imagine you're at the beach and you see the water coming out of the ocean hitting the sand. There's this kind of zone which just like glimmers a bit and it's soft, but it's also firm. And there's a site of exchange. It is a unique ecological environment where things that are typically not seen, new plants, new tiny micro bacteria can exist because of the uniqueness of the ecosystem. And so I think about it as a site of very unique exchange. It's novel and it's also necessary and it's embedded in the things we love, like a walk on the beach, I love it. But what you're actually walking on is the riparian zone, it's what you love or these interstitial or liminal moments where there's an exchange between you on land that feels so literally grounded and looking into a body of water that you're like maybe something's out there for me in the world. There's a sense of awe and bigness, but also held in a space.

The third image is that is of a mycelium network. So thinking about the way in which fungal networks, things that are again, not perceptible to the human eye, are always in a place of activity, generation, connection. And that there isn't a clan, except for that, it's just imbued in the chemical functioning necessary to ensure that the entire network is nourished and that it is fostering something that will grow and be new. But there's the way in which like a silence of a mycelium network is holding on to the power of life. And the way that a mycelium network to me just feels so spiritual in many ways and sacred. So through all of this, we're looking at ideas of connectedness, exchange, and ultimately, collective actualization. So moving from this idea of the self-actualized to the collectively-actualized is what I believe is possible when we get to a place of silence and of stillness to discover what is the queer possibility for the university. So don't come with a, "Here's what I think we could have gotten," but rather how would we begin to meander and find our way there?

Zoy Anastassakis: Thank you so much for this opportunity to share with you all these ideas. I prefer to contribute to this conversation by sharing my experience as a director of ESDI in Rio de Janeiro. I will show you some photos. This is the campus of the Design School. This is a photo from the '60s, but now I work here and in the '90s, I was a student there, but now I am an associate professor. But between 2016 and 2018, I was director, and I was not meant to be. I didn't want to be a director. Okay? This is very important.

These are some old photos. And this is the school right now. And in 2015, I was pregnant. I had my second child. And then I was on maternity leave. And the director of the school, he wrote an email to all the teachers saying, "We are having an election in university." In our university we have direct elections. So students, staff, and teachers vote for dean and for directors. And nobody applied in the Art Institute and in the Design School to be director. And he wrote this email asking for a meeting with the design teachers. "We need to find a solution." And I called him from my maternity leave saying, "What is happening?"

Nobody wants to be a director! Nobody wants that! We are teachers, we are not managers. And we get only a little bit of extra money to be director, a little bit. And we need to be there every day managing. We are not prepared for managing. So I proposed to him, "Let's have this meeting and propose that some teachers can give time without pay to volunteer to help the director and perhaps then someone will apply."

So we at arrive the meeting and my director says, "Zoy has a proposition." And then I sit here at his side and he says, "Tell them about your proposition." Some colleagues left the room, others were sleeping. And then I said, "Who wants to give time volunteering to help the director?" Some of youngest teachers responded, saying, "We can do it," because when you are young, you have to do things like that. Okay, we thought. Now someone will apply to the direction board. Nobody. And I said, "I can be vice director if someone apply to director." Nobody. And then we look and everybody leaves the room. I stay alone with the directors Rodolfo and Marcus, I will show him to you because it's important. Here. This is Marcus and this is our room. And Marcus and I, we look at each other. At the time, we were changing the curriculum of design education, because we have quotas in our university. Our university is the first university in Brazil to have social and racial quotas. So we have a new kind of student in STEM, very different. Our design courses were every day. So the students need to be at school in the morning and throughout the whole day. But this was not possible anymore because the students now able to attend thanks to the changing quotas need to work so they can't stay the whole day studying. I was studying in the '90s as a middle class student. I had my mother helping me to be there. But that was not the reality for these students.

And so we decided, me and Marcus, to apply to the director board because we were transforming the curriculum. We were afraid if some other entity were to take care of the direction, we will be in a kind of mess with a new curriculum and not a design teacher managing this process. And so we decided to apply saying, "Nobody wants it. We don't want it, but let's do it, but you all will be together with us."

And we also invited eight students to direct the school with us. Some of them are here. Daniella, Isabella. Some of them were volunteering, some others had scholarships and so they have a room near my office, so we would make decisions together–every meeting I had, they were with me. So this is the informal arrangement I make and everybody was saying, "You know that you are ultimately responsible." "Yes, I know." "You know that if something goes wrong in the school, it's your problem." "I know." And it was a burden, but not a burden. For

me, it was a freedom because when I decided to apply to be the director, I was remembering the student I was. And as a student I was revolting every time with the teachers. I was an angry student. Some students here must be like that. I was not in love with that school. So I was trying to remember it, to find in my body that student and saying, I can invite the students to be in the position with me now and let's have fun.

So it was not funny because it was just after the Olympic Games in Brazil, in Rio and the FIFA World Cup. A lot of corruption. A lot of corruption. The city was a mess. And the government of the State of de Janeiro said, we don't have money to pay public servants anymore. We stayed one year and a half with the payments delayed and cut. It was a kind of misery. I didn't have money to buy food. The students didn't have scholarships. Hospitals were not working. Everything, garbage collection, not only universities. A mess. A mess. People were depressed, crying. So we had a strike for six months and when the strikes ends, me and Marcus were like (we had been obliged to go every day as a directors, event without the classroom, without students, just me and him), so we were like, "Oh my god, what can we do?" "Let's organize a movement. Let's invite alumni and students to be there to occupy the school."

The school was full of termites because of the trees. So we had a lot of leaves on campus. We had no money to collect garbage and leaves. One morning I arrived and this was my problem, not thinking about curriculum, thinking about a tree. I don't have money to cut this tree and to move it outside of the school. You can see the lines of the termites in this photograph. This is a classroom. And so I had to deal with these things and not with design things. It was strange. And then we decided, me and Marcus, let's think about that in terms of design education and let's change our research and research this instead. Let's be managers and activists. So we invited people to clean the campus over the weekend, retired teachers coming to clean the campus, teachers and students cleaning the campus, cleaning garbage. Me with some students cleaning garbage because there was no garbage collection. And so great things started to happen. Some students, for example, started to grow food in this part of the campus. And now this is a research lab about sustainability design and plant design, growing foods. They developed a lot of PhD theses out of this work. So some informal things became research. And so some funny things happened in that process. They were growing food and giving food out near the classrooms. And this is an indigenous anthropologist. We had a lot of partnerships with indigenous artists and researchers in the school. We changed a lot of the way that we thought about a lot of things. Some students occupied our graphic workshop, making books and inviting poets and writers to be there to make books for very different things happening. In the video of this process, two older graduate students made a new identity for the school. Two alumni gave us a new website, free. We didn't have money to pay. So many meetings! My baby at home. Meetings with alumni. Meetings. Meetings. Meetings. And some workshops. And we also managed to have partnerships with the municipality and a bank to open a new gate near to the metro station. So good things. We worked.

And then we decided to have a party in the middle of this mess. And we said, we need to communicate to the city and to go to the TV stations, to the newspapers, to say we are in

misery, we are in a very bad situation but we want to have a party because we are still alive and we are occupying the school. So we invited a lot of artists to be there. 2,000 people came to the school that day. It was a Sunday, we talked about design, of course, lectures and everything, but also partying.

And after that the students decided to occupy the school. Forty students. And so they stayed in the school and they asked me to organize a kitchen. So I called the dean and said, we need to put gas here, they need to cook, they need to stay here. And they started to organize educational activities to invite the other students to come. And so it was one year and a half, two years, and then suddenly, I don't know why, the government started paying everything again. And suddenly, everything is back to normal.

What I learned from this is that there was no formal output, no infrastructural output. It's not a case of success. But for people who were in that experience, it changed a lot because we were committed on a very everyday basis. *One with the others*. In my room, people came to cry and I had time to receive people to cry. Please come, let's cry. We didn't have classes, but let's stay together because when we are depressed and without salary at home, you can go crazy. If you are together as a community, you are not crazy anymore. You'll be together. So for me it was important to understand that a public university is a collective space and we can reclaim community and care because it's for everybody. We are not one person, the other person, the other person. So we can remember that we are a collective body and we can live like that, rethinking what education can be, on a daily basis. And I'm sure that the transformation in that generation that was there during that time, it's a thing for the rest of their life. It changes someone, the students that were directing a school, it changes. So I think there's this output.

So it's important to write about it. So here is a book telling about the story because it's important to tell, otherwise nothing stays. It was two years, and nothing more. But we are other—changed—after that. So I think this kind of experience can be created in any space, in any university, private or public, because it depends on how I want to be in this collective body. I want to see myself as part of a collective body. Let's engage in that and see. It's easy, I think. And I will stop here. Thank you.

Renée T. White: Oh this is so rich. Thank you. Honestly, I'm not even sure where I want to start, so I'll just make a couple of observations and then I'm really anxious to just open it up because I'm sure that a lot of you have things that you want to say and contribute. So the first thing I wanted to start with is something that really struck me in all of your comments. And I think it also has surfaced in conversations that I've had throughout my own academic career and that there's something fundamentally unique and different about what we expect of higher education as an industry, for the sake of no other way of putting it, and as a practice that's different from other spaces where dollars are exchanged for something. There's a fundamental difference about higher ed that makes the models that we often call on, that are corporate, not work. And the kind of discomfort and ill-fitting nature of it is because there is something fundamentally different about higher ed that we expect. We expect something out of it that is

about the human, that is about relationship, that is about ideas, about change, about access. Those are not the same kinds of things that we would expect from a typical nine-to-five gig. So that means, I think, that the growing changes that we experience across higher ed that are affected by structures and systems, that are defined by those things, that are defined by corporate models or that are defined by the commodification of goods or that are defined by power, we feel some dis-ease with that because it is so antithetical to the ways in which we enter into the work that we do within higher ed.

So, that's not necessarily a profound statement, but I think it's an important one that, at least for me, helps me think through the questions that we're asking about the transformation of what we do within higher ed in terms of the critique—and there are many and many really important ones, hierarchy, corporatization, rules, power, these external trends that we're pushing up against. And then I also hear, redistribution of resources; I hear leadership that is distributed; I hear leadership and place, which is something I've been thinking a lot about. What does it mean to lead and change from wherever you're located within a college or university as opposed to it being defined by formal leadership titles and structures? That's not a conversation that we could ever have in a corporate space. It's a foreign thing. So that just shows the differentness about what we do. Interconnection and mutuality, relationship, value. So it's more an observation that in re-imagining the university, we are in a way, trying to create a set of ways of doing this work, a vocabulary, a set of tools, a set of codes and mutually agreed upon tenets that don't exist in other spaces in the same way. So we have to create them out of whole cloth, or at least the things that we draw on for us to learn how we can do this differently and better are maybe not the things that we sometimes fall back on and look to because those aren't the right sources.

So I just want to leave it there because I'm really excited to hear what you all have to say. I have a lot of questions and I will occasionally pull a little prerogative in my role as facilitator and organizer and mover of our conversation. But there's so many folks in here that I'd love to hear from and I just want to thank the three of you for such really powerful, evocative, thoughtful and fulsome observations and ideas that you've shared. And I will be talking to each of you individually because I've got questions. So why don't we just open it up and see what other folks would like to say and share. So, Christophe.

Christophe Cox: Thank you very much for these presentations. Fantastic. I actually want to pick up where Kathleen, you ended, and Zoy, you ended, right? The question I have is how do we retrofit those institutions that have become corporate over the years but maybe didn't begin that way, how do you retrofit them in the future, into coalitions, cooperatives? I know that there are all sorts of, in my own position, there are all sorts of efforts from below as it were and sometimes really fostered by deans and others, but you're still working within these structures that are not either well suited to it, that can sort of squash those things. Anyway, I'd love any thoughts you have on that.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: So I'm going to start with one anecdote and see where this might lead us. As was mentioned in my introduction, I'm president of the board of directors at the Educopia Institute, which is a relatively small nonprofit that works with libraries and information spaces to think about cultivating communities that can sustain the kinds of projects that we're interested in.

Educopia has been around for 16 years now. It was originally co-founded by Martin Halbert who was its first board president and Katherine Skinner, who was its executive director for 16 years. Katherine recognized about four years ago that Educopia was in danger of succumbing to founder syndrome. As a nonprofit still led by its founder, it became too identified with her. And so she set about the process of first of all, working within her team to cultivate leadership so that the members of the staff thought of themselves as more empowered to take charge of what the organization itself was and what it could become. She also turned to the board, which had become, on the one hand sort of half advisory, anything you say, Katherine, whatever you want to do Katherine. We're just here to rubber stamp your plans and sign the tax statements. But on the other hand, it was in danger of becoming super-corporate because then when she made the announcement that she was going to step down, what did we do? We formed a search committee and we started the process of looking for a new executive director. And before we could get too far in that, Martin had stepped down, I had become board president, Katherine turned to me and said, "We need to do some serious board development work."

And so we brought in a consultant. It's a group called Circle Forward that works with nonprofits and that is specifically about thinking about the future of leadership and what it might look like in nonprofit spaces. And through a series of workshops with Circle Forward, the board sort of gradually, and among some of our members a little bit reluctantly, came to understand that our role was there to be supporters of—not directors of—the organization. That we were there to collaborate with the staff, not boss them about. And that changing that relationship might mean looking differently at the search that we were about to do. And that was the moment at which three members of the staff came to us with a proposal that said the three of them would like to apply for the position of executive director and will lead together and here are the structures for what this is going to look like. And there was some nervousness on the board about adopting this because we're all very used to having that singular person who is responsible—when things go wrong, where does the buck stop? And I finally looked at everyone and said, You know what? Let's do this as an experiment. If we hire a new executive director, we're going to have a one-year review anyway. We're not going to be hiring this person for all time. So let's hire these three people for a year and see what happens. And thus far it has been enormously successful. So what I would really like to think about is that level of board intervention and how, Sloan, you were talking about some of your work with thinking about rethinking governance, how do we get to our university's boards of directors and get them to go through similar rethinking processes so that they become allies of the institution instead of directors?

Speaker 6: Thank you. This was amazing. You mentioned the structure issue. And for me, the solutions that I've been seeing universities take are, I don't want to use those words, but I will, kind of condescending. Instead of really touching on the structure itself. I can say as an example, I'm a historian and at my university we were dealing with overwork and burnout among professors seeking tenure. So the association suggested, to sort out the problem of overwork and lack of enough compensation, by changing the rules from tenure. So, for example they said, instead of writing a book, you don't need to do that anymore. Of course, you're teaching so much and you're making so little money, and then as a solution, you take, from researchers within us, the possibility of producing knowledge, instead of just changing salaries and reducing the teaching load. What I'm seeing around us is applause to solutions like that instead of questioning the root problem. People are so thirsty for any change that what I'm seeing a lot is, finally someone recognized we're overworked, instead of like, oh let's address the real problem. Yeah. So how do we change that?

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: I want to ask Zoy that question because I'm super curious what happened after classes started again? Once the strike was over once, I mean, I am hoping everything is back to functioning with classes and everything. How were you able to carry the spirit of this occupation forward once business as usual began again?

Zoy Anastassakis: I don't know if I can answer you. Classes came back and it was 2018. And 2018, I don't know if you follow it, but we started with Marielle Franco, a council woman, being murdered, and it was near to our school, and then Bolsonaro went as president at the end of the year. So it was normal in terms of classes, but very strange in political terms. So everybody was so afraid that we are again in an okay mode. But I left the country at the end of the year and I left my position, me and Marcus, we left the position because we were afraid because we were doing experimental things. And with Bolsonaro as president, I had no courage anymore to live this. So to answer you, it was like that. I stayed four years in Portugal, I just came back to Brazil. Now we have Lula as president. So I trust I can live in my country.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: Yeah, I mean, I'm very sorry for that outcome because I was hoping that there might be a model where this moment of disruption can be carried forward into a rethinking of those larger structures.

Within my own institution, my dean, Chris Long, has been really thoughtful and supportive in attempting to work with both faculty and staff. This is one of the important things about the innovations that he's made, I think, is that he sees them as being applicable to all the employees of the institution and not just faculty with our particular prestige. But that is working with all of us to think about what success looks like to us and why and how to help support us down that path towards success. Now, there are still institutional rules about how much we teach and about salaries. We're state employees, so there are all the rules and regulations behind that. But I think in opening up the structures of what an academic position is supposed to look like beyond research, teaching, service, and instead thinking about what is it you're trying to accomplish and why? What does leadership mean intellectually? What does it mean in

the classroom? What does it mean in the community? It's enabled a lot of us to start thinking differently about the ways that teaching and research intersect, for instance. What does that do for overwork? Not very much, quite frankly. The university still sends us subscriptions to meditation apps.

Sloan Leo: I'd love to contribute to what both of these comments feel like they reflect, which is this idea: how change happens in institutions and how knowledge and new ways of understanding yourselves happen in organizations is deeply uneven and goes back to a point that Zoy had made, which is that when something, a crisis or a significant or acute moment of difficulty emerges, people are changed. And the organization's ability to change is partly random, dependent upon if you are a changed person in a position of power, more things change. If you're a changed person with lots of changed people who don't have lots of power, then you can create power. And if you're a changed person who isn't in a position to create something that's visible to everyone else, that change that you are going to support or nurture shows up maybe 10 years later when you come back as faculty or you come back here.

In a project we did recently, there's a group of trans-masculine black folks who had been working as a collective for 10 years, and about three years ago they had a major fallout. There were accusations of deep misogyny and community violence. And it was really very painful for this organization. And what they did though is that they didn't say, "Let's try to change everything." They didn't come in with any kind of a corporate structure. "We'll fix the board, we'll fix the staff, we'll do all this stuff." They said, "How has our community changed in the last three years?" So then we worked with them to ask that question of their community, "How are we different at the individual level?" Which then allowed them as a community to say, "How are we different?" And then allow them to say, "So what's the thing we could do this year?" And so finding a way to understand that change and then metabolize it individually, collectively, and then to begin to change some of the structures. But that happened just very unevenly and it didn't happen as an institutional change until there was the chance to say, "John, how are you different now?"

Renée T. White: Can I pick up on something I'm just really grappling with? And it's the concept of community, and who is that? And who determines who is part of community? And what are the relationships and the interdependence within this thing called community? And I ask that because I think it's a concept that we utilize as a signifier for things. And I'm not always sure if it actually is accurate, if it actually captures what we think it captures. And I'm thinking about this as well, around faculty. That as faculty when we invoke community, it sometimes doesn't include staff who were part of the same space and engaging in intellectual work and knowledge production as well. And they were like, "Oh yeah, we met staff too," which doesn't feel great for staff, right? And so I'm trying to think about if we are talking about a redistribution of power, a redistribution of decision making within a community, how do we imagine what that looks like, inclusive of everybody? Where everybody has a stake, everybody has something to contribute, everybody is part of creating this new vision. What is the expression and the sort of demonstration of community look like in that way?

Sloan Leo: I will take a bite of this apple very briefly because I think everyone who knows me knows I have strong feelings about this and I can't keep them to myself. It's that community is so often seen as like, "Oh look, community." But it's not a noun. It is a verb. It is a set of commitments, actions that are taken by people who are somehow engaged in the sharing of a resource. But it is not the place or the people, it is the ideas. That we are *in* community. We are in this together with a series of behaviors. So I just would like to offer that before other people get into this. Maybe it's not a thing.

Zoy Anastassakis: No, I was very aware of that. Not everybody at the school were saying they were committed and feeling part of a community. A lot of people were perhaps hating everything at home saying, "These are crazy people, doing crazy things." And for me it was important that we didn't need to engage everybody because "everybody".... This thing doesn't exist, exactly. What I was trying to do in a very provided way was, as a leader, repeating for everybody that was there, or by email, or other things, that it was possible to propose things. And my role was to say, "Yes" to everything. And using my power to say "Yes, if you want to do that, let's do it. Yes, yes, yes."

And some "No's." Two no's I said in that period. So trying to animate people to put their wishes on the table. And of course, some of them wanting to do things, and the others, no. And okay, because I cannot do magic. I couldn't say, "Come on Lara, let's do it." No, if she doesn't want. So I was trying to open space to people who wanted to have space, and it was a very huge and hard job, and it was okay. I was thinking like that. And the community was people who were there, in the limit.

Speaker 7: Continuing the conversation about community but community in a private space against community in a public space, and how people share differently and own space differently, and what does it mean to actually create that feeling of belonging in the private space like the one we are in here? And I guess the other thing would be, when we are creating new ways of being together in spaces that have a history of being a community for whiteness, it becomes very, very clear, very fast that certain margins will remain in the margin of the community. And so having to always grapple with the thing of like, "I belong to the community," but who shows up for who and what, and who shows up for me is always a thing. And so I guess this thing for me, it's like, "What are the boundaries of actually asking for that feeling of belonging?"

Speaker 8: When trying to formulate this, I think it's dangerous to even try to break down community in those stable categories like staff, faculty, part-time faculty, administrator, and leadership. Especially in a moment of crisis. I think it's different to talk about community when the community's healthy and when it's in a crisis. Communities form around grievances, community forms around privilege, and so on. So I think that part of the notion of community is also how it evolves over time. It's not completely unstable but we are forced into those categories. And there's organization around those categories which create more fragmentation,

creates both unity and fragmentation. I don't know if it's a syndrome of the corporate and how even labor is organized. So I think the system is so complex and I would just reinforce the notion of community somehow. Reinforce division, and not so much collectivity.

Speaker 9: This conversation is very interesting in lots of ways, of course. And it also returns very much to the conversation we were having in the first of this series of dialogues, which gravitated around shared government which is a lot of what I think we're talking about here as a response to the paradox of people who want to do something cooperative within a corporate environment. We talked about shared governance as a response to corporatization, and also about the complexities of governance, so I guess I'm asking about the more concrete dimensions of this conversation.

How do we actually would move out of this situation when shared government is also extremely conflicted and fractured within those communities, even within the university's schools and divisions. There's been struggle over the structures of shared governance within institutions to pluralize them, open them up, stop them being dominated by inherited hierarchies. Shared governance itself is messy; it's not a ready-made solution. This is something we need to work and transform. The elements that we're going to use, I think, to transform the university are also in need of transformation, and we don't have much practice doing that, but I think that's a big part of the conversation we need to have.

Speaker 10: I wanted to offer something, and in keeping with the community agreements, sort of starting with my own positionality I guess. And disciplinarily, as I said, when we introduced ourselves, I'm a futurist, but my training is in history originally, history and philosophy of science, and in law. And then I studied futures in a political science program, so I did my Masters and PhD is in Political Science, but not because I wanted to do politics, but because that's where the futures program was.

When I went there in my mid-twenties, and I thought what I would end up doing was something about the design of political systems, because clearly they're so broken, as you evoked, and only becoming more so. And the costs and problems associated with that are only becoming more pressing. But after a little while, I suppose, I realized that that's a really important conversation. "How do you design a political system? How do you design governance, not just at the level of an entire system, but at the level of institution at the level we've been talking about?" But it's very rare that you get to do that from whole cloth, like blueprint style. That's not what we're working with here. We're working with community, with a verb, a series of human lives and practices and cultures in progress, not starting from a blank slate.

And so I wanted to highlight this idea that's sort of just a term that I find useful as a lens for what we've been talking about, of *governance design*. Of that as a lens for a problem that we are grappling with here. And that to me, in a way, all futures conversations, if you're trying to make and then institutionally entrench changes of a sort, all roads ultimately lead to

governance design of one sort or another. How do people convene? How do they decide who's in the room? Who's not, who counts, who's left out? All of those questions on governance design questions through this lens. And I wanted to offer one thought in response to what Hugh was just saying, and a couple of other people have asked, "Where do we begin with this?"

I had a very odd experience about five minutes ago where my train of thought directly intersected with the words coming out of your mouth. You said that you wanted to open space for people to do these things. And I was thinking about the term 'open space,' because I had a conversation yesterday with Yvonne Watson and another one with Mariana Amatullo here at the institution. And in both those conversations it happened to come up, this idea of 'open space' as a convening technology. And I know that may be familiar to some people and may not to others, but just to make it brief, it's a way of bringing together really as much of the system as you can fit in the room physically, and eliciting from that system all the various responses and concerns and perspectives on what might be solvable and how to begin to do it. It's a concrete way of convening. This is a way of convening and it's great, I love this conversation, but I'm thinking in terms of how to progress things in some of the very complex ways that we've been talking about. And there are ways one can do that. One can invite that and harness a certain self-organization and I wonder if that would be worth discussing as a possibility down the road.

Speaker 11: I want to also bring one other dimension, which is really our relationship to the context, environment, the natural world, and the land. We keep talking about organization and structures, all of that. But I think we really need to make peace with the land we are on first. And that's something that rises a lot, at least for me and my body, all the time in this place. I think there are natural, in moments of real crisis, when you were talking I could really just connect so much to everything you were saying, because I come from Lebanon and this has been so much of the way that we have operated and things have emerged naturally because we do come together in moments where we are outside of our comfort zone. And where we realize that we need each other, and we need the land. We are part of this natural world. And I think that that's something that must be brought into the conversation if we think about, what is higher ed and what are these ideas that we are talking about?

Speaker 12: I was so struck by Sloan's presentation followed by Zoy's. Sloan presented on biomimicry and then in Zoy's we saw the images of nature literally encroaching on your university, begging to be listened to, saying enough with your hierarchies and your committees and your directors. This is how we exist. And I think as I'm listening and as I've listened to all of the previous dialogues as well, I've been thinking a lot about what Adrienne Maree Brown writes about charismatic leadership, and when I read that part of her book I felt so seen because of my own experience in the nonprofit world. And, I guess this is a question for the speakers, but also I think many of the other people in the room who are involved in leadership and thinking as well. Adrienne writes about change in shifts and slides and the small part of that that we can be, and so my question is, how do you navigate that as a charismatic leader. We have charismatic leaders in the room, right? Leaders of FLOX, The New School, how do you

navigate that role as we're trying to transition into a world where we don't need that, as we learn from nature where there are no charismatic leaders in nature. And I think the examples you brought us were really rich. So yeah, I'm just curious about reflections on that. And embodied experience, right? As people like you Provost White who sit in these seats, where somebody's put you in a place and said you are the leader, but that you're also in this conflicting space of where the fact that your role even exists doesn't vibe with how I believe the world and interdependence function.

Sloan Leo: It's a wonderful question, and I would build on it by thinking in this way: Charismatic leadership sometimes *is* catalytic, and catalytic leadership *isn't always* charismatic. And so finding how to navigate those things—just that dynamic and figuring out how do we get *catalytic leadership*. Because the charisma is, it's very performative and doesn't necessarily create things. As someone who has a big personality, I always try to ask, "Am I doing anything or am I just taking up some space here?" Am I being charismatic or catalytic?

Zoy Anastassakis: And there is this book, I don't know if you know it, from Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State*. And he's researching among indigenous peoples, and saying that there's this theory that says indigenous people didn't develop a state; they didn't get complex and so didn't have a state because they didn't complexify. And what he says is the contrary. Leadership among indigenous people—he was talking about Brazilian indigenous people, Amazonian—the leader is kind of a diplomat, not a boss. So the role of the leader is sometimes to be abandoned by the community if he doesn't do what is in the agreement. So I think you can play the role of the leader but not feel, ""I am kind of boss. No I am kind of someone who can mediate things here. Totally aware that my position is that, only that." And I was trying to navigate that way.

Speaker 12: And that brings in what someone was talking about, with the queering and the hacking of the roles that you're in and how you can use that as diplomat and translator.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: I love this idea of the leader as diplomat. I think that's really getting at the heart of something, coming back to the conversation around community and the challenges of like, "Is community a thing? Is it an action?" One of the reasons why I've been trying to get myself instead to think about coalition building is in part thinking about the structures of academic employment and the ways that conventional institutional structures use those employment categories to divide rather than to bind together. The diplomat can be one who is building the bridges across and finding the issues around which coalition can be built across and through difference, without dismissing difference.

Speaker 13: I think that Sloan actually anticipated an answer to what I'm going to say here. But I really connected with and also appreciate you bringing this down to the biological level and also acknowledging that the land that we stand on is not indigenous to us. And my position working in admissions is extremely illuminating of exactly how transient this space is. We have programs here with students that commute for six years, or they can be here for one year, or

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here for three months. And I think that the catalytic leadership element, the self-governance element is where we see belonging, being a part of. But I also wonder how we can find community and awake community in people that are passing through. We are not in a terrarium, we are in a riparian zone, as we were saying, it's constantly changing. So rather than looking at this as a fixed system, if we are really considering all parts of the university, faculty and staff are people whose names we know and whose faces we know, but I see thousands of faces that impact my life uniquely every time that I show up to work, and I'm sure all faculty members do, all staff members do, as well. So how do we make a student that is like a shadow appearing for us very briefly, something that has a lasting effect as a part of community, even when they're not physically present in this space?

Speaker 14: I'm going to note this word crisis that started that slide presentation you've raised. Again, I use this a lot in my own work, *krisis* with a "k" in Greek etymology is "extreme opportunity." It's a moment to decide. It's not always darkness and doom, and gloom, and we have a gun to our head. It can be uncomfortable. That makes me think of the Buddhist term *dukkha*, which is "we are unsatisfied as humans." That's always present. I'm also reminded of when I first met Provost White. This is a university of what I call "productive combustion." How might we thrive in that? It's not about solving and fixing, which our transdisciplinary praxis visions as well. And so there's this relationship of being uncomfortable, of being separated, our bodies from the land, which is for many of us in very mysterious ways, is the harm we walk around with. Do I belong here? I'm not so sure. I've walked around, I've been here for 10 years and I always walk around saying I'm not really an academic. Everybody's heard me say that a thousand times, and then 10 years go by and I'm like, wait a minute. I'm a seven-year-old gay boy who's afraid to be in those settings, because they're dangerous. And then I look in the mirror and ''m some old white man who supposedly has power. But I do think that when we talked a lot about the queering of the spaces and understanding space in these other ways, and I heard Eduardo, you talking about this notion of time and non-linear time. I think, again, the way in which we define and measure value and when we have these deep entrenched assumptions around time and space, it's like, oh it's your birthday, here's a cake. and oh, you're graduating from high school and here's the diploma to your undergrad. And it's this kind of very linear story and we can't remember that we actually have stuff and know stuff. And there's a lot that's already here. There's a lot of value that's present that we're not discovering. We're maybe uncovering it, or re-remembering it.

I was cleaning out a filing cabinet last night sending Eduardo photographs. I found things like 'confabulation' in my handwriting 1992. I was like oh my god, I've been talking about the same things for 30 years, but I think it was a reminder to me that we don't need magic or extraterrestrial gurus to come in and drop down and solve. I mean, so much is with us and I think about things like appreciative inquiry, it actually demands a rigorous unlearning, remaking, relearning. We get so entrenched. So, I think a lot of it is in our bodies in ways. And around this notion of space and time as well, the permeable container is a hard thing to achieve.

Speaker 15: So just one fun fact, Chris Long was a PhD student from the NSSR, an alum. But just to add to this as I often think of these problems, and the language of habit and re-habituation. I think it's come especially from thinking about for those who've been here long enough, in a long cut, not only the fall but different types of things that have worked against trust, and also thinking intergenerationally. So, all these things come up about making ourselves prepared for whatever community. And going back to the question of Provost White about the staff and faculty, sometimes it seems so simple but there's so much naivete or ignorance around how all of our work contributes to one another. So, we don't even feel like we're on the same team.

I talk to people sometimes, I'm like, Have you been in a band? Have you played on a sports team? I'm trying to make analogies to get a sense of how our work flows in and out. Some are stronger sites of connection and others more peripheral. But just to see how to be prepared and seeing how the organization works, is to try to habituate out of our old practices that have deep histories. And I think part of that is also to accept the risk and the common sacrifice in trying to change. But I tend to go to habit, because sometimes I think there's these kind of different psychologies. I've been trying to quit smoking for many years. It takes a hundred days straight to build a habit. It only takes three consecutive days to break it. And sort of acknowledge that as the shared challenge, trying to aid as a kind of governance structure or whatnot. Because we kind of hope everything happens in the nine months of the semester and we're ready for break, and then we come back to the same shit.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: Can I brag about Chris Long for just a second? I had forgotten that he had gone to The New School. So, that's really great to hear. And this idea of all of us within an institution, being on the same team, I think is something that he's really tried to instantiate within our college. It's the College of Arts and Letters within MSU, and MSU is a very weird institution, and I could go on at length but I won't. But one of the things that he has been extraordinary at is bringing together all of the department chairs and directors within the college and getting them not just to trust him, but to trust each other and to really recognize that in fact they are all on the same team. So most colleges, you bring all the chairs together and you say we have five new positions that we're able to fund this year. And everybody puts in the request, and the request, what's your need? And the need is terrible everywhere. So we're going to put a position here and a position there. And everybody else is furious that the department over there, how did they have more need than we do? He brought all of the chairs and directors together and said we have five new positions you're all going to put in your proposals. I'm circulating all of the proposals to all of you, and you're all going to read about them, and you're all going to know what the need is in every department within this college. And we're going to discuss them. We're going to go through a process that's sort of appreciative inquiry, sort of critical friends. In thinking about these proposals, how to make them better, can we turn some of them into collaborative opportunities where multiple departments can benefit. And ultimately, he still had to make the decision. He still had to determine what five people were going to get hired. But all of the department chairs saw the process, they participated in the thinking and by the end of it they accepted that everyone had operated in good faith and their department wasn't being punished. They were all on the same

team in a way that has transformed the feeling of that college. And so, yay Chris Long, and yay The New School.

Speaker 9: The gap between what you're describing, Kathleen, and what Zoy describes is so vast. What's the middle ground or what's the process of getting even a conversation between those things? In one case you're working with these very strict institutional structures; in the other, with institutional structures that broke down completely, you get to build something out of literally almost nothing, but you have the freedom to do that. So, what is the conceptual or institutional or practical bridge across that space?

Kathleen Fitzpatrick: That's a super important question. I mean, one of the things that was required for Chris to be able to do that work with the department chairs was that some of the department chairs who'd been around for a long time had to not be department chairs anymore. We needed new department chairs who were willing to be on the team. And that's not easy, it's not easy for anybody to make that kind of change, but it has to happen if you're going to have the environment without a total raising of the ground.

Speaker 16: I just want to pick up on the point of the leadership, the leader as a diplomat. And I think somebody at some point said the word bridge, and I've been thinking about this word a lot. Being the bridge. I feel like the bridge myself a lot. And in relation to governance that we are thinking, how we design and redesign our systems of governance, I feel it's the way I'm trying to think about this lately is finding the bridges, because people are already there. And you can see the bridges, and you can see who are already in those positions, and how to nurture them into acting.

Because as with everything, governance and everything people are, they are also modeled and curated in for whiteness. And so everything, the infrastructure that was curated for whiteness, it infiltrates everything. And then I think recognizing the bridges, in sometimes marginal spaces, because it's easy for you to recognize that person that goes out and screams, and it's there all the time, right? And it's good. It's good to have those, we need those. But sometimes things are a bit more subtle and I think the leadership perhaps has something to do with this, with seeing these bridges that are doing that work but also may not have the privilege to either speak, or behave, or even labor. Because everything that you're saying to me, what you're describing, I'm thinking, it sounds wonderful but it's a lot of work if you're in that position of them reading everything and everybody. How many hours can you do that for? You need to be compensated! I'm not using all of my weekends and I have time to live my life as I work. You think together with that. So, it's hard. I don't have wise words, but acknowledging the complexity of that, I guess, the finding the bridges

Speaker 8: Bridges need maintenance, repair. Need to be built. Or they will fall apart.

Sloan Leo: I was just going to say I love the idea that part of the role of leadership is to see the subtle, it feels like such a gentle, generous, and also very strong position. Yeah, I really love that.

Renée T. White: The quiet is important, as we're talking about and stillness to be able to take in what's happening around you and be part of it, and of it, but not always have to be driving it.

Speaker 17: I have a few last words, but it's kind of like a paragraph. I guess I was reacting off about what Zoy was talking about with ESDI, and how you form something from nothing, and then also well, not from nothing, but formally, and how multiple people were sacrificing things, and they were also in a moment where there was a strike and certain students weren't able to, it was a lot of difficulties that the students were dealing with, it was a lot of people that you were going through with the different staff.

So, it kind of reminded me a little bit of our strike and the different things that people were going through throughout the university. But I think one thing that came up for us, speaking for Transdisciplinary Design, what we kind informally created was, during that time in the strike we still wanted to learn, still get a level of education. So we went to the Jefferson Market Library on 6th Avenue, and we're kind of making informal community sessions of still keeping the classes going, still trying to learn, still trying to have some development of education. And that development, that informal development was beautiful. And the thing that you're talking about, your university, that was also beautiful as well. But one thing that we also talked about was, even though it was a beautiful moment that came up, we still wanted to keep in mind the kind of difficulties that were happening in that moment, and to not make it seem like it was a better moment than it was.

Because as students we're dealing with things, and also within that community, to go back to the margins and the community being a team, but not everybody in the team gets paid the same. Go with your analysis of sports, and everybody on the team has different positions. So I guess what I'm curious about is, the students that were sacrificing certain things were not necessarily at the same level of faculty and staff that were sacrificing things. So then, after the strike and as things might have gone back to normal, and as the school developed, I'm curious what happened with those students who were sacrificing things that might have been at a higher level than the faculty and staff, and what did they do? And I guess that's a bigger question. Because then with us as students, we sacrifice things and we have a different positionality than the faculty and staff. And even within the community of students, international students, have things they had to sacrifice that are different from what I would have to sacrifice.

So I guess I'm asking you, what did those students get once things went back to normal? And then a bigger question, and it is work to change and stuff, is the ends of a new organization of the university, is that the reward for everybody? And should it be dispersed evenly? My understanding for me personally, people's level of sacrifice, stuff like that, in that work of

change, should there be a level of supporting the people in the margins or supporting the people in the margins at the end at a different level than people who are more privileged?

Zoy Anastassakis: We had a big problem at the university because it was not only the design school without classes, the whole university, we have 30,000 students. I don't know exactly but it's big. So, at the undergraduate level, a big problem was graduation, the possibility of those students graduating being delayed. And so the university came with a lot of actions to help students graduate, because they need to go to start working, and it was a mess for everybody. And for thesis students, they received money from the university to stay. It's a permanency scholarship, money every month. And they were without money as we were without salary. So, it was painful. And then when classes came back, the government didn't start to pay it again. So, students didn't have money to take a bus to go to the school. So, we organized a lot of actions in the university saying some students must have the right to do tests and exams at home online before the pandemic. So, a lot of actions decided by the university to help students complete their courses and graduate, a lot of things like that. But because it was the whole university in the same complication, so we were everybody trying to help students. I don't know if I've answered everything, but that's part of it.