

Matthew Jenkins

Well, this is Matthew Jenkins and this is the interview for GWS 467, Locating Queer Culture. I'm here with Robin Deterding to talk about the history of UIUC and kind of the important people in it and kind of get your story today. So Robin, can you start out by just telling us kind of a little bit about, you know kind of, your time here at the university and kind of what brought you here to campus?

Robyn Deterding

OK, so I started in campus recreation. When I came here, which was in 1984, so I've been here 40 years, this was the top program in the country. So this was the job. So, you know, I worked really hard to get that position. I always had the desire to move up, so I came as an assistant director. Told the director at the interview that I wanted to be a director. I wanted his job, and he kind of laughed about it and in my profession, if you want to move up, you move. You have to leave. I got lucky. I got lots of opportunities, not just within campus rec, but within the campus.

Um, so I have been here. I've stayed here the entire 40 years. I was assistant director, then associate director, then director. I did get the director's job. I retired from that eight-year years ago, and during that time as director, I got approached by this department, Recreation, Sport and Tourism, which is an academic department. They were looking at giving the students more practical experience and so they came and asked me if I would be interested in teaching. I'd already been teaching in Ed Psych with, it's called Group Dialogue. In Group Dialogue, so I've been doing that for four years already. In Group dialogue, we'd pick a topic and we'd have, so my topic was initially race and ethnicity, then I did being white in a multicultural society, then my third class was liberal/conservative. So, you always have an opposite. So, I was a liberal. Uh, Scott was a conservative and we bring students together and teach them how to dialogue. How to talk with people who think or believe differently than you.

So, I already had the teaching kind of background RST, rec, sports, and tourism, asked me to start teaching and I started with a facility design and management class. From there, when I retired, they asked me would I be interested in an events class, so I put together a Capstone 2 semester events class. Then I got a grant for a class called Inclusive By Design. Um, developed that and, basically what that means is, we look at everything in our profession from all identities. How do we design, you know, for size, for religion, for gender identity, for elderly, disa-, you know a person with a disability. We look at policies, facilities, marketing, and all that kind of stuff. And actually getting the grant was kind of a coup because I'm not faculty, I'm not a professor. And there were a lot of professors who applied for the grant, and I got picked. So there were some people there, like, you know, who is she? Because I'm an adjunct instructor. So yeah, I just keep getting opportunities. So, I taught that to undergrad and grads inclusive by design. I still have the facility class and then I just started another new one called Community Engagement. So I'm doing that this semester. So even though I'm retired.

Matthew Jenkins

Still a lot on your plate.

Transcript has been edited to remove extra words and affirmations for clarity and to improve the flow of the oral history.

Robyn Deterding

Still a lot on my plate. Yes, but I love teaching and giving practical experience to the students. Because I know the people of my profession are going to hire the students and they need them to have some practical knowledge and they, they didn't. So that's how I teach. I teach, you hear about it, you see it, we, we go on tours and then you do it through some sort of activity. So I give them problem solving skills, I give them real world experiences. And that's where I am today. So eight years retired, and every time I talk retirement here *they offer me more* (whispered). They offer me assistance. They give me a little more money and they're like, no, no, you can't talk about it. So I'm...

Matthew Jenkins

Sounds like they're very content with...

Robyn Deterding

Yeah, and I am too. If wasn't enjoying it, I wouldn't be doing it. So yeah, but it keeps me connected with the students, which has been my whole lifetime philosophy is engagement and support and that kind of thing, so. It works for me-, it works for everybody so.

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah. So to kind of, going back a little bit to campus recreation. So especially, especially since you started in the 80s when there was a lot of sort of LGBT movements happening, not only here but kind of across the Midwest. Um, do you remember any of those movements or ways that campus recreation tried to address those?

Robyn Deterding

Yeah, and actually, we did a lot of things, not just with LGBTQ plus, we supported all the resource centers. So we always made sure and I especially did this, as when I became director, I always had a staff member on every advisory board because that's how you find out what the issues are, what the concerns are, you have a direct link with someone. With the, so I was also initially involved with getting, so I worked with the student team actually to get all, gender neutral, all gender restrooms. That was a project of a student group and I was their advisor for that. They did it for a class and then I talked them into taking that to the chancellor.

And so that was how we initially got changes made in code. So any new building has to have all gender [restrooms]. Um any renovation has to include that. So that was one of the things we did. Going way back historically with campus Rec, when Doctor David Matthews came here to start campus rec in the 60s, his philosophy was a place for everyone. That was another thing that drew me to this to this place. That was their philosophy. It's, it's opening, open and welcoming. And we had you know an inclusive statement on our web page on all our materials. We were the first to have all gender restrooms and locker rooms. So when we renovated and built CRCE [Campus Recreation Center East] and renovated and made the ARC [Activities and Recreation Center], we had those. Even though the architects were like, oh what is that? You know, they were, you know, they didn't have an understanding. It's like, nope, that's what we're doing. This is what we want. We had some pushback from the architects that we were working with who had no understanding of that.

Matthew Jenkins

Oh really?

Robyn Deterding

Yeah. And I got to tell you.

Matthew Jenkins

And what year was that do you think?

Robyn Deterding

So let me think, 8. So 14 years ago was when the ARC was renovated.

Matthew Jenkins

So that would have been 2010.

Robyn Deterding

So no, but it's a seven-year process. So this would have been. late 90s, early 2000s.

Matthew Jenkins

Okay.

Robyn Deterding

Because it takes about seven years to get a whole project through.

Matthew Jenkins

Ohh yeah.

Robyn Deterding

So yeah, so late 90s, early 2000 would be when we were pushing to get this.

Matthew Jenkins

OK. Wow.

Robyn Deterding

Yeah. So I mean that's not that.

Matthew Jenkins

Very, very new, but not that long ago.

Robyn Deterding

Well, yeah, yeah, yeah. So you know, and our thing was it's a place for everyone, period. And the other thing, it wasn't just, and this was the other piece. We had to educate. So it wasn't just about,

our, our students who might be LGBTQ plus whatever it's about people with disabilities. It's about me bringing my son to the facility. It's, you know, me bringing my dad to the facility. So it, it was an education piece.

Whereas most people go straight to oh, it's strange, you know? No, it's not. It's it may, be you or me who's not comfortable in a locker room. So it's again, it's something for everyone. It's overarching and not just that. The other thing that I did, and this I did when I began teaching, I noticed there was no inclusion statements in our syllabi. And so at a workshop, probably five or six years ago, I got asked to speak through CITL [Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning] on my teaching practices and one of the things that I introduced was I had an inclusion statement. And the Provost office picked up on it, and now that inclusion statement is the one that's used by the campus because there wasn't one.

Matthew Jenkins

Oh wow. I didn't know you were the one that made that.

Robyn Deterding

Yeah that's me. Yeah. Let's see what else? The chancellor's office always did quite a bit, so I was on several committees with them, and again it was overarching all identities. So I like to get in there and be that voice at the table because that's one of the things that I've always pushed. And I actually teach them this in class who's at your table and who's not. And if they're not, why? And we have the power to make sure those voices are there, and if they're not we can be that voice. You know, and push so you can be a disruptor. You can be an ally and an advocate, but you know, pick where you can be a disruptor and how you do that. So I also teach the students to be disrupters.

Matthew Jenkins

Important skill to have.

Robyn Deterding

Yeah, and how to do it because I was that disruptor. You know, at times I was a pain in *ass* (whispered inaudibly).

Matthew Jenkins

The butt.

Robyn Deterding

Yes, yeah. Because something would be said at a meeting or whatever and people would go, they would look at me and is she going to say something because they knew I would. And you learn how to do it diplomatically. I once had a friend say that I could tell you in, pardon my English, I could tell you to go to hell and you would feel good about. It because I could, I could do it in a way that you know, I made a point. You didn't feel bad. It's part of that dialogue, right? I taught that. So you need to learn how to be able to do that and do it so that you can still have a conversation. So I just.

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah, yeah, yeah, of course. Yeah. Your stories always crack me up. They're so interesting. So you talked a little bit about pushback from the architects, but have you received a lot of pushback from other administrators? Have you ever had to fight with community, or have you typically gotten support?

Robyn Deterding

So I'll go to community. I live in a little town called White Heath, Monticello School District. I've always again been a little bit of a disruptor. My kids, my oldest, had a learning disability and it took us several years to figure that out, and so I was an advocate for him. But it wasn't just him, it was the other kids with learning disabilities. So again, your early 90s. My second was a very loud and, she's a lot like me, pushy, you know, strong female. In some schools, some classes, you're not supposed to be that. So there again, I was an advocate for her and then my third, who we adopted, in 8th grade was when she told us that she thought she was transgender. And the sad thing that goes with that, and it breaks my heart, was she knew it for a long time. So at that time she/her, knew it for a long time, but she was afraid to tell us because she was adopted and she was afraid that we might give her back.

Matthew Jenkins

Wow.

Robyn Deterding

And it's like, no, honey, you are ours. We were there when you were born so you're ours. And we've always told our kids we love them unconditionally. So 8th grade, she comes and tells me it's now he/him and that's a path that I thought I was pretty educated. But when it's up close and personal, I had a lot of things to learn, and a lot of resources that I had to either find or figure out. And then, then it's so it's the schools, right, because we did the name change. Um, we went through all the paperwork that you go through.

Matthew Jenkins

Because it's strict.

Robyn Deterding

It's strict and there's I mean, I had to change all the medical insurance, Social Security card, birth certificate. There's a lot and then to get the schools to acknowledge that. And at that same time, they were starting a great gay straight alliance. So there's pushback from the school, from some parents, for that, some teachers for that. Um, and you find out who your allies are because you want your child to be safe, all children, right? So, teachers that would send me notes and say if there's an issue have him come to us. And finding those allies just breaks your heart because you worry all the time about your kids anyway. And one of my biggest allies was, he was PE teacher, wrestling coach, ex marine. Someone I would have never pegged and when the GSA was going to do a fundraiser, and they brought flyers to be posted, and it came down from the superintendent that the teachers could not post those flyers because some parents complained. And he was like, give

me the flyer. That's what he told the kids. And he also reached out to me and said if there's a problem you tell Eric, come to us. Come to me. And he actually pulled a couple of kids aside and kind of did the straighten up, you don't do that, Blah, blah, blah. And it was awesome. Yeah. Yeah. So you find out, you know who's supportive, who isn't the whole bathroom thing. Where are you going to go to the bathroom.

Matthew Jenkins

Oh yeah, especially 'cause this would have been 2010s, right?

Robyn Deterding

So 8th grade. Yeah. So E is now 23. So yeah, 12 years ago.

Matthew Jenkins

So it would've been pretty, when this was a very new subject in public schools as well, because, because now it's a little bit more established. But back then

Robyn Deterding

Ohh yeah yeah. Right, because that was the 1st year they had the GSA you found, you found other parents. We were going to a church that, there were a couple of other parents and kids that also went to that church who were part of the GSA, and the minister actually came to us and said that, you know, do you want to do you need some counseling, do you need to talk that kind of thing? We're like, oh, yeah, that'd be great. But then his thing was, when we have to do it at kind of a side location under the cloak of darkness and all this shit.

Matthew Jenkins

Oh.

Robyn Deterding

And so you know, wouldn't you think your church is there for you? They're not. Yeah. So, you know, we quit. We actually quit going to that church because the youth minister also. Said some things to our kiddo and it's like, OK, we're done. Yeah.

Matthew Jenkins

Time to pack up and find somewhere better.

Robyn Deterding

Yeah, yeah, this is it for us. So that was the community thing. So, you look for your resources. So, Illinois Safe Schools Alliance was huge. They actually, our principal was really good, and he actually brought them in. They're out of Chicago. They put together a packet that was really helpful on how to navigate all the insurance and all that kind of stuff. How to get a new Social Security card, passports, and they came to the school and did some a training for the teachers. So I really give props to our principal because he didn't have to do that you know. The up center was good except...

Matthew Jenkins

And that's the local LGBT support group for Urbana-Champaign and I assume the satellite towns as well.

Robyn Deterding

Probably yeah. I went to a few parent meetings, but most of the parents had little kids. So that really didn't help me much. Lurie Children's Hospital was awesome. Found it, some doctors, so you also have to find doctors that are supportive. So I had to reach out to all the different doctors and say this is what's happening. Are you okay with this? And if you're not, that's okay, but I need to know. So, I found out which doctors in the Carl system were supportive and actually Lurie came down and did workshops for Carl. So I made that connection. Let's see. Who else did I use? I had friends in what was in the LGBTQ center, so I talked to them as resources.

Matthew Jenkins

The UIUC one?

Robyn Deterding

yes, yeah. What's the church community? UCC, United Church of Christ? They're up there on 6th St. they were amazing and they still are. They're very supportive of everyone. And then there's an international group. They started as national, found them on Facebook. It's called Serendipity Dodah for the Real Mama Bears they are amazing group and actually Jamie Lee Curtis, the actress has taken on the two founders and she's going to do a movie around their push to unite the Mama bears. Yeah, so they were a great resource and they were just getting started, but they've branched out to the point where they can provide you with info about colleges. doctors, books, religion, all kinds of things, and they're very supportive. The two founders actually go and do weddings. They'll perform wedding ceremonies or they'll stand in as the mom, and be your supportive Mama bear if your family isn't. So they do all kinds of stuff. So yeah. So the community was an interesting challenge. Campus was good. Surrounding... But it's a conservative, you know, Pike County is Republican, so you know that's what you're going to get.

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah. I mean, we are blue dot in sort of a red sea. I think usually when they talk about Urbana Champaign. So it's kind of an...

Robyn Deterding

The bigger city or township, yeah, but Monticello. White heath. Yeah, I got a Trump flyer right across the street from me who would never use E, right, name or pronouns, and would pray for us, you know.

Matthew Jenkins

And I mean as a parent, how do you handle that? I mean, especially since, I think for modern culture, this is really I think part of the bigger wave when this was starting to become more prominent within society's view, so how did you handle that sort of roller coaster? You touched a little bit about accessing their resources, but I mean, in terms of just like yeah.

Robyn Deterding

Emotionally?

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah.

Robyn Deterding

You gravitate towards the people who support you and your kids, right? If you don't support my family then you know you were a chapter in the book and maybe you're not part of the book anymore. And so, our friends were so supportive and they still are. Like we're still, we're going, you know, through another transition because Eric has gone from he/him now to E and she/they. And my friends are like, they just ask what's going on. We want to be respectful. So what name? What pronoun? And they just flat out ask which I appreciate, you know, and they're like, it's none of our business what's going on but when we see E we want to be respectful and those are the people that you surround yourself with. Our neighbor, my husband, is really good about talking to them. I just don't, you know, I'll wave or. And they're really nice people, you know, but they, but they're flat out racist with. You can hear the comments they make. It's not just gay people, it's, you know, undocumented or, you know what, Jews, or whatever. I mean, they're making, it's like my God, You know, and my husband will actually say, because he'll see something that they post on Facebook, and he'll say I don't see that in you. You are a very nice person. He'll have conversations with them. And say you are really sweet. You would give us the shirt off your back, which they would.

Matthew Jenkins

And then, but then you get those bigoted comments.

Robyn Deterding

Those comments it's like oh god okay. So he handles, he handles that. I've got family members. I had a family member who sent me a e-mail that said if my kids said I'm a giraffe, I'm not going to support that. And it's like, OK, you know, or they would send me religious stuff from, you know, the church. And I just kind of ignored it, you know, family, what do you do? The yeah.

Matthew Jenkins

So kind of just make best with what you've got, yeah.

Robyn Deterding

But, but you're not going to disrespect me or my kiddo to our face. You know, I will push back there, but sometimes it's like, you know, I just. Say or do and. You either love me or you don't. So yeah, I'm not here for you.

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah, a piece of advice or I guess something you had mentioned to me back would have been two years ago when we had a similar conversation when I was starting my other research. Was you had mentioned that when your child comes out like however many years, and I guess you were kind of

saying to me so it was, you know, however many years it takes you to come out, that's how many years that you should expect your parents to kind of accept that and kind of go through that same emotional.

Robyn Deterding

Transition.

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah. And so can you talk a little bit about that sort of transition for you? Is, you kind of?

Robyn Deterding

Yeah. It was I was trying to understand. And trying to be supportive and yes, it's also you know for 12 years I had this little girl. And all the photos, you know, like, what do you do with photos? Because you know, there's all kinds of things. Going in ahead of E to say like at the doctor. Going and saying this is the name we want you to use because it takes time to get all the paperwork adjusted and then helping them understand that people aren't trying to be hurtful. They just may not know. The other thing was it took longer for my husband to kind of, and I knew he would. Or like, my middle child, Hannah, who was like, I only have one brother. And it's like, no, you know, and trying to help her through that process too. Yeah. So it's educating myself. It's trying to catch myself if I screw up and call you Ella instead of Eric. It's kind of questioning, are you sure this is what you want to do or how you want to do it?

Matthew Jenkins

Hmm. And that's a difficult dynamic to have, to not. To make sure that the right decisions being made without also making them feel like you don't support.

Robyn Deterding

Support. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And So what was really helpful for us was a finding Lurie Children's Hospital because they have a clinic. And talking, and this is what flipped my husband quickly. We went for our first appointment at Lurie, and the Doctor came to talk to us. And, you know, he could sense that Mike was there, but not fully there. And he told him he said 50% of LGBTQ plus children who don't have support at home are depressed. 47% are suicidal. And we had we lost our first child at age 11. So we went, you know, and he's like, I know you've lost a child. And you know the pain that goes with that. I don't think you want to lose another one. And that's, he said, and that did it.

Matthew Jenkins

That, that, that strikes a chord. Wow.

Robyn Deterding

That's powerful. And he said, I know you've lost one. And I'm just telling you. And *snaps fingers*. Just like that, Mike was all in. And that's all it took. And like yeah. Yeah, we're not going through the pain of losing another, we will do whatever we have to for this kid. And still wasn't easy because it we're going through teenage, you know, and we're starting the hormone therapy treatment. Which means we've already gone through puberty, now we're going through puberty again. Yeah, that's fun.

Matthew Jenkins

So fun.

Robyn Deterding

Yeah. And. You just roll with it and it's like, OK, some days. He absolutely hates me, but Hannah was the same way. You know. And Hannah is one of my best friends, our second child. So, we tag team you know and it and thank God I got that tag team situation. So yeah.

Matthew Jenkins

Teamwork.

Robyn Deterding

Teamwork yeah. Because it's like, OK, I can't do it, here. So yeah, there would be times when my husband was coaching and playing volleyball and it's like E has to go with you this weekend because I need to break. You know, I'm just exhausted from trying to, sometimes you're walking on egg shells. You know, you're trying to figure it out or you screw up and you use she, or you know, and like, I'm not doing this on purpose. So. So we got. Really good at the he/him. And then.

Matthew Jenkins

Going back

Robyn Deterding

Yeah, and I have to remind my husband that it's she. But she is much more forgiving. And because she knows we have the best intentions. So yeah.

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah, I mean I I think it always helps when you've given so much support. And I mean throughout your professional career, you've done so much to advocate I think it really, yeah highlights that's for the dedication for those moments of sort of like I guess. For that sort of almost burnout of walking on eggshells and knowing that you need that emotional reprieve, did you have any sort of signals that you were able to pick up on in terms of how to navigate like. OK, like I need to get a break. And what did you do to, you know?

Robyn Deterding

Well, I've always had ways to, because I'm pretty driven and focused, no matter what I'm doing. So professionally, you know, I'm passionate of what I do. I'm passionate about being a parent and a wife and all of that. And I also realize that for my own mental and physical health, emotional health, I have to have outlets. So I find, I mean I've always exercised. I have. I like to be by myself, because sometimes like after a whole day of teaching because I got meetings, I got 100 and some kids that I'm really connecting with, and I get home and I'm just like ahh. So, I'll go take the dogs for a walk by myself. We live on three acres in the woods near the Sangamon River. I'll go down to the river.

Matthew Jenkins

Such a beautiful area.

Robyn Deterding

Yeah, yeah. I work at the horse barn where I keep my horse. Nobody wants to work at the horse barn, but I do. I go and clean, you know, I go and feed, groom, whatever. I was a distance runner then because of my knee I distance walk and I'll just go off by myself. I listen to music, I cook. Cook, as my husband says he can always tell when I'm relieving stress because I start baking. I love to cook and I like doing it. My parents now, you know who I told you we're taking care of 88, 94 year old parents and I get home and I go for a walk almost immediately because I have to. Destress. And then I'm OK and I can come back. I have my girlfriends, my gal pals who I can share anything with. You know my husband and I've been together for 43 years, so we've been through a lot, so I can. Go and vent with him.

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah, I imagine having, that partner makes a lot of this so much better. Yeah. I mean teamwork like we talked about before.

Robyn Deterding

It's huge. Oh, absolutely, yeah. And you do the same thing. On campus, right, you find those like-minded people that you can go and talk to vent with. Or one of the things I learned when I was a young professional was if I want something done but it's not going to happen right now, I'll just put it on the back burner because I got a million other things I'm working. On and then when it's time we bring them and bring it up. It's like, oh, this. Is good timing, you know, so.

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah. So to kind of swing it back around to classes like we mentioned, you'd mentioned in the beginning. What is the student reactions have been like throughout the years, especially because some of your classes are pretty, either kind of new in terms of the sort of ideas that you're pushing as well as I mean trying to teach people how to have a dialogue is not an easy thing. So are there really any sort of major reactions that you can remember?

Robyn Deterding

I connect with even if I've got a class of 65, 75 I connect with my kids. I do, like they have to check in and we did this in the dialogue class. You had to check in. Tell us where you are. What's going on? Because sometimes a check in is more important than what we're going to talk about. So a check in might be my grandmother just passed. And I'm going to have trouble focusing like, okay, I need to know that.

Matthew Jenkins

And are these check-ins? Are they in person? Are they like one-on-one? Is it like an e-mail?

Robyn Deterding

In the in the dialogue, there's only 20 max, so everybody, it's in person. In class, the first class I, every first class I talk about mental health and I tell them, you know, I tell them all the resources. I

talk to them about if they need a mental health day. I explain what a mental health day is in my mind. Sometimes you need a break. I tell them if there's stuff going on with family or their roommates or whatever it can impact how they're going to function. We talked about that and then I share with them, you know, losing my son and that I was in the deepest, darkest hole ever and everybody's going to have a time when they might be in the deepest, darkest hole. And you and the things that you have to do or to help yourself. And because I do that talk, the kids tell me stuff. They, and the other thing is because they might do just to check in of I'm here, you know. But if I don't see them and like two times in a row, I send them an e-mail. And my first question and I tell 'em this, if I don't see you a couple classes, I'm going to go. I'm going to send you a note and I'm going to say are you okay? That's my first question. Second question is what do you need? Is something going on? My third question is get to class. Tell me why you're, you know, and they do. And so I set up that communication ahead of time. If something's going on in your world and you can't come, I want to know. Because I can connect you with resources and I have kids that do that. And they will tell me because you did that you helped me here or here. Or you let me know that I'm just not another body and a seat in the classroom. And so they tell me stuff which is great.

You know, I sent a note last week to one of my students and I knew she, I mean he'd already told me she was struggling. And I didn't see her Tuesday, and I didn't see her Thursday. So in class, while the kids are off doing something, I sent her note. Where are you? What's going on? You know, or they'll say, they'll say my mom is happy you're doing this for me. You know, and it's like, yeah, because you're all my kids, and I care about all of you. And so they'll stop me. I always have candy. They know they can stop and get candy. You know, they'll just stop and say, hey, so I make that connection and they will, you know, they will send me notes. This was the best class I ever had. So I'm making those connections to them. It takes a lot of work. It's extra work, right? I don't have to. I don't have to do that. But if you're going to come and be functional in my class and learn and play and have fun, you got to be here. And I'm not, like a lot of faculty are so strict. You're gone? Demerits, demerits. It's like we're not teaching brain.

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah. And it's, I mean you have a very different approach than a lot of professionals and professors here in terms of the you know.

Robyn Deterding

But I'm also modeling, right. I'm modeling when you are a professional, you got to take care of the people that work with you and for you because they're not going to do be able to do their jobs, if you don't. So I'm modeling, how do you treat the people you work with? How do you treat your team members? How do you treat your you know, colleagues? So that's also part of it is I'm trying to model how I want them to be as young adults and professionals.

Matthew Jenkins

Yeah, have that system of support. Yeah, yeah.

Robyn Deterding

Because you need it. And I mean, I had it when my son passed. They took all my work away at campus rec because they knew I couldn't function for a couple of months. They didn't penalize me for it. They didn't say I had to take time off. I could come to work. I didn't have to. People picked up and, I, that was awesome. I needed that because I was trying to keep my family together, you know, and my husband, who was part of the accident with the kids. You know. It was emotionally a lot of work and they did. Like when you're ready, let us know. They came a little bit back a little bit back and then, you know it's back. But that really meant a lot to me that I had that support.

Matthew Jenkins

And that's not a support that most people get.

Robyn Deterding

Would get. Yeah.

Matthew Jenkins

And especially from a large institution like this.

Robyn Deterding

Yeah, so I'm modeling how do you want it? How do you want others to treat you and how are you going to treat others. Yeah. But yeah, I do that in all my classes. We talked about mental health very first day and it's like if you if your roommates having trouble, let me know. We'll find him some support. We talked last week because we were doing risk management. We were doing emergency action and all of this and the Cleary act, but we talked about Wellness checks and how if are fearful of someone having some issues you can ask for a wellness check and we talked about how to do that. You know that's not facility design and management but it, but it is, you know. If you're working with someone and. So I'm teaching life skills too, not just. 'Cause they're getting the other stuff, they get that. I mean, I'm teaching what I'm supposed to teach, but I'm also, teaching them how to be kind and caring.

Matthew Jenkins

Well, and I mean, if those campus resources exist but no one knows they do, then.

Robyn Deterding

Right, yeah.

Matthew Jenkins

You know, it makes it so much more difficult.

Robyn Deterding

Or if they say, you know I'm sick, it's like, okay, here's the emergency Dean information. You know, a lot of them don't know about that. So again, they don't know the resources that they have. We have our, we have an embedded counselor here in AHS [College of Applied Health and Sciences] which

is awesome. And so I'll send some of the students her way you know. If you need it, you need it, and there's no shame in that.

Matthew Jenkins

I know that you're going to have to get going soon. Times flown by, so I guess before we kind of wrap up, is there really anything important that you really want to make sure gets shared kind of here on the record?

Robyn Deterding

Yeah. Well, if I was going to say anything, find your resources. Like I said, those resources for me were a godsend. Then, if those people are, part of your like I said, your book they might have been part of a chapter, but maybe they're the chapters over so.

Matthew Jenkins

Time to start anew.

Robyn Deterding

Try to find new chapters. Yeah. And don't be, don't be, feel bad to do that because it's, you got to do what you do for your own sanity and for the health and welfare of those you're trying to support. So yeah, use the resources. They're out there. I mean, I became a resource. For others, once because I do I research everything. I know it well. And so if I can help somebody else because people help me and I'm going to do that too. Yeah, yeah. That's it.

Matthew Jenkins

Thank you so much for sharing this today. I mean very few people can say that they have a history as long as you do here at this university. So it really means a lot.

Robyn Deterding

Yeah, yeah. So I've seen a lot, yeah. So resources are out there supports out there. So.

Matthew Jenkins

Just got to find them. okay. Well, thank you again.

Robyn Deterding

You're welcome.

Matthew Jenkins

And hopefully whoever is listening to this in the future will find it helpful or insightful and.

Robyn Deterding

Yeah. I hope so too.

Matthew Jenkins

You know kind of current, whenever they're at.