

Angel Arriaga

Interview with: ANGEL ARRIAGA
Marist College
Poughkeepsie, NY
Transcribed by Lola-Dillon Cahill
For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Angel Arriaga

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Interviewee: Angel Arriaga

Interviewer: Gus Nolan and Jan Stivers

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Summary: In this interview, Gus Nolan and Jan Stivers had the opportunity to speak with Angel Arriaga, a Marist College employee of 22+ years. They discussed his childhood, education, and work experience.

Angel Arriaga

Gus Nolan ([00:00:00](#)):

C plus Gus, the students called me <laugh>. We want to interview you because you have unique history and your contribution to Marist is just overwhelming as we are looking through 22 plus years with us. And you're still here, and, they haven't fired you and you haven't walked away. So there's really like four parts to this. Okay. The first is kind of the early years where you were born, growing up in grade school, and then we go to, high school and college. <affirmative> and the activities. And then the third, how did you hear about Marist and why did you come here? What was the job you had and how were your days here? And then the fourth kind of, evaluation of Marist. Why do people stay? Or why do people leave if they're unhappy? Your recommendations. What would you tell the board if you were invited to the board? What does Marist need for, its growth and development, plus what should it maintain so it stays in business. So that's the overview of it. That's what I say now. Now we get into a <laugh>. Yeah. So from the beginning, just say a few, kind of a snapshot where you were born and grew up, and, family, you talk.

Angel Arriaga ([00:01:34](#)):

Yeah. So, my family's from Puerto Rico. I was born in Willimantic, Connecticut. Around the age of five, my sisters moved to Beacon, two of my sisters. So my entire family relocated to Beacon. So I grew up in Beacon, New York. And went to Beacon High School at a time where Beacon was a very different place than it is now.

Gus Nolan ([00:01:57](#)):

Okay. What happened to grade school?

Angel Arriaga ([00:01:59](#)):

So grade school, I was back and forth. I spent some of my grade school years in Connecticut and the others in Puerto Rico. So around, I think around third grade we moved to Puerto Rico. I was there until fifth grade. Came back, and then was here for sixth and seventh, and then back to Puerto Rico.

Gus Nolan ([00:02:24](#)):

Give me the decades. Was this in the sixties? The seventies? The eighties?

Angel Arriaga ([00:02:29](#)):

Okay. So,

Gus Nolan ([00:02:31](#)):

Not the exact age

Angel Arriaga ([00:02:32](#)):

<laugh> I was in- in grade school, I was in the eighties. It was in the eighties. Okay. And then high school was the nineties.

Gus Nolan ([00:02:38](#)):

Okay. Alright. That's a good picture of it. Now grade school, big classes, small classes, private, public? What kind of school?

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Angel Arriaga (00:02:50):

So I went to public school. You did? In low income, spaces. So there were big classes. I was placed in bilingual classes at first because of, I would assume was my last name, and the fact that I spoke Spanish. So I had a interesting experience in grade school. And then because I sort of moved between Puerto Rico and the U.S. I think I got in Puerto Rico classes, where still are schools are very underfunded, um, Uh huh <affirmative>. So I had that experience just growing up.

Gus Nolan (00:03:35):

I see.

Jan Stivers (00:03:36):

Angel, we share something in that my father was in the Army, so I moved every two or three years. Two years. And I hated that change. How did you feel about the changes you were making?

Angel Arriaga (00:03:47):

You know, when I was in elementary school, I think I enjoyed it because I was able to sort of learn to navigate two different worlds. So I mean, maybe I didn't make as many friends and long-term friends in elementary school, and I think I missed a little bit of that. But I did, learn how to code switch and move between cultural spaces. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. But, when I was in ninth grade though, my mom, we were in Beacon. My mom, we've always had a house there, and she wanted to go back, to be in Puerto Rico and I went and spent a month and then came back and lived with my sister to finish my high school education. So I think it was definitely harder when I was already in high school to try to navigate those two spaces.

Gus Nolan (00:04:44):

Yeah, okay. Let's move on to high school, and then we do something in between. <affirmative> What kind of classes did you take? You had literature, English I guess we called it, you know, and mathematics and history. Did you like that? Did you do well in school, or so-so?

Angel Arriaga (00:05:08):

I loved high school, but it wasn't until high school that I began to, that I started loving education. I think because I think I was, trying to find myself and, and find my way through what it meant to be, you know, a Latino in a space like Beacon High School. Beacon at that point was, Beacon High School was very diverse. But it was also very, very problematic. I was very sort of introverted in the school. There was always fights and things happening in school. So I had some really great teachers that made me love history and English. So I loved my classes. I think at that point, Beacon was very underfunded, so a lot of electives weren't available. I wasn't able to take, you know, I think I was able to take two AP courses while I was there. That was about it.

Gus Nolan (00:06:08):

In high school. Did you participate in various activities, the theater, choir, sports, any of these things?

Angel Arriaga (00:06:19):

Well, so I was voted most school spirit, but I don't know. So I was always <laugh>.

Angel Arriaga

Jan Stivers ([00:06:25](#)):

That's wonderful.

Gus Nolan ([00:06:27](#)):

<laugh>.

Angel Arriaga ([00:06:28](#)):

I was like, I was in the key club and I participated, in all of, like, you know, Teachers of America or future teachers. I was involved in a lot of clubs, not a lot of extracurricular requirements, or definitely not sports. I wasn't a sports guy. But in the yearbook committee and student government. That was the kind of student that I was. But yeah, no.

Gus Nolan ([00:07:00](#)):

That would, you would have a number of friends then if you were in those groups. Yeah, so that would be part of it. And so, were they happy years?

Angel Arriaga ([00:07:11](#)):

They were confusing years. I was, you know, I was going through a,

Gus Nolan ([00:07:17](#)):

Growing up.

Angel Arriaga ([00:07:18](#)):

Yeah. <laugh> So, my identity questions and trying to figure out my space, whether or not I would go to college what college I would go to, I had great friends and actually, two of my friends really sort of follow me through my college years. We went to college together.

Gus Nolan ([00:07:40](#)):

Okay, let's get into college. Where'd you go to college?

Angel Arriaga ([00:07:42](#)):

So, I went to, I started actually at Dutchess Community College. Did my associate's there in biology, then transferred to the State University of New York at New Paltz, and did both my undergrad and grad work at New Paltz. My undergrad was in bio-psychology. Psychology with a concentration of bio-psychology. And then my master's in counseling.

Gus Nolan ([00:08:07](#)):

Ah, I see how they mixed. Yeah. But, interesting. Any other, did you have any work experiences after school, during school, summers? Can you talk a little bit about that?

Angel Arriaga ([00:08:23](#)):

Sure, I started working very young. As soon as I could get my working papers. I think I was 13, 14, whatever that was. And I remember it was, I was just gotten my working papers and my sister-in-Law, used to work at an insurance agency in Beacon. And they had just gotten computers and <laugh>. So

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they were beginning to automate their records or put their records, you know, all the paper records and files into their computer program. So I was hired to work for the summer to help do that because I, you know, had, I was, you know, had played around with computers, knew a little bit about computers at that point, um, and then kept that job. I was, after that summer, the person who ran the agency kept me a few hours a week throughout my junior and then senior year in high school. Then when I went to college, I left that job and I worked at the movie theater in the Poughkeepsie Galleria, <laugh> part time. And, but also worked, did my college work study job at Dutchess, at Dutchess South, in Wappingers. And then when I graduated from Dutchess and went to New Paltz, they kept me twice a week as a temp. Doing everything from registration to advising students, and so I, that's where I learned my college, my love for college work.

Gus Nolan (00:09:53):

But you pretty much focused, you were not so much a salesman as you were computerized, technician moving stuff into files and stuff.

Angel Arriaga (00:10:03):

Yeah, mostly that's what I did. Towards the end, I was learning to be a customer service rep and, learned how to, you know, figure out what premiums were for auto insurance. And it was interesting. It was an interesting job.

Gus Nolan (00:10:18):

Yeah. I've talked enough, Jan

Jan Stivers (00:10:21):

I'm interested in following up on the experience that you had in, at Dutchess. Were you doing some college counseling at that point?

Angel Arriaga (00:10:30):

Yeah. Towards the end, right. So, I, when I was doing my work study, I was simply helping cover the office. But Dutchess South was, you know, an extension campus. <affirmative>. So pretty much the people in the office did a lot of everything, right? <affirmative> So when I graduated and was offered a temp position, then I was doing registrations, and I was, so, I was helping students register for classes. Sometimes they would have questions about particular courses or their degree plan. So this, that's where I got my intro to advising in the college space. And I really loved it. I really, really did love it. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Jan Stivers (00:11:09):

And did that influence your decision to pursue counseling, pursue psychology at SUNY?

Angel Arriaga (00:11:14):

Yeah, that was definitely one of, one factor. I think also, you know, when you go into psychology and counseling, there's sort of this desire to reflect on one's own personal experience and try to figure yourself out. And I think I was going through a lot of that. I also had an amazing psychology professor at Dutchess who really inspired me and really sort of made me think of, initially I was going into research

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and biology and the sciences. That was my desire. But then I fell in love with psychology as a field and yeah. And then pursued that at New Paltz.

Gus Nolan ([00:11:56](#)):

How does that happen that a teacher influences you? Is it because of the lectures that he gives? Is it because of the assignments he gives, or do you have conferences with him, what's the key to that? Is there one?

Angel Arriaga ([00:12:11](#)):

<laugh>? Yeah. You know, it's, I would say for me, it was a professor that was very inspirational. I think his passion for the field was evident. I think he allowed and encouraged as much as you can in a gateway course, you know, sort of first year courses. But he allowed students to be sort of their genuine self and, allowed this, you know, these opportunities to think critically about, things and, one's own experience. So I wouldn't say there was one real thing. I think he was inspirational and really made me feel, seen as a student. And I think, I think that made a difference.

Gus Nolan ([00:13:04](#)):

It's a person thing rather than a book to the person that you know.

Angel Arriaga ([00:13:07](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

Gus Nolan ([00:13:08](#)):

It's the person that influenced you as such. Yeah. Yes. Mm-Hmm.

Angel Arriaga ([00:13:11](#)):

Absolutely.

Jan Stivers ([00:13:12](#)):

Absolutely. Tell us a little bit more about your time at SUNY New Paltz.

Angel Arriaga ([00:13:17](#)):

So, New Paltz, I had always, you know, my mom, my family was in Beacon, so I wanted to always stay with them.

Jan Stivers ([00:13:27](#)):

So your mom was back from Puerto Rico then?

Angel Arriaga ([00:13:28](#)):

Yes. At that point, yes. By the time I was in college, my mom was back in Puerto Rico, and I am, I must say I'm the youngest of eight. So all my brothers and sisters, you know, are married and they had their own kids. I grew up mostly with my nephews and nieces as equals, and my sisters and my brothers. But I wanted to stay close. So I went to New Paltz, and New Paltz was a good school. I also wanted a bit of more, you know, coming from, although coming from a traditional Hispanic family who is also very

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Catholic and very conservative, I wanted to go to a space a little bit more progressive, I would say. <affirmative>. That would allow me the opportunity to sort of figure out who I was, but also experience people from different places. And New Paltz allowed me to do that. I loved this school. I had some great friends there and, sort of discovered who I was Mm-Hmm.<affirmative> ,while I was there.

Gus Nolan ([00:14:35](#)):

Very good.

Jan Stivers ([00:14:37](#)):

How did you come to Marist?

Angel Arriaga ([00:14:40](#)):

How did I come to Marist? <laugh>

Jan Stivers ([00:14:43](#)):

Do you want to, do you want to tell us first what you did after graduating with your master's?

Angel Arriaga ([00:14:47](#)):

So, actually while I was completing my graduate degree, I was working at the case management department at Vassar Brothers Hospital. So I had gotten initially an AmeriCorps placement and then was working with Mia, who was the chair or the department manager there. And I really liked it, but I realized I was doing my graduate work, and I also realized that I did not want to work in a space that was, you know, when you're in a hospital and you're working, I was working in the ER and, and their prenatal clinic. But it wasn't always good news that you were giving people, and it just was very draining on my psyche. And while I wanted to be part of the helping professions, I realized very quickly that that was a bit too much for me. I had been an RA at New Paltz, so I started looking for jobs that were similar in student affairs. I wanted to get back into higher ed. I always knew about Marist. I had, some of the people I worked with when I was working at the movie theater while going to college, were students at Marist. So I knew about Marist, and Upward Bound had a position for the summer in 2000 at that point. And I was like, well, I did RA, I was an RA, let me apply to this position. And so I was hired for the summer. Gladys, and, oh my God, what is his name?

Jan Stivers ([00:16:27](#)):

Joe.

Angel Arriaga ([00:16:28](#)):

Joe Parker, hired me. And I was the resident coordinator. I really enjoyed it, working with, you know, upper bound is high school students, but I really enjoyed that. And so towards the end of the summer, I am walking around and an RA that was, that had worked with me at New Paltz, had become an RD here. And she's like, oh my God, what are you doing? We're looking for all these, you know, RDs, you'd be perfect for it. And I was, at that point, I was very different than what I expected the Marist student to look like. And for a person to work here, I, you know, I had blonde bleached, blonde hair, <laugh>. I had a tongue ring. I, was, at that point had discovered, not discovered, but had come out, as part of the L-G-B-T-Q-I community. So I was like, they're never going to hire me at Marist. But I applied and was interviewed and Jerry-

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Jan Stivers ([00:17:33](#)):

With the tongue ring?

Angel Arriaga ([00:17:34](#)):

With the tongue ring <laugh>.

Jan Stivers ([00:17:37](#)):

Good for you.

Gus Nolan ([00:17:38](#)):

Wait, who?

Angel Arriaga ([00:17:39](#)):

Oh, no, no. I had a tongue ring.

Jan Stivers ([00:17:42](#)):

I was wondering if he took out his tongue ring for the interview but he didn't!

Angel Arriaga ([00:17:46](#)):

No. I think because I was,

Jan Stivers ([00:17:48](#)):

It's authentic.

Angel Arriaga ([00:17:49](#)):

<laugh>. I was here, and they basically, I was living in Marian, and they called me and said, you know, when can you come interview down at the housing office? And I interviewed with Steve Sansola and Patty Houmiel-Petacchi at that point. And then they asked me to meet with Jerry Cox, who was the Vice President of Student Affairs. And he spoke to me about the history of the Marist Brothers, the value of the institution. But I still was thinking, I am too radically different <laugh>. They're never going to hire me. But he took a chance and they hired me. And I did res life for five years before then moving on to HEOP and Multicultural Affairs.

Gus Nolan ([00:18:37](#)):

So that was the beginning?

Angel Arriaga ([00:18:38](#)):

That was the beginning.

Gus Nolan ([00:18:40](#)):

Coming here, I don't know exactly where we go with here. We talk about, your experiences here. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you know, what did you do as a hiree? Did you do any teaching? Did you meet, what was your job?

Angel Arriaga

Angel Arriaga (00:19:08):

So I worked in Residence life. So I was a resident director supervising, actually, I was in Marian Hall. So at that point, it was upper class students. And I had a staff of RAs and they did all the programming, the co-curricular sort of programming within the residence halls.

Jan Stivers (00:19:29):

The discipline,

Angel Arriaga (00:19:31):

Also the discipline, All the student conduct.

Gus Nolan (00:19:33):

It's a discipline for the job.

Angel Arriaga (00:19:34):

Oh, there was, and at that point, we didn't have an office of student conduct. So, it wasn't until years later that we established an office of student conduct. So the resident directors and, and the residence life staff dealt with all, levels of discipline. So I really loved that job. It's very fast moving. But I also wanted to get back into the academic side of the house, and really learn advising and learn how to support students, who would not otherwise have those support systems. The first gen, the black student, the brown student.

Gus Nolan (00:20:12):

Okay. I always, I have a really similar experience in as much as when I first came to Marist in 68, I was a proctor in Leo on the fourth floor.

Angel Arriaga (00:20:25):

Okay. Yeah. <laugh>.

Gus Nolan (00:20:28):

And I was the first one to bring television in sixty-eight to the floor, because you just had charge of that one floor. Okay. Of course, the rec room, as it was, was right next to my bedroom. So I was buying my own death key, as it were, because they watched television all night, you know, World War II, my father was on that ship! You know, so I listened to that through the night. I said, what was I doing on the tv? You know, and then it's very hard to put a lock on it, you know, once it's open, you know. So I don't want to become an enemy of the floor, you know. So, I persevered through that year, but then I was quickly removed, and they found another job for me where I didn't have to work. The community took me in <laugh>. I was a Marist brother at the time.

Angel Arriaga (00:21:22):

Okay.

Gus Nolan (00:21:22):

Yeah. So

Angel Arriaga

Jan Stivers ([00:21:24](#)):

Tell us about what you do in your job today. Because, you said you wanted to make a transition to the academic side of the house, to supporting students academically. And I imagine also social emotionally, but. So tell us about what you do. Tell us your job.

Angel Arriaga ([00:21:39](#)):

It, you know, it has evolved since it began since I started in 2005, because we were just HEOP at that moment. And HEOP had been at Marist, you know, since the inception of HEOP. But, at that point, we were, you know, we had a small cohort of students, all of which, most of which were black and brown students from inner city spaces, all of which were first gen students. So I was directly putting all my counseling, you know, what work I had learned in the school, I was putting that into action with these students. Not that I wasn't in res life, because I was dealing with crisis management, and, but I could relate to the HEOP student. I was that student. I just didn't happen, I wasn't part of the program, but their experience, their lived experience was very much, very much mirrored mine.

Jan Stivers ([00:22:43](#)):

Do I have a place here? Do I fit? Am I accepted?

Angel Arriaga ([00:22:46](#)):

Am I accepted right? Do I have the support systems in place that will allow me to succeed? You know, do I have the security to feel safe in this space? So that's what I do now, you know, in 2010, we became the Center for Multicultural Affairs, so that mission just grew and expanded. In res life, I had done, you know, I've always been interested in diversity and equity issues, and, specifically, you know, giving voice to those people who feel invisible within, you know, systems and structures. And, I began to, you know, there were moments myself at Marist from that, I felt invisible, that I felt-

Gus Nolan ([00:23:38](#)):

Yeah. I want to get back to that.

Jan Stivers ([00:23:40](#)):

Yeah. I'm writing the same down.

Gus Nolan ([00:23:41](#)):

Hold that one. Yeah. But because, I want to get to that, percentage of the students, see, we do this, well this is like, we have almost 200 of these that we've done, and many of them are nice, flowery things. Oh, I love Marist and so on. A lot of people would say, not a lot, a number of students would not say that we believe. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But we haven't found them. I mean, well, we've not looked, we're trying to get, a view of our people who have been disappointed in Marist, and why? What do we not do correctly? And you're like, touching that point and saying, you know, they were discouraged because they were not accepted. They were not considered for, a office of a job or whatever, you know? Is that true? Would you say there was a percentage of those?

Angel Arriaga ([00:24:37](#)):

Well, I think so, I think even in the, I think when you look different and when you, or when you are, when you come into the space and all, and you're the only person that, or you feel like the only person

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of that ethnicity or that, I think a lot of times what, I know for me, what I try to do when I, because although I was out, I was still reserved when I started at Marist in terms of talking about my culture or my experiences. And it wasn't until I, began to connect with people that had similar identities, I think.

Jan Stivers ([00:25:21](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> critical mass.

Angel Arriaga ([00:25:22](#)):

Yeah. And yeah because, see Marist to me has always been, I mean, a very loving, friendly place, right?

Gus Nolan ([00:25:34](#)):

Yes.

New Speaker ([00:25:35](#)):

But I think when I first started, I was like, okay, very conservative, Catholic, keep, even though I was trying to be out of the box, I tried to sort of stay within the, you know, the lanes or the lines.

New Speaker ([00:25:49](#)):

Very loving and friendly, as long as I don't push the boundaries too much.

Angel Arriaga ([00:25:53](#)):

Push the boundaries, that's it. And, things have changed a little bit over the years. But that, that was my initial feeling. Yeah.

Jan Stivers ([00:26:03](#)):

Who is invisible today, do you think?

Angel Arriaga ([00:26:07](#)):

Oh,

Jan Stivers ([00:26:09](#)):

Among your, your client load among the students?

Angel Arriaga ([00:26:11](#)):

Yeah. I think sometimes, and this is true for faculty and administration, I think people default to what they expect, or what resources they expect the Marist students to have. Without sort of thinking, so like, these low income students, these students that are, that may be foster youth, students that are here at Marist that may be experiencing housing insecurities or, food insecurities. Those are invisible students, because we don't, you know, I think a professor may say, oh, I expect that you'll do this, or go on this field trip and or spend all this money on whatever it is a project, or, and the students who are low income students, who are those students that, are here, don't have the resources to be able to go to that field trip, you know, in New York City very easily. Yeah.

Jan Stivers ([00:27:21](#)):

Angel Arriaga

I'm just realizing I taught at 3:30 on a Friday for a long time. It was kind of a service to the department to take this slot that was not so favorite.

Gus Nolan ([00:27:31](#)):

Not a very popular area. Yeah.

Jan Stivers ([00:27:33](#)):

So one of the ways we got through it was, it was a Tuesday, Friday class, and on Fridays only, we brought snacks and we signed up. Everybody took a week to bring snacks for the class. Never occurred to me. That might be asking a lot that that might be a hardship for someone. Never occurred to me. Invisible.

Angel Arriaga ([00:27:51](#)):

Invisible. Yeah.

Gus Nolan ([00:27:53](#)):

Well, when students apply to Marist, do they do it with some kind of glow that I'll get to Marist and it will be all lovely? I mean, is that why they make the effort to come here? I mean, they know they don't have the wealth and so on. They don't have the cars, they don't have these things. But if I get to Marist, I'll be able to get through and get a degree and I'll get a good job or something. Is that, is that the lure?

Angel Arriaga ([00:28:27](#)):

I think for my students, right, for the students that are coming in through the HEOP program or, the ACEs program that had that profile of first generation of low income, they love, they will visit Marist and they'll love the space. Oh, they love the students. I think that their initial interactions, I mean, Marist is a warm, welcoming space, and they meet very caring administrators and faculty while they're here and visiting or interviewing for our program for admissions. But so many, I would assume, Marist students, you know, they, come to college and that's an expectation of their families, you know, or their parents did it before them and their parents', parents before them. For these students, they, this is their first sort of introduction to college life, right? And they are carrying not only the weight of, yeah, I'm going to get a career, get a college degree so I can support myself, so I can enrich myself, but now I have to carry and pull with me so many of my family, right. So even while they're in college, they may be working a second job, to send home money for their parents, or they may be going home to translate, for their parents and are missing class. So these are things that, you know,

Gus Nolan ([00:30:04](#)):

They're invisible again. Yeah. That's interesting. Yeah. The, I was just wondering about, you know, the number of, I don't know what the percentage is now of traditional students versus the non-traditional, you know, it's, you know, is it 10% of the college?

Angel Arriaga ([00:30:31](#)):

I mean, because it's more than we think, you know, I think sometimes we think, oh, you know, there's maybe one or two students, right. That, that are foster youth students or that, are experiencing homelessness. And they're just not telling you.

Jan Stivers ([00:30:49](#)):

Angel Arriaga

They're not telling you, It's a source of shame.

New Speaker ([00:30:50](#)):

Right. They're living out of their cars, yes. They're, yeah. So they're not telling you. I think because our programs are so specific, and we've developed these really strong relationships with the students that are in HEOP or the ACEs, right? So, the HEOP, we have a headcount of fifty-seven, but we could take three hundred of the college letters, you know. So those are fifty-seven students, and then probably another ten or fifteen that are ACEs or some of the other program students.

Jan Stivers ([00:31:21](#)):

Remind me what ACEs is?

Angel Arriaga ([00:31:22](#)):

ACEs is mostly students from California and Hawaii that are general admit, but they, their profile, they may be first gen. They also come from spaces similar to the HEOP student, which is the HEOP students are just from New York.

Gus Nolan ([00:31:40](#)):

What's just a little bit more, you were talking about students in the interaction. How about faculty? Have you seen the same kind of, silent neglect as it were? Benign neglect, you know, in other words, they don't mean to be necessarily mean, except they are, you know?

Angel Arriaga ([00:32:05](#)):

Yeah.

Gus Nolan ([00:32:07](#)):

Wrong word.

Angel Arriaga ([00:32:08](#)):

<laugh>. Yeah. I'm trying to, I think, you know, I'm sure,

Jan Stivers ([00:32:14](#)):

You know, we've lost a lot of faculty of color.

Angel Arriaga ([00:32:17](#)):

Yeah

Jan Stivers ([00:32:17](#)):

We seem not to be able to retain,

Angel Arriaga ([00:32:20](#)):

To retain them. Yeah.

Jan Stivers ([00:32:21](#)):

Angel Arriaga

And we would like to tell ourselves it's because other places can offer them more money. I don't think that that's the whole.

Angel Arriaga (00:32:29):

Yeah. My conversations with faculty, I think they feel, I don't think we just have, we don't have that critical mass, that representation. I think sometimes, especially faculty of color may feel exhausted by the fact, I mean, it happens in institutions everywhere, right? Because you have so few of them that whenever you're looking for representation of that particular culture, you know, culture, ethnic identity, you're calling on them. And so I think there's that exhaustion that, and the connections aren't there. But I think that happens in all predominantly white spaces, right? But I, and I think they may feel similar to, I mean, I still feel it, you know, even to this day, that sense of imposter syndrome, that sense of like, do I belong here? And I've been here twenty, twenty-two, twenty-three years now, and I still feel it in spaces.

Gus Nolan (00:33:35):

Right you do, well to tell you the truth, when you came in here Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I didn't like you.

Angel Arriaga (00:33:41):

You what?

Gus Nolan (00:33:41):

I didn't like you.

Angel Arriaga (00:33:42):

No? <Laugh>

Gus Nolan (00:33:43):

Yeah. Ten minutes later, I see how wrong I am, you know, it takes time to break through to find the genuine person that is, I mean, just, I know. Just a visual kind of, you know, you didn't strike me like the quarterback of Notre Dame <laugh>.

New Speaker (00:34:02):

<laugh> Nope. That is not, that is not, me.

Jan Stivers (00:34:04):

Aren't you glad <laugh>?

Gus Nolan (00:34:06):

Yeah, so, but you know, I never met a person I didn't like. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But you have to meet them. I mean, you just can't just, you know, go on a certain image and certain, you know,

Jan Stivers (00:34:20):

Angel Arriaga

So I think also people who are from underrepresented groups, they know this and therefore they have to get themselves out there, which is even more exhausting. Coming back to the same thing you were just talking about.

Gus Nolan (00:34:32):

Yeah, yeah. So pardon my honesty, <laugh>.

Angel Arriaga (00:34:35):

Oh, no, I appreciate it.

Jan Stivers (00:34:39):

Well, what just happened there is something that you try to get to happen over and over again, including in workshops. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So, can you tell us about how you do that? How, my question was, I had written this out. You have, you lead workshops designed to change people's perspectives and to challenge their assumptions. And I've seen you do it, and I've seen you do it in this sort of gentle and non-defensive, well, not non-defensive way, in a gentle way that doesn't let other people become defensive about it. How do you do that <laugh>?

Angel Arriaga (00:35:17):

Yeah. I think, I find that, if you approach people with your genuine, authentic self, that's the first thing I think sometimes we talk about things but are not vulnerable enough to share our own lived experience. I think you begin there, right? This is who I am, this is my true self. This has been my experience. And then make it okay for people to be themselves, to be vulnerable, and to maybe sometimes ask the questions that aren't, you know? So perfect, and well,

Jan Stivers (00:36:08):

Flattering to yourself?

Angel Arriaga (00:36:08):

Right? But to say, look, these were my views, you know, before I got to meet you. Right? Yeah. And let's confront that. Let's have a moment where we're talking about an issue, but then also allowing people to reflect on how their experiences really shape the way that they perceive and the assumptions they have of other groups. And so yeah, I mean I just, I've loved the topic. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But it really begins with realizing that narrative matters. Yeah. And we can default to all these assumptions, but it isn't until, like you said, we say, hey, tell me about you. Let's, that we then say, oh, you know, I had all these assumptions about you. Those assumptions are now different because I got to know you and your lived experience and your challenges in life.

Gus Nolan (00:37:06):

You could have been very at fault. You could have come in here carrying a football and say, did you see the game last night? What do you think about that foul off, you know, which would not be you! You know, which is the whole game here of saying, you know, you have to reveal, the life, you know, what is, is, you know? And that's kind of where we are. So, alright.

Jan Stivers (00:37:31):

Angel Arriaga

We were talking, as we were walking here about the challenges of continuing to do that work when day after day, the newspapers confront us with such evidence that it's not taking, at least in the broader society.

Angel Arriaga (00:37:50):

Yeah.

Jan Stivers (00:37:51):

That prejudice and out now hatred. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> is, is rampant. So, how, well, first of all, what do you see on the campus? Do you see growth? Do you see change?

Angel Arriaga (00:38:07):

So, you know, it's an ongoing process, right? So I see a lot of efforts and a lot of, you know, conversations about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. But, you know, our new, Vice President of diversity speaks to that. You know, in, I, I think, you and I were at the last, the strategic plan, you know, I don't know. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> 10 years ago, whatever that was. And a lot of that conversation that we were having in the fundamental subcommittee of that group was about, well, how do we, you know, create spaces and opportunities for Marist to be a little bit, you know, more diverse and, and for students to feel welcome and for faculty and staff to feel welcome. And I think there's been improvement there, but I think, you know, the political climate of the country has allowed for those few people that have very strong views on, you know, Black Lives Matter or Jewish students or Muslim students, to really express those things in ways that I don't think they would've done even five years ago. Right? So, I think those few students who are loud can be very loud and very disruptive to communities.

Gus Nolan (00:39:30):

I mean, you go back to the first graduating class with girls in it in the seventies Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you know, color was not an issue. There was no color. There was only, you know, I mean, and I had, I was the first one to have a migrant student in class here on a scholarship from Highland, you know? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And this was a whole new area for Marist to open up. You know, we had been such a closed box for all those years before. And so by contrast today, it's miles ahead from where it was, but it has miles to go. You know, to be where it should be, where it might be, I don't know whether we should be there yet. I mean, it takes a while for you, it does. To transfer this overall attitude, the willingness to change.

Jan Stivers (00:40:21):

Well we have it at the top. So we have President Weinman making this, a centerpiece,

Gus Nolan (00:40:29):

Yeah.

Jan Stivers (00:40:29):

Of his administration. And exemplifying that by naming a new vice president. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So tell me, what challenges will they face, and what do you hope they will do?

Angel Arriaga

Angel Arriaga (00:40:41):

I think so. I mean, cultural shifts are, you have to be in it for the long run, right? It's not something that happens. I think you can, there are some times, and I'm not saying this is what happens here, but there are times when institutions and organizations sort of create this appearance, but there has to be the follow through, right? The resources allocated the staff that you need to be able to do this work, and to do it well. I think, and I think there is really effort, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So, president Weinman did the equity fund, which really is helping students with, you know, who may need transportation to an internship or who can't afford to pay for their tutors in the learning center.

Gus Nolan (00:41:37):

Yeah.

Angel Arriaga (00:41:38):

So that's helping those students. And I think that's, you know, a huge step forward. And I think, you know, if we put in the effort to engage those faculty and staff of color, of different groups, and to bring them, truly bring them to the table, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> by having a, diverse cabinet Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> a diverse, you know, board, that represents the students and the people that we want here. I think that's going to come a long way too. But we have to be in it for the long run, right? You know. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, what is one target group today, may not be tomorrow, but there's always a target group. There's always somewhere something going on where people of different identities can feel targeted.

Jan Stivers (00:42:30):

We're going to marginalize somebody.

Angel Arriaga (00:42:30):

Yeah.

Jan Stivers (00:42:31):

Yeah. So what do you hope they do? What do you hope they, so it's not going to be, they, it's going to be you, <laugh> <laugh>. What do you want to see happen?

Angel Arriaga (00:42:39):

You know, and I've reflected on this a lot. I hope that they recognize that the college demographic is shifting, right? And that there are, the students that are coming to our campus with greater need. So I hope that we focus on our student support services and our ability to really deal with these first gen students that are coming from inner city schools that may, that don't have this, you know, they don't know the college space. And very often when I lose a student, it's because they don't feel, that they don't feel welcome in the spaces they're in in the residence hall. Or their responsibility external to the college space is so great that they have to leave. So I hope we put more or rethink, some of our student services so that they're more holistic in nature, that they're also addressing and being able to address some of the external factors, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> for that student that is food insecure, do we have a pantry in the college? Right? And I think they're, the conversations are starting, right? The vice president of DEI just announced a food insecurity committee and,

Angel Arriaga

Jan Stivers ([00:44:12](#)):

You're on it. <Laugh> He sent out an email. You're there <laugh>.

Angel Arriaga ([00:44:16](#)):

So, it's things like this yeah. And I hope that we end up with a, when we recognize that we'll end up with a more diverse student body, and that's happening. I'm walking into classrooms now where I'm seeing three or four students of color and not just that one student.

Gus Nolan ([00:44:36](#)):

Yeah. But we have to be careful of a bind here. And as much as the college is tuition driven,

Angel Arriaga ([00:44:44](#)):

Yes, that's true.

Gus Nolan ([00:44:45](#)):

Where's the money? And they come from, we can't open the doors and say, come on folks, come on board. I mean, the white population will then leave, you know, and say, well give it over to the minorities, you know, we'll go someplace. We have to do both things. You know, we have to bring them together. And I think the process, you have the biggest job <laugh> is, you know, to be able to change us, you know, to be able to say, you know, open up the door, you'll be better off for it. It's like, you know, the immigrants coming in, we need people in this country to keep the country going. You know, we'll need people in the college to keep the college going, you know, on both levels. You know, the ingenuity of the new culture, as well as the tradition, you know, who will pay their share financially.

Angel Arriaga ([00:45:45](#)):

Right.

Jan Stivers ([00:45:45](#)):

Plus you said that Angel's got the biggest part of making that change, but the other part has to come from advancement. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, for a college of our size and our age, our endowment is not impressive.

Gus Nolan ([00:45:59](#)):

I know.

Jan Stivers ([00:46:00](#)):

So, and maybe now we are getting to a maturity of the alumni population so that that can expand. But when, I mean, I know we're not Harvard, but when Harvard has 47 billion, did I make 47 billion? Right. You know,

Gus Nolan ([00:46:19](#)):

And Vassar not far behind <laugh>.

Jan Stivers ([00:46:21](#)):

Angel Arriaga

Right. It's not just bringing in enough students who could pay the tuition. We have to realize that never was a Marist education funded by Marist tuition completely. It was subsidized by everybody else.

Gus Nolan ([00:46:39](#)):

Oh, yeah. This is true. Yeah. And, you know, the idea that, the minority students, teachers are leaving for more money, I don't think it's true. I think that, I think that's pretty much equality. Faculty buy and large doesn't get a lot of money. Even at Vassar with all their money, they get more money over here than teaching at Vassar So, I mean, this,

Jan Stivers ([00:47:07](#)):

I don't think that's true across the board. I know that,

Gus Nolan ([00:47:10](#)):

Not across the board, but, people who have, are, yeah. I don't talk the same evidence.

Jan Stivers ([00:47:17](#)):

Yeah. I think that, yeah, faculty are not well compensated, but in other institutions, you know, faculty, we still start faculty at 57,000. I shouldn't say that. Maybe, sorry. <laugh>, you can bleep that. Ann!

Angel Arriaga ([00:47:35](#)):

Delete delete! <Laugh>. Yeah and I don't think I mean, I don't know, you know, do we have like the mentorship, those programs in place that provide the faculty and staff, you know, like I would like to see, or to bring back, because we used to have a Marist minority group that, you know of professional staff, the professional organization, and it sort of, I don't know, you know, it died down like 2010, 2009. But to bring back those opportunities for faculty and staff of color or different identities, whatever it is, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, similar to how we had, you know, the Women's Mentorship program.

Jan Stivers ([00:48:23](#)):

Right. The women, I was thinking the same thing that also kind of faded. Yeah.

Angel Arriaga ([00:48:26](#)):

Yeah. Right. And I think those programs are important.

Gus Nolan ([00:48:29](#)):

The whole faculty is separated now. I mean, there's a lack of that commonality in terms of even reading it and socializing. So science is over here, is over here, is over here, you know, so there needs to be a more common place for this all to go and to develop, you know? Which it kind of moves into the next thing.

Jan Stivers ([00:48:53](#)):

Yes.

Gus Nolan ([00:48:54](#)):

Why did you stay here for 22 years?

Angel Arriaga

Angel Arriaga (00:48:56):

Why do I, you know, when I started, I said, two years, I'll do two years and then I'll move on to my next, whatever it was. I think the Marist brothers and the brothers that were here were instrumental in helping me feel actually very welcome, even though I was an outsider.

Jan Stivers (00:49:19):

Who? Who was it?

Angel Arriaga (00:49:21):

I didn't meet Joe Belanger. Brother Michael, not this Michael that's here, but the old Michael.

Gus Nolan (00:49:28):

Kelly?

Jan Stivers (00:49:28):

No, that's Frank Kelly.

Angel Arriaga (00:49:29):

That's Frank. Oh my God. What was his name? He was a mentor. You know, he was great.

Jan Stivers (00:49:37):

Oh white, tall Michael. Yeah. Tall, white haired Michael.

Angel Arriaga (00:49:40):

Michael, yes. Michael. Oh my God. I cannot, why am I,

Jan Stivers (00:49:42):

I know he was in Leo.

Angel Arriaga (00:49:43):

Yes. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But he was great. And so Dean Cox was, you know, so I had these people along the way that were here, or I was having this assumption of, you know, Marist Brothers Catholics. Yeah. They're not going to be very welcoming to me. They're not going to, yeah. So I already had those assumptions anyways, and I was very quickly surprised of how, the kind of conversations, and throughout the years, I think that's been pivotal. You know, we had Marist universities here probably three years ago, and I, because a lot of them are from Latin American countries. You know, I spent two weeks I think, talking to Marist Brothers from Portugal and everywhere. And it was the same spirit, right? So I think that the values were important to me. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But then I also saw an opportunity to contribute to Marist becoming a more inclusive and welcoming space for students. Like, I felt like I had a mission to help Marist and help those Marist students that felt unseen to be seen and to be able to complete their education here. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So that's what's kept me, I think the students are amazing. I think the faculty, I'm a little anxious lately because so many people are retiring, and have retired and are leaving the institution that I'm walking into spaces now and I'm like, oh my God, I may be the oldest person here, or I don't know anybody.

Angel Arriaga

Gus Nolan ([00:51:31](#)):

Welcome aboard <laugh>. Yeah

Angel Arriaga ([00:51:34](#)):

But, so that makes me a little anxious. But it, it really is that the value, the institutional values and the fact that, I mean, so many people have been here for so long that, I mean, it speaks to,

Jan Stivers ([00:51:47](#)):

Yeah. It does

Gus Nolan ([00:51:48](#)):

There's some kind of glue that keeps them all here, which is,

Jan Stivers ([00:51:52](#)):

That is it. You may have implied the response to this, but I want for the record. So you said that one of the reasons you stayed was this welcome, especially from the Marist Brothers, and that of course comes from the Marist Brothers mission. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and creating a sense of community. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> is central. Do you still see evidence of that at Marist today?

Angel Arriaga ([00:52:20](#)):

I, yes, but less, I think, as we grow things, this, you know, part of what I loved was we were, even though we were growing, we were still, we acted like a small institution. I can still pick up the phone and call whoever I need something from and speak to them in person and get something done pretty quickly. But I think as we're growing in our priorities, we have multiple priorities, right? We're internationalizing the campus and we're building programs. I think you lose some of that community feel. I think it becomes watered down a little bit. Yeah. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I don't know, for those people that are just starting, if they're getting that sense, you see, I still have it because I know the people that I care for, and they're either still here or I can connect with them, and say, hey, yeah, I know you're retired, but what do you think about this? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I wonder if the new staff is, is getting that feeling. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I don't think they're getting, you know, for a vice president to really interview a person in my position and to have that conversation that Dean Cox had with me as I was being hired is a lot. I'm not quite sure that happens now. You know, where you get introduced to the Marist, the sort of the foundation.

Jan Stivers ([00:53:52](#)):

The ethos.

Angel Arriaga ([00:53:53](#)):

Yeah.

Jan Stivers ([00:53:55](#)):

What advice would you have for someone who is applying to Marist today, especially someone from an underrepresented group?

Angel Arriaga ([00:54:03](#)):

Angel Arriaga

What advice? I think, know what you're getting into, right? Realize that you are in a predominantly white space. Marist is at a certain inflection point and things are shifting, but it may take time. And to be kind with yourself, I think this type of work is exhausting. If you're still being asked to represent your community, even in conference rooms and in spaces, you may be the only black or brown person in your department, and you, so you'll have these feelings. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Jan Stivers ([00:54:48](#)):

And you'll be the only one that the black and brown students come to.

Angel Arriaga ([00:54:52](#)):

Exactly.

Jan Stivers ([00:54:53](#)):

So that's exhausting too.

Angel Arriaga ([00:54:55](#)):

That is.

Gus Nolan ([00:54:56](#)):

Well, do you feel that people would apply to come here as a stepping stone? In other words, I'll get to Marist for two years, you know? And then, like you had in your youth, you know, <laugh>, you know, that they may not be so interested in a lifelong commitment they'll put up for whatever they have to put up with, you know? But, if they were at Marist for two or three years, they can't be that bad. And maybe somebody else will take them, you know, a more honorable place, you know?

Jan Stivers ([00:55:32](#)):

Well, more prestigious.

Gus Nolan ([00:55:34](#)):

Well, yeah.

Angel Arriaga ([00:55:36](#)):

I think there's been a generational shift in general. I think this, these students, the Gen Z's, the millennials tend to, don't tend to stick around too long. So I think their perspective is that, yes, I'm going to come here for a year or two, get some experience, and then they'll hop around. And I think I've seen that at least in, well, I've seen that with faculty too, <laugh>. So I would, I've just seen that happen a lot. I think even so, like my generation, even at that point, I was like, if I like a job and I like what I'm doing, I'm going to stick around. Right? Yeah. There's a sense of security. And so after those two years, I'm like, I, like, I love Marist, I have things to contribute. I can build, you know, programs and do things, and always find the support, right? Yeah. So, you know, I lasted five years and then I was like, okay, I'm going to HEOP, but I'll be there for like four or five years. But then we proposed the Center for Multicultural Affairs and expanded our mission. So I'm like, well, then I'll stay another 10 years. And this is how I ended up, you know, staying so long because I always saw something, you know, else to do.

Gus Nolan ([00:56:52](#)):

Angel Arriaga

And interesting. You know? Are you in any way communicated to other similar positions at Siena, or Villanova, St. Michaels, and I mean, are there other colleges going through what we're going through?

Angel Arriaga (00:57:09):

Yeah, so HEOP has a professional organization. So we often have conversations with people,

Gus Nolan (00:57:18):

Didn't we lose this here though? Do we still have HEOP?

Angel Arriaga (00:57:21):

Oh, no. HEOP we still have. Upward Bound is what lost its funding. Yes. No, but HEOP is here. It's been 53 years, hopefully another. But we do have, and many of the staff, like the staff in what originally was our HEOP department did evolve into, you know, multicultural affairs or diversity programs. So we have conversations with our, you know, our colleagues at Bard, or Mount St. Mary or, Cornell.

Gus Nolan (00:57:54):

Even Cornell?

Angel Arriaga (00:57:55):

Yeah, Cornell Columbia. I mean, you know, NYU, they all have HEOP programs. And the challenges are a lot of, so schools, like, for example, some of my conversations with my Bard colleagues, that you would think students may sometimes have a different experience because some of the resources that we don't have are there. They're still having those issues and, and they're still having those same experiences. I think programmatically some of the other schools have done a better job of creating multiple touch points for those students. So it isn't just one person Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But that they have people in, you know, in financial aid and in the registrar and within the departments and that they can, that really can sort of, that they can go to. So I think creating these multiple touchpoints so that it's not all on one department, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And creating those, that mission, and that campus culture where we, everyone believes it's their job, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> not just one department.

Gus Nolan (00:59:08):

It takes a little initiative though, for a student to be able to step forward to financial aid, well, not even financial aid, but to, all these departments say, you know, and say, I have this problem, registration, right? I want to get into another class. You know, I can't come to eight o'clock in the morning because I have the job in the cafeteria. You know, this, there are these conflicts that work out that so many people like you to kind of encourage them and say, this is the first to see. Because they're in the same office. There might be three different people, right. But if you get to A rather than to B yeah. You are better off, you know?

Angel Arriaga (00:59:49):

Yeah. It's just, it's not just telling the student, oh, go see them, but having that compassion, that realization that the student is, for them, campus structures may be pretty hostile and they may just feel like, you know, they're embarrassed or they're ashamed or there's a lot of feelings.

Angel Arriaga

Jan Stivers ([01:00:13](#)):

I think sometimes they don't even know that we make exceptions to the rules all the time. So they don't ask for the exception because they think the rule is the rule without realizing that more privileged kids expect you to make exceptions for them.

Gus Nolan ([01:00:29](#)):

Yeah. Have students changed much themselves in 20 years?

Angel Arriaga ([01:00:37](#)):

I, yes. <laugh>

Gus Nolan ([01:00:39](#)):

Yeah, okay.

Angel Arriaga ([01:00:40](#)):

I think, you know, it was, when I started here, it was the turn of the century. I think a lot of the students, I was closer to them in age, you know, I was only four year, five years older than, you know, our seniors. So I think, you know, I was very different than the millennials and the Gen Z's. It, computers were just becoming a thing, you know? I had just gotten my first cell phone because I could afford it, instead of a pager. There, there was that shift into technology happened while I was here, right? Yeah. 2005, the iPhone comes out and, and your world changes. But think the students in the early two thousands, adapted to change, very differently than, these students. I think they were more social and because they had, they, you know, they had to talk, and, their sense of commitment I think was different. And I notice that in the students that I bring now, you know, during those years, my first years in HEOP, we barely lost students, right? Because they were, they had grit and resilience that I think some of our students now, and especially after the pandemic, have lost that sense of asking for help or being able to connect with other people. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> other students. But yeah. I mean, so much has happened since the turn of the millennium that I can't, I just, I can't even, but there it is a very different student.

Gus Nolan ([01:02:28](#)):

So much just happened. Let me tell you this little, little story. <laugh>. I came here to the college in '46. That's, it was just a brother's college. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> Brother Paul Ambrose was the president. Okay. He had a little office in Graystone. Okay. He had a typewriter manual, not an electric. He typed with two fingers. Okay. He had no secretary. He had no legal advice. He had carbon paper in the thing for multiple things.

Jan Stivers ([01:03:00](#)):

Do you know what carbon paper is Angel <laugh>?

Gus Nolan ([01:03:02](#)):

So you really had,

Angel Arriaga ([01:03:04](#)):

I do <laugh>

Angel Arriaga

Gus Nolan ([01:03:04](#)):

Yeah. Right. Well, he typed the application for Marist to become a four year independent college.

Angel Arriaga ([01:03:12](#)):

Right on that,

Gus Nolan ([01:03:13](#)):

And that, you know, and I was here when the word came through the mail. That's how it came. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you've been accepted to give your four year degree. And he went bananas, <laugh>, you know, that day we finally had it, you know, and so, that, and I think of, I have a student, well, Roger Norton wasn't really a student, but the guy <laugh>

Angel Arriaga ([01:03:37](#)):

<laugh> Yeah not anymore.

Gus Nolan ([01:03:40](#)):

He's a racquetball player for free. You know, I mean, that's when I was here and young and so on. And then he was just beginning, you know? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And now he talks about the system 634, where the 635. Yeah. His daughter is in Japan, and they talk together, they zoom together or whatever the new method is, by which they talk and watch TV or watch films together. You know, the world has changed. Yes. Every day it changes so much. It changes, you know, so much. So that, you know, I'm surprised how you let me talk so much because I don't know any of this, you know, really, it's just, yeah. I had experience that life is that kind of thing. Maybe Jan has a few following words.

Jan Stivers ([01:04:26](#)):

I had a, I've written down a question that you had asked earlier. I want to make sure we give you a chance to answer it.

Angel Arriaga ([01:04:33](#)):

Okay.

Jan Stivers ([01:04:33](#)):

And that was, if you were invited to speak to the board, what would you tell them you really want to make sure is preserved at Marist? And what would you tell them you'd like to see change?

Angel Arriaga ([01:04:47](#)):

Hmm.

Gus Nolan ([01:04:47](#)):

Tell your truth, <laugh>.

Angel Arriaga ([01:04:49](#)):

Yeah. No, if I was able to talk to the board, I think, certainly the core values of the Marist Brothers and the, that sort of the community service and the excellence, education, all of those things that we always

Angel Arriaga

talk about. I think that's sort of the bedrock. That's our, that's what we maintain. Yeah. What I would like to see change, whew. It's big. I think giving, I mean, I think they're already working on sort of diversifying the, sort of the top tier. And I think that needs to continue, right? For the longest time there were, there was very, it was just very white and male, right. <laugh>, that's what the board was. So bringing people, truly bringing people to the table and giving them a voice in the process and the governance, I think that's really, really important. And then allowing those people as it sort of trickles down to the faculty and the administrators, allowing the space to innovate and, not to be so sometimes we get stuck in our older ways. Right? And it's hard for us, especially those of us who've been here for a long time to shift and change. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> it. And you have this conflicting, so you, and then you get all this new staff who just wants to change everything right away. Right. So we may have this like, wait a minute, <laugh> feeling. So, but I think we can, we need to be able to learn how to sort of navigate that somewhere in the middle, right? There's traditions and,

Gus Nolan ([01:07:01](#)):

Change <Laugh>.

Angel Arriaga ([01:07:01](#)):

Change is hard for people, right?

Gus Nolan ([01:07:02](#)):

Yeah.

Jan Stivers ([01:07:03](#)):

And, I think what often the younger people or the group pushing change, what they don't understand is that things were being done that way because they worked.

Angel Arriaga ([01:07:14](#)):

Right.

Jan Stivers ([01:07:14](#)):

So maybe the situation has changed and they don't work as well anymore. But to simply dismiss them as ineffective seems very disrespectful. Because the reason we did them was that they were working for us. We invested in them for that reason. Yeah. I wish you could have the ear of the board. I really do.

Angel Arriaga ([01:07:38](#)):

<laugh> I you know, and I think we're creating, I mean, I just, I noticed for the longest time everything that was L-G-B-T-Q-I or dealt with, you know, Hispanic students, people were coming to me. And now that I'm sharing a little bit of that, there are other people within the institution that are sort of doing that. And I'm happy to see that.

Jan Stivers ([01:08:06](#)):

That's nice.

Angel Arriaga ([01:08:07](#)):

Angel Arriaga

Yeah. Because for the longest time, it just felt, especially when it came to L-G-B-T-Q-I issues, you know, it just felt like it was me.

Jan Stivers ([01:08:17](#)):

Because you were more candid about it.

Angel Arriaga ([01:08:18](#)):

<laugh>. I was. Yeah.

Jan Stivers ([01:08:20](#)):

Yeah. So there were others who could do it, but they hadn't stepped up.

Angel Arriaga ([01:08:23](#)):

Right.

Jan Stivers ([01:08:24](#)):

Because it didn't feel safe to.

Angel Arriaga ([01:08:25](#)):

Right, it didn't. Right? But now with the Ally network you know, it has created this conversation and these spaces, you know, we do the social hours for faculty and staff and the allies go. And just seeing that, the visibility of it Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> creates a more welcoming space for students, and you know, we've seen policy begin to catch up to those changes because, you know, while we're rooted in all of these values, we also have to realize that the student has changed. Right. And that it is important to allow the, sometimes the sort of Catholic roots, the brothers. You hear those words and automatically, for those of us that are from otherness, you feel like this is not the space. It's too conservative for me. They are going to hate me. They're going to because I came in here with that sense, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I think if we just allow students to be their genuine self and tell their own stories, you know, I think that's what creates a welcoming space. And it's, you know, yeah. You know, it's a Catholic rooted institution, it has all those beginnings.

Gus Nolan ([01:09:48](#)):

Even that is changing. The Catholic I the homosexuality is not a crime. Right. You know, people are born with certain, you know, everything is so, developing, you know, and, I think you can't be frigid, you know? No. And holding onto Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> those traditions that, you know. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Well, good. None be on Friday or only mass on Sunday hour if they,

Jan Stivers ([01:10:17](#)):

There are the timeless values that kept you here.

Angel Arriaga ([01:10:21](#)):

Right.

Jan Stivers ([01:10:21](#)):

Angel Arriaga

And that we think are worth passing on

Gus Nolan ([01:10:24](#)):

Yeah.

Jan Stivers ([01:10:24](#)):

Sense of community, excellence and education, service to others.

Angel Arriaga ([01:10:27](#)):

Right.

Gus Nolan ([01:10:29](#)):

Hit the nail so much, the Marist tradition, you know, you kept saying that, you know, why, were you a Marist brother or something?

Angel Arriaga ([01:10:37](#)):

<laugh> No, but I

Jan Stivers ([01:10:39](#)):

He's in the closet, <laugh> Marist brother.

Angel Arriaga ([01:10:41](#)):

Yeah. I mean, you know, it's, for me, as a Catholic person, right. I became more, I had a lot of hesitation with the Catholic church before I got here. And, but then, you know, I realized that it wasn't so, I could relate to people in the Catholic church and that compassion, that sense of that's what comes through, right. It's the feeling behind and not the sort of policy and the history. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, although that exists Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right. And that carries a lot of weight.

Jan Stivers ([01:11:17](#)):

It does, yeah.

Angel Arriaga ([01:11:18](#)):

For some people.

Gus Nolan ([01:11:22](#)):

Well, someone has to say thank you very much for coming, and I will, I'll start saying it now.

Angel Arriaga ([01:11:25](#)):

Oh, thank you and I hope I, I'm sorry I was nervous!

Jan Stivers ([01:11:29](#)):

Is there anything else, like, as you were thinking about this, anything you wanted to say?

Angel Arriaga ([01:11:37](#)):

Angel Arriaga

Yeah, no, I think, I just hope I just rambled on and sort of like <laugh>,

Jan Stivers ([01:11:44](#)):

You covered everything that I wanted to hear about. And in such a disarming way, thank you.

Gus Nolan ([01:11:51](#)):

And you made a unique contribution to what we think we are doing. You know, which is actually preserving, Marist College in the voice of the people who are here. It's not somebody writing history who read about it. This is the voice being recorded that will be there.

Angel Arriaga ([01:12:14](#)):

And it would,

Gus Nolan ([01:12:14](#)):

And then transcribed into a, you know, I don't know if it's a, how they'll put this down on paper. I don't know what they do there.

Jan Stivers ([01:12:20](#)):

But at least it's unfiltered. You know, it's a direct,

Gus Nolan ([01:12:24](#)):

The recording is unfiltered. Yeah.

Angel Arriaga ([01:12:26](#)):

Right. And yeah. So I appreciate for, you know, I'm sure my perspective is different than some people and including that is, thank you.

Jan Stivers ([01:12:34](#)):

Is really important. Yeah. Thank you.