**Xueli Wang**Learn about the challenges and opportunities of improving equitable outcomes for STEM transfer students.

**AS** [00:00:00] For today's podcast. It's a pleasure to have Dr. Xueli Wang [pronounced similar to "Shoo-lee Wong"]. Xueli is the Barbara and Glenn Thompson Endowed Professor of Educational Leadership and a professor of higher education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She teaches graduate courses on community colleges, mixed methods, research and education and assessment in higher education. Dr. Wang's research focuses on community colleges and STEM education, aiming to identify practices, structures and policies towards transformative change for equitable student outcomes. In collaboration with a number of community and technical colleges, Dr. Wang's NSF funded research projects have investigated two year colleges, students learning transfer pathways and success, how faculty development translates into teaching practices that subsequently shaped students experiences and outcomes, as well as how technical community colleges engage in change and innovation during times of crises. A notable example of Dr. Wang's work is her book, On My Own: The Challenge and Promise of Building Equitable STEM Transfer Pathways, published in 2020 by Harvard Education Press. This book received the 2021 publication of the Year Award from the American Educational Research Association's Postsecondary Education Division. Among her numerous other awards, Dr. Wang was honored with a Transfer Champion Catalyst Award by the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students in 2021. The Barbara Townsend Lecture Award by the Association for the Study of Higher Education in 2020 and the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education's Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in 2020. It's such a pleasure to have you as part of the Student Success Podcast. Welcome, Xueli.

**Xueli** [00:01:47] Nice to be here. Well, thank you for having me.

**AS** [00:01:50] So I'd like to start the podcast with my guests, asking them if they wouldn't mind sharing something beyond their work, perhaps a hobby or talent or a story they wouldn't mind sharing.

**Xueli** [00:02:01] Absolutely. And I have to preface by saying beyond my work, you know, work really consumes almost all of my time. And I enjoy my work as a hugely introverted and introspective writer and thinker. So that actually is my top hobby, writing and researching. But your question really reminded me of a very meaningful story or experience. Doesn't necessarily mean my special talent per se, but I up until a year ago, I was an avid yoga and barre practicing person. And then when COVID just hit, you know, everything got shut down. And then as someone who was once even recruited by the yoga instructors at my studio and saying, you should start teaching barre and yoga. And I thought maybe, you know, it's a good idea to start a virtual training session, especially in support of and in community with a lot of my international students, many of them women, and experiencing just multi-layered challenges during COVID. So I started doing remote training sessions with them and developed a teaching voice and a bunch of creative poses for yoga and barre. So we supported each other throughout the summer, and that was some of the most difficult but also meaningful experiences and shared by all of us. So I'm forever grateful for that experience and helping to carry the spirit of that experience on and forward.

**AS** [00:03:40] You know, I tried barre. It is hard.

**Xueli** [00:03:45] It is very deceptively hard, right? Small weights, small muscles.

**AS** [00:03:52] That is teaching, right? What you're doing with yoga and barre, since you've been doing a lot of that especially remotely not in person, do you find that experience, that teaching experience, some of what you learn about teaching that way translates into your your classroom teaching at the university or vice versa.

**Xueli** [00:04:16] Yeah, vice versa. I like how you concluded that with vice versa, because remote teaching actually predated my remote teaching when it comes to garden yoga. And that was the spring semester when everything was disrupted by COVID. And I will say, you know, these two teaching experiences definitely reinforced each other in terms of lending, even greater grace, flexibility in terms of how we think about the pace and style for learners, but also for teachers in this collaborative experience. So definitely learning to be much less fast paced. I used to be a super fast paced teacher. I am no longer that anymore. Just learning from all these experiences within these collaborative teaching and learning spaces.

**AS** [00:05:16] So much of learning is about unlearning, huh?

**Xueli** [00:05:20] Absolutely. Unlearning has been my new theme word these days and years, actually, leading up to the day and forward.

**AS** [00:05:29] Oh, well, thank you for sharing that. That's beautiful. That, you know, it's so important to keep healthy, right? Self-care physically, when you help your body physically, you also help your mind. And thank you for doing that for, you know, you bring joy and fitness and health to other people. So not only do you make an impact, positive impact in the classroom, but then you do this as well. So that's beautiful. Thank you for sharing that. Yeah. I want to switch gears because On My Own, your book is. Phenomenal. It is so inspiring. And I want to focus on your book, on on STEM and equity. And my first question is, can you take us through the process of writing it. Also your why. What led you to even begin this study? And a little bit about the process because you work with a lot of community college students, it was like 1600 or something. So I love to hear that story.

**Xueli** [00:06:36] Yeah, absolutely. And I will start with the why first hand, because that was the beginning, but not the end of everything. So as a researcher, I would say my passion for community colleges just, you know, regarding every element of community colleges, had been a long term passion ever since my time as a graduate student at Ohio State University. And it was really motivated by not just sort of my scholarly interest, but personal encounters with some of the most amazing community college students that I worked with through one of our student affairs assessment projects, you know, trying to understand how transfer students fare and how transfer students engaged at the university relative to their direct entry peers. And so I was on that project and leading the process of survey design and focus group interviews. And so it's through those capacities I got to just know on a first person basis, transfer students. And I was initially very much just inspired by the fact that they were so savvy, they were so successful and engaged. And then kind of coinciding with that, I my sort of scholarly engagement with the literature, you know, opened my eyes to everything the American community college embodies, you know, democracy, mobility and opportunity and all of that. So that was just like a beautiful coincidence. And I wasn't realizing the stark gap between transfer aspirations and transfer attainment until much later. So that actually further deepened my commitment to studying community colleges and transfer. So, you know, that was really the beginning and the rest was history. And then as soon as I landed this faculty position at University of Wisconsin-Madison and I started to be further exposed to the STEM context, not just because of where I was situated, but also because of the national policy narratives around, you know, STEM workforce development, where community colleges were included, but often portrayed mainly at the sort of the so-called subpar baccalaureate level, as if transfer wasn't like a huge part of their mission. So I think I was further perplexed. You know, as a researcher, what bothered me motivated me to conduct research. And so I did a bunch of quantitative analysis looking at transfer pathways course taking patterns, contributing to transfer pathways and so on. But then part of I think the biggest piece of my heart was not being satisfied simply because I am missing a sorely, sort of the authentic student voices and experiences in their own ways of storytelling that were that was not reflected in, you know, national quantitative databases. And so that kind of motivated me to launch this pretty large scale longitudinal study, which is mixed methods, meaning that I, of course, you know, I'm following students on the ground, their stories and experiences. But also I collected survey data to document, you know, via imperfect numbers. But then, you know, that gives us some larger patterns in generalizability. So, in a nutshell, the 1600 some students you mentioned, they all participated in the survey component of this research. But obviously I was not able to interview all of them. So I interviewed a total of over 50 students over multiple years. And to further understand their experiences on the ground, that would deeply contextualize the the survey findings. I hope that made sense.

**AS** [00:10:53] Oh, absolutely.

**Xueli** [00:10:54] Yeah. And then you also asked, should I go on and talk about the process of writing the book and making sense of the data in the process?

**AS** [00:11:03] Yeah. And as you do that, then, also share the findings?

**Xueli** [00:11:07] Yes, absolutely. And I think, this was another probably good, surprising revelation, engaging in the writing of the book. But also in terms of the findings I ultimately ended up with, after almost four years of data collection, survey data and interviews and such. And, I was like making deep sense of everything, using the book as a way to harness all of these findings. And so the surprise I talked about meant that coming into this research, I was hoping to use all the richness of all kinds of data to shine a very clear light on it. This is what a clear transfer pathway in STEM looks like. But actually my findings were much more complex and nuanced in the sense that, to put it very simplistically, there's no clear pathway. I came here wanting to find one and I found none, and meaning that essentially the current system as it is, is a very convoluted process where students persisted through a so many structural barriers because of their own agency and brilliance and resilience. But at the end of the day, it is so much hurdle for them to overcome. And then eventually the system serves as a mechanism that perpetuates preexisting inequities, meaning mostly, students ending up transferring upward are more likely to come from relatively more advantaged social, cultural and economic backgrounds. And whereas, students from low income families, students who are first generation students of color are more likely to follow less linear pathways and or in some cases, they ended up not transferring or having left post-secondary education just altogether. So I think, that the key findings trying to make sense of the findings, knowing, this is clearly way more complex than my younger version of myself assumed. But I think another part of the rewarding challenge in terms of navigating the process of harnessing the findings, but also bringing some clarity and insight to the findings, is this a good challenge in reward in terms of how do we highlight these trends for aspiring students, for the talents and success stories they actually are, while at the same time naming the structural barriers they had to endure in order to just charge forward. So I think, that's why, whenever I got colleagues and readers asking me about the meaning of On My Own, I would just portrayed this by saying, we have multiple facets to On My Own. So there is a genetic internal facet to it. That is, we have to recognize this student population is a huge talent pool for the entire higher education and On My Own exemplifies their agency and their talent. But then there is this external facet to On My Own that is illustrating this imposed upon structural barriers that let these students to be almost using their own agency and brilliance as the sole lifeline in order to progress in their educational journeys.

**AS** [00:15:01] On My Own. As I reflect on that. On My Own. In a way, it's a sad title because it gives the impression that there isn't support, community. Sense of belonging. An it's so adequate for you to come up with that title On My Own. So because they are on their own and to a large extent because of structural barriers, could you unpack what you have seen are some examples of those structural barriers?

**Xueli** [00:15:37] Yeah, that's a great question. And also, I want to probably nuance that interpretation a little bit. I, I can see, for example, the sense of maybe isolation or the sadness implied by this title. At the same time, I want a complicat the nuance that by saying there was community, but it was not the kind of community where we were hoping for institutions to be able to really show up and be present and be collaborating with students and to make this a very systemic part of students experience as students, they themselves, they were able to foster a sense of purpose in community, and they never really lose their ties to their own community. And on the very contrary, it is their communities and their family outside of the institutions that continue to propel them. And so I think that's why, I just wanted to offer a little nuance to that. But in terms of the structural barriers, I described some examples in the context of transfer in particular. First, it is a very pervasive issue in higher ed, but particularly for this group of students. Is that just the utter lack of financial support across almost all levels of financial aid policy making. Thinking about transfer and not, regularly, at least, there are some, transfer support scholarships. I'm not denying that. But just in terms of the general financial aid policy making, transfer and transfer students are not part of the picture. And so what this transpires in terms of student experiences is that sometimes a student might have just the perfect GPA and everything, for them to transfer. But then they are facing the realities of not having enough financial resources to move on with their baccalaureate. And then they're are forced to make decisions between school and work because, oftentimes these are students from low income, first generation backgrounds, women of color, who are deeply committed to supporting their family members. And so one of the students I highlighted in my book, Kanda, a Native American Women, she was everything, and she just had to defer transfers. She was following what I refer to as the deferred trajectory because she had to defer transfer because of lack of financial support in order to find a job immediately to support herself and her family. So I think this is a very glaring structural barrier facing transfer. And another couple of structural barriers immediately came to the picture, including the lack of articulated courses that would ultimately transfer into majors, STEM or not. So there is a lot of articulation on paper. For example, we hear the notion of guaranteed transfer programs. Some of my students in the study, they were enrolled in the so-called guaranteed transfer program. But oftentimes this does not equate every credit actually counts toward students ultimate baccalaureate graduation. A lot of times this means that there because there is this scarcity in terms of major to major transfer and credit, major credit, to major credit transfer on both levels, and then students who would take a lot of paper transferable courses, but they don't count toward their major, hence not graduation. So the students who did end up transferring, they faced, the number one issue, a structural barrier and issue they experienced was having excessive amount of credits that don't count for their baccalaureate graduation. And also, oftentimes, this resulted in some of the transferring students not able to transfer into their first choice major. And they ended up, in their second choice, the major. And all of this was very counter to their initial understanding when they signed up for this guaranteed transfer to a program or degree. And another thing is just this, I think this is really including both structural and experiential elements, this next point I was going to make: it is the kind of barrier where there are transferable courses offered at the community college level and they do transfer into a four year major. So these courses render not just credit value but also the psychological symbolic value to students, meaning that, okay, I took this course and this boosts my transfer efficacy, this will help my transfer. But then there were so few of those courses that were offered as frequently as I would hope for meaning that that one transferable. You know I'll use chemistry as an example. This is another student highlighted in the book, Seamus [pronouced "Shame-us"], and she identifies as a multiracial black woman. And so she wanted to transfer. Actually, she was a swirling student and she didn't find the initial fit with the four years. So she attended the community college, but hoping to bring her grades up and then transfer back to the four year. And so she wanted to take this chemistry class that was the only transferable chemistry class, and that was offered only once a year. And so because of her other life obligations and such, she couldn't make this work. And she missed out on this transferable chemistry class, this one given year, and that kind of set things back another year for for her. And then, you know, just as the story continues, when I was asked questions around why did students had to wait about a year? So I had to go back to this, sort of motivation or symbolic meaning of what certain what the notion of transferability actually could do and could mean for students. And so for them to not be able to access opportunities that are either real or render symbolic meaning of their upward mobility via transfer. And that is a problem. So just thinking about that lack of accessibility and of transferable options, you can translate this even beyond credit or course teaching context. So that is a problem that is not only taking tangible opportunities away, but also it feels defeating for the students who really, really are intent when it comes to transfer. So these are some of the structural barriers experienced by the students I worked with.

**AS** [00:23:02] And hence why I been a big proponent, because I was seen when you actually implement it, not talk about it or plan it, but when you actually implement Guided Pathways with equity intentionality, it really does address many of those structural barriers. I was wondering because students spend most of their time in college, especially at a community college, because it would be a commuter, it's not residential, in the classroom, have you found in all your research barriers that faculty create for students. And can you explain some of those?

**Xueli** [00:23:46] Yeah, I really appreciate this question, too. It's a very reflective question because I also am a faculty member, even though I don't teach in a community college. I realize how my well-intended practices can actually be counterproductive to my intended goal. So I preface my answer to your question by acknowledging that, and so that I don't just point fingers because I think the short answer to your question is yes. Faculty, colleagues, myself included, unintentionally create barriers for students. So in the context of my book, well, gosh, where do I start? I will I'll start by saying how we as faculty have long taken for granted what is supposed to be the best way to learn to engage and to support students. And so here I'll bring Katie's story to our conversation. Katie is another feature student in my book, and she was a single mom of two, and she openly shared her mental health and ability concerns. And she had ADHD and which was very prominent in her journey when she started in chemistry. So when I interviewed Katie, and over the years and she was always just so gracious about the support her instructors in college gave had given her. But her story was very telling because she was very much struggling with the noise in the lab as part of her chemistry class. And so she shared that concern during our conversation. And I asked her, did you--and this was her first semester when I first interviewed her--and I said, "Did you ask your instructor for support?" And Katie described her instructor as very kind and accommodating. And then when I poke further, however, I realized the conversation went like this: katie went to her instructor to talk about wanting to start sharing. I am struggling. I'm struggling. And the instructor immediately kindly dismissed her concern by just saying, I think you were doing fine. You're doing perfectly fine. I don't see you struggling at all, so you're just doing fine. And so Katie actually never was able to fully articulate her concerns. She actually mustered a lot of courage as a first round student and as a woman, she had the tendency to, as she shared with me, like not wanting to seek help. She always thought I should just figure out problems on my own. And when she couldn't take the noise anymore, she must had a lot of courage to approach her instructor. But the instructor, I trust he was just fully 100% committed to her success, but where he was coming from is basically encouraging. Encouraging. And you're fine, just words of encouragement. And so Katie left that conversation in her own words feeling, then I must be fine and I guess I would just have to figure out the solution on my own. So she did try all kinds of solutions, like putting earplugs in her ear to deal with the noise. But still, nothing really worked. And she actually, that chemistry class was the beginning of the end of her college journey. And so she attempted other programs and options in the next few years when I interview her, so I continue to follow her. But then eventually she flunked out of that chemistry class. And that was then was sort of the end of her college journey as a STEM transfer aspiring student. So looking back, I think, it's just these very little moments that can make or break a student's college journey. I don't think necessarily, the solution would be that simple. But had the instructor paused and hear her out more and thinking about accommodation and other ways to support her, Katie might have had, I don't know for sure, but she might have had a very different, a story that I would I would have been able to tell.

**AS** [00:28:27] Wow, I've done my fair share of focus groups. It's just really interesting to me. I, oh, because I still and I love working with faculty. I do a lot of work with faculty. I do a lot of inquiry and action work where we dig deep into a student need and then we, we go through a process of now that the data is telling us this, what, what is one or two things that we we can change. Just one or two, because as educators we tend to try to do too many things and we end up going an inch deep and a mile wide. Right. And guess what? If it doesn't work, that's okay. Let's go back and try a modification. And I hear this a lot from students because they'll, like you did, they'll say, oh, my instructors, fine. They were kind. But when you ask more and you probe, you begin to learn. Oh, no. Yes, they're kind and they do care for your success. But wow, we could have problem solved this had we listened more. Here's the other thing. And then there are faculty who are still so old school. The,"they better come to me prepared" because if they're not, that's not my problem. Faculty that still, and I can't blame them, I'm not trying to point fingers. Usually what I point fingers at is the practice. So they inherited grading policies that were done to them. Antiquated grading. They don't know any better. So they do the same thing that was done to them, to their students, not knowing that, hey, you know, you don't have to have a high stakes test early on in the semester. Let students make some mistakes.

**Xueli** [00:30:25] Yeah.

**AS** [00:30:26] And let it be a learning process. Let's not be so focused on points, but on the actual learning. But some faculty just can't shift from what I like to call from external attributions to internal attributions. Right. So anything about the student is external. It's not my fault. But when we start to have more internal attributions, we then take on more of this continuous improvement mindset about our craft and in the process we can be more equitable. Do you have another example like that of structural barrier in the classroom?

**Xueli** [00:31:05] Yeah, I do, because and this kind of probably goes off of a little bit about this long held assumptions about not just teaching, but also what success can look like. And I think a lot of the problems faculty colleagues unintentionally caused were actually rooted in a very simplistic take on what success means, who succeeds and or what that looks like. And another telling example is, going back to Kanda, who did have the perfect GPA, but in her first semester she was IT and so she was struggling a little bit in and to a large extent to do, again, being that one of the very few women and the only woman of color in her classrooms and her classroom was full of white men, students, and they were good peers to her, throughout the interview. So these things are very nuanced. They coexist at the same time. But when she was initially struggling a little bit, the instructor said something that was meant to encourage them, but to her that was very harmful. And the instructor said only talented people succeed in IT, and so this sounds, in my past, understanding this, this sounds about right, but it is just so wrong. A) you know, the instructor was not acknowledging, as you just said, productive struggling was a good thing. You know, and it's not just about talent or what is innate is about the practice and continuously honing your craft, as you put it. And but B), when the instructor was not really recognizing the gender and racial dynamic in the classrooms, and when Kanda was initially struggling for all the good reasons, and then she heard this and she looked around, okay, these are the people who are talented enough to succeed. And I don't look anything like them. Right. So for a woman of color who was experiencing some setback academically and then to hear, talented people who seem to be not struggling at all, they don't look like me. And so you can just imagine the detriments, a comment like this that is very contrary to a growth mindset and to efforts and learning and practice. And, what that can mean for students. So I'm not trying to say we should be as faculty members, we should be just watching every thing we say from here on, but rather maybe arriving from a very vulnerable and honest place and saying, you know, my intentions were always good, but my language and my practices may not always completely live up to the full promise. And so, we just all need to acknowledge there's a lot of unlearning, co-learning and re-learning to do together, and language is flawed, and practices can be improved. So I think even building that kind of sense of learning and unlearning together collaboratively and reflectively would have a kind of ease the mindset kind of experience. But then she was amazing. So she continued to thrive despite all of this. And so I think that is really another STEM. This is very STEM specific too because of the white male dominance in a lot of STEM subject matter. And then you see these kinds of messaging that is not really gender, culture, racial, ethnic, affirming, at least in this case.

**AS** [00:34:51] And I think on top of that--faculty--it's a very lonely profession. It's quite isolating. Now, yes, you meet with colleagues. You go to committee meetings or department meetings. There was a joke I heard the other day. If you want to make sure that I answer your email, make sure to email me while I'm at the department meeting.

**Xueli** [00:35:19] That sounds about right.

**AS** [00:35:21] And so then you go to what's typically, not always, well, they're not always productive meetings. Right. And the participatory governance structure isn't always very, oh they say, we need to be collegial, but it isn't always collegial. My point is, is that we don't really create settings for faculty to come together to learn, to try things, to support one another. And I think a lot of that is in American higher higher education, still kind of part of that tradition of rugged individualism. And I did a lot of studies of my days back when I was earning my doctorate, I learned a lot. For example, in Japan, they just focus. Educators go to the extent of actually watching each other teach and they focus on the practice, but they make sure they have that setting for them to actually collaborate. So the good news is that we have some of that going on. I actually do a lot of coaching around that area. Well, if we can just get a group of the coalition of the willing for faculty to come together and take them through a process to be vulnerable. And it's okay to be vulnerable if we really care about improving our craft and improving student success and equity. But I think because it is such a lonely profession and not all PD is effective, right. The Brown Bag Lunch P.D., I mean, some of them are good, but then you go back to your old ways. So I hope we build more and more communities of practice, if you will, for faculty to come together and just--everything that you just said is beautiful--to learn to unlearn. And it's okay and it's okay to make mistakes. And even in my trainings and all that I do, I still have go "Oh!" I leave every training, I go "That I teach that well?" And just asking yourself that gives you a little bit of grace because you know that you could be doing better. So tell us about the recommendations that you have in your book.

**Xueli** [00:37:30] Yeah, there is a bunch of those. And I think capitalizing on the thread you're already kind of guiding us toward in terms of faculty, community based learning, these PDs, a community of practice. I concluded in my book in my final chapter with a set of reflective prompts, all in the spirit of unlearning, reflection and undoing. Rather than do this, do that, but rather like maybe you can eliminate, we can eliminate, a lot of the things in our mindsets, in our practices, and our approaches that actually were a lot of work for us, but that doesn't really contribute to student learning and success. So I think a lot of, I will I won't go into all of the reflective prompts, but basically trying to see the less seen spots in our existing practices and see them now with a new light as potential barriers. And for example, when we use student evaluation data, how we we tend to just ignore the sole concern and without necessarily further contextualize that and say not necessarily who gave me that, that review, but rather, these positive experiences who tend to have easy access to those positive experiences and who's the majority in the classroom, thinking in STEM, women of color, women sometimes, so women or students of color. And then how are these overwhelming positive experiences as reported, apply to them or not? Right. So I think this is just one of the many examples in my research and reflected prompts about seeing what was not seen before and then removing barriers that cost our time but actually, you know, hurting students odds for success. And so I'll to say I really feel a lot of the work when it concerns faculty starts with taking things off our busy plate that is counterproductive. So instead of like doing this more and doing that more, almost like we have to continue to do less, less harm with less rather than, doing more with less. So that's at that it that is sort of more of a guiding idea. I also feel, one of the things I wanted to balance and nuance about is the fault is not on individual advisors or faculty. So the responsibility, especially as an institution, doesn't really rest with individual faculty and advising colleagues. But whether it's really up to the institution to rethink what productive faculty development, what productive and meaningful faculty work looks like. And this is where I want to ground this next recommendation from my current ongoing research project on changing innovation that happens in community and technical colleges in response to COVID. So I interviewed by now over 60 faculty advisors, institutional leaders across Wisconsin and beyond, just about, new and different and innovative practices. So one of the things I learned from faculty colleagues is this: there's got to be a new institutional vision when it comes to how to incentivize and use faculty time with this culture or maybe a newly built culture of trust rather than a lack of trust. So one of the examples shared by my participant is that, yes, we would love to unlearn a lot of things and to be equitable in teaching and supporting our students. But then we were consumed with these kinds of in-service days where we were just sitting there the whole day, wasting our time listening to our institutional leaders talking about their vision and strategic plans. We would rather use that time to problem solve together and say, Hey, I encounter these and these issues on my students and I want to learn how to do better or to have difficult conversations with my students of color, for instance. What are your approaches? So what are some of the good resources? So I think it's really up to I want to put the onus on the institution to reimagine faculty development and faculty time again with the spirit of trusting faculty colleagues in doing their work rather than, you know, if we don't catch them, there here for the in-service days, the entire time, and they're going to be just go fishing or golfing. So I just wanted to add the institutional responsibility at the center of as a change lever.

**AS** [00:42:41] Absolutely. And you know. What's really important. I've been seeing this a lot lately. Is that for those faculty that want that space, they want their time to be better spent. It's important that those that are equity minded that they push back when those settings are created. But people use that to try to, I call them "institutional conservatives," and they use those settings to ensure that we maintain the status quo. So, they can easily hijack these settings to fight for remediation.

**Xueli** [00:43:25] Yeah.

**AS** [00:43:26] Which we know from research is, it's an abomination to do that to students. And students of color are the ones who suffer the most. The "they need to come to me prepared crowd" is what I'm talking about. Right. So but unfortunately, I found and one time is sometimes one time too many is when people don't say anything. There's politics involved and they don't push back. So what I say is make sure you go to these meetings with your coalition of the willing and so you don't feel you're the only one pushing back. Be ready to have a group of you to push back. Because here's the other challenge that we have in higher ed. I've mentioned this in many of my other podcasts. It's my three month rule. There's only really three months in a year to get stuff done, priority work at an institution. I use another S-word. And that is because and this is one of the reasons why, for example, Guided Pathways is very difficult to implement because we need faculty. Summer, forget about it. Right. September, ah, we're too busy. It's the start of the semester. October is okay. So that's one month. November, December, are you crazy? It's the holidays. It's finals. We're lucky to squeeze in one or two meetings. January, we're off. February is so busy. We're back at the beginning of the semester. March might be okay, maybe part of April because then the spring break. May, are you crazy? Right. So we have this unproductive committee structure. We have these every year. I always say, can you just change commencement? Can you just change this? Can we. You can send the vision and everything in an email or mention it briefly, but give people space to problem solve, to connect, to create community. As to your point, trust because you can also not only is the three months really you got to move at the pace of trust. Yeah.

**Xueli** [00:45:37] Absolutely.

**AS** [00:45:38] Yeah. There's just so much action when you think about higher ed. There's actually so much that. So many barriers for faculty and those that want to do the right thing just because of the way we're, you know, we're built. I just, I want to thank you so much for your research, for your passion. You know, I have a question. Do you happen to have any tools or resources maybe in the form of Google Docs or something related to your book that we can share? Or maybe they're in development because I think that would be great for colleges to have tools and resources created from your from book, from your recommendations.

**Xueli** [00:46:19] Yeah, absolutely. I think I have a couple of resources, not necessarily all related to my book, but that may be helpful very synergistically. I will share with you a set of reflective prompts. You know, I think my publisher will be fine with that and put that in the book. Google Doc. And those questions really resonate with my practitioner colleagues who use them as a way to just get this conversation started so I can share that. But also, I want to highly recommend Practice Guide that is publicly available, supported by the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students in collaboration with a number of colleagues. We created a practice guide for faculty, but primarily in support of transfer students, basically faculty colleagues working with transfer students. What are some of the facts and data. What are some tangible practices within our control in terms of checking our assumptions but also lending tangible supports for transfer students. So I share a link of that. And then I also wrote a two page document, super, super concise, documenting key structural barriers to transfer students navigate but also overcome. And so that that would be another resource coming to mind. But also finally, I will be probably there already. They might have already been included, but I will be remiss by not highlighting how transformative Bension equity-mindednes. You know, the both the notion and all the resources, housed in USC. How helpful equity mindedness and the tools have been. And also Eboni Zamani-Gallaher at UIUC. She directs the Office of Community College Research OCCRL Research and Leadership, Office of Community College Research and Leadership. And they also developed a number of very community college centered equity guides. And so those are all open resources and I can share all of those with you via a follow up email.

**AS** [00:48:44] Yes, I'll I'll have them in the show notes. Thank you. So, as we wind down here, I have a challenge for you.

**Xueli** [00:48:50] Okay.

**AS** [00:48:51] So back to barre. I want you to use barre. First, you might need to explain a little bit to the audience what barre is, and I want you to use that as a metaphor for how institutions can improve, especially in the area of STEM to make it more equitable. So.

**Xueli** [00:49:13] Yeah, I think you have the answer to that, Al, right. So let's compare notes. And so first in my lay expert language, barre, the notion of barre, as a fitness practice is that we challenge our muscles and build our muscles by using super small weights: one pound, £2, £3, five at most. But the point is not about the small is rather the repetitive practice, like using small ways to hone our various muscles. And then over time we build stronger muscles without looking super bulky, and then we are stronger because of our stronger muscles. So, and barre also is associated with this very subtle nuance, the little almost invisible body movements. And so as a metaphor, thinking about how colleges can support faculty and and other is supporting students and toward more equitable experiences and outcomes. It is about a centering all efforts around, what is essential in the student experience is like all our little core pieces of our muscles that are not necessarily noticeable, but there are core to our functioning. So we must center our efforts around what matters the most across holistic student experiences, so that is number one, that we need to follow barre, doing that. But then B, it is about incremental but persistent efforts, institutional efforts, efforts on the part of faculty and advising colleagues, persistent and meaning that we have to follow through. It's not just one big massive event and then be done with it. No, like barre, small incremental challenge and efforts like the small weights and then constantly nourishing, attending to and challenging, every aspect of student learning, teaching and support around their core experiences. And so over time, students continue to be their authentic self, but they become stronger and more successful and just looking forward to their next barre session in their education and career and life context.

**AS** [00:51:53] That's beautiful, Xueli. Beautiful. Thank you so much for participating in the Student Success Podcast.

**Xueli** [00:52:00] It's been my joy. Thank you, Al.