

Antoinette Martsoukos Interview

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SPEAKERS

Interviewer: Bedell Terry

Interviewee: Antoinette Martsoukos

Bedell Terry

This is Bedell Terry, and It is June 29, 2021 at 3pm. I'm with Toni Martsoukos on the online zoom platform, we're about to begin our oral history interview for the University of Baltimore Stories, the 100th Anniversary Oral [History] Project is to celebrate the university's centennial by preserving the memory of those influenced by the University of Baltimore over the years, we will be creating a digital archive and exhibit making those recordings available online through the Internet Archives [website]. So, thank you for joining me today, Toni.

Antoinette Martsoukos

It's my pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Bedell Terry

The basic format we're going to use is that I'll ask a few questions about yourself as well as about your experience at the university. We'll have between 60 and 90 minutes to have a conversation about both of those things. So, to get started, where were you born and where did you grow up?

Antoinette Martsoukos

I was born in Baltimore, Maryland. And I grew up in the community that is between Locust Point and Federal Hill, which used to just fondly be called South Baltimore, but now has gotten very posh and unrecognizable to me. Because when I grew up there, it was very much a working-class group of people. We had Bethlehem Steel on Key Highway; we had a lot of different factory jobs. And over the past, I think, probably 30 years if not a little more, the neighborhood has changed dramatically with gentrification and just very beyond my means [Laughing] from when I grew up there.

Bedell Terry

Is your family still there?

Antoinette Martsoukos

No, we all moved out of the neighborhood. Yeah.

Bedell Terry

So, about your family, what do you know about your family ancestry?

Antoinette Martsoukos

One of the reasons that I grew up where I did was because my maternal grandparents had a restaurant that was in Locust Point, pretty much next to the school I attended from K through eighth grade, Francis Scott Key. And so, the business was in the family on my maternal grandfather's side. His father came from Greece, and opened up the business with his brothers, and then my grandfather inherited it. So, that was a very interesting beginning to my story, just being in that like, historic part of town, and everybody knew my grandparents, and everybody knew my parents. So, it was a really good childhood. I was very fortunate.

Bedell Terry

Now in that area, at that time, how was it like growing up there? Wasn't it a tight community?

Antoinette Martsoukos

It wasn't. Yeah, sorry to interrupt you. Go ahead with your question.

Bedell Terry

Did you, you know, have a lot of friends in the neighborhood where they would just all get out and be in the air.

Antoinette Martsoukos

Yes, what was great was that the families knew each other. What I really didn't like, and even from a really early age bothered me was that it was not an integrated community at all. It was very white. And like I said, even from an early age that just struck a chord with me that something was very wrong with the neighborhood in that way. And its historical elements of the neighborhood, you know, it just was from what I understood, very racist. So that part I didn't like and as I grew older and asked more questions about why everybody looked the same, you know, for the most part in our neighborhood. And I went to school there from kindergarten through eighth grade. It did pose a lot of questions for me why we all were so similar.

Bedell Terry

So, you went to Francis Scott key?

Antoinette Martsoukos

Yes.

Bedell Terry

Kindergarten through eighth grade?

Antoinette Martsoukos

I did. Yes.

Bedell Terry

And it was a grammar school, not a junior high.?

Antoinette Martsoukos

It was from K through five in elementary school. And then you could go on to middle school there from six to eight. So, I did that as well from sixth grade to eighth grade.

Bedell Terry

And where did you go to high school?

Antoinette Martsoukos

That's when finally, my world expanded. I was admitted to Western High School, which is still to this day, the oldest all female public high school in the country. And so, it was wonderful that it was able to maintain that Status over time. And like I said, luckily, in that realm, I was really able to, you know, see a diverse group of people and Polytechnic [all-male high school] is next to Western. So, you know, we had the integrated school meeting boys and girls in that way integrated. Polly was [there] at that time when I attended. So, you had the very distinct Girls High School, and then you had the high school next door where we shared a quad. And so, everybody was all together really on one campus, even though we didn't mix the two as much until we were in the quad during lunchtime.

Bedell Terry

Do you think having the all-girls school helped with the educational part as well as the social part?

Antoinette Martsoukos

I do. You know, that wasn't the best time in my life, personally, High School, but I did like that aspect of it, that it was all female, my parents had split up, right as I started high school. So those four years were kind of bumpy for me personally. But from an education perspective, I did love the teachers there, I did love how they really wanted us as women to see our full potential. And I think that's something that continues as a tradition there today. And it's sort of like shorthand, when you meet someone who went to Western, we call each other dogs, because that was the school mascot. So, you know, we meet each other at different parts of the community, we recognize, you know, there's like a real respect there, that they were a fellow Dove.

Bedell Terry

Now geographically, that's far away from where you grew up?

Antoinette Martsoukos

Yes. So it is, if you're not familiar, it's off of Falls Road and Cold Spring. So, like, right, adjacent to Hamden. And so, I would travel outside of the neighborhood every day to go to high school. So that was great. To get out of the little isolated, you know, enclave that I grew up in.

Bedell Terry

Now, you finished Western, and then did you come directly to the University of Baltimore? or What was your path? What was your path to the University of Baltimore?

Antoinette Martsoukos

That's a great question. So, when I finished high school, I was rather young, because I did skip a grade when I was in grade school. So, when I finished high school, I was just turning 16. So, I took a year off. And, you know, just worked a little while before deciding what my next step was going to be. And it was so convenient. I couldn't resist. And you know, the cost was really good to just go to Baltimore City Community College, because at the time, they had a wonderful downtown campus. And the wonderful thing too, was that they had a yellow school bus, right outside of the Baltimore downtown campus, that would take you to the Liberty campus. So, I got to go to classes on both campuses without having to worry about transportation. And it was about, you know, when we were young, we always walked to the Harbor, that was just like an easy, fun outing to do. So, there were a lot of times I would just walk, you know, to campus. And then if I needed to take classes at the Liberty campus, which was the case a lot, because I did my associates there.

So, I was there for two years, I could just, you know, jump on the school bus to take me to the other campus. So, when I was there, I just did General Studies, because I still wasn't really clear about, you know, where I wanted to go with the profession or with my education. And I had followed what we called, try[ing] to remember the name of it. I think college prep was the course schedule that I followed in high school, you had to choose whether you're going to be more of a business student or college prep, and I had selected college prep. So that gave me, you know, a liberal arts background while I was in high school.

And so, I didn't want to commit to just one thing, once I got to college, and I was able, you know, beyond the general education classes, I was able to take pretty much what I wanted for just the general and I had no idea when I was there. And I had met with an advisor when I was coming to the end of my time, you know, to finish my degree at Baltimore City Community College and she said, "You know, you're eligible for this full scholarship for transfer students to University of Baltimore". And I was like, really shocked. Like what? And she said, "Yeah, what did you think you wanted to study there" and I had looked through, you know, all of their offerings and pictures Jurisprudence because I had always had an interest in philosophy law. Sort of the heart of what I really like to study for liberal arts. And I chose that.

And then strangely, so it's just a fact that came to light not too long ago when my father passed, and you know, you go through your parents' belongings, and things like that. In the local paper, there was a local paper in our neighborhood in South Baltimore that was called the Enterprise. And they printed the paper, like twice a week. And they would put, you know, just announcements and things like that in there. They actually published that I got this full scholarship to the University of Baltimore, in this little, tiny neighborhood paper. And I had found it, I would not have remembered that at all, but I found it in my dad's stuff recently. So that was really nice that he had cut it out and safety. [Laughing] That was really sweet. That was really nice.

Bedell Terry

So, you entered the University of Baltimore as a junior.

Antoinette Martsoukos

I did, yep.

Bedell Terry

And Jurisprudence. And you know that was your major coming in?

Antoinette Martsoukos

Yes, yep. Finally, I made a commitment to a major. So, I was really happy with it. You know, because my general education courses were pretty much fulfilled at the lower level at B, Triple C, coming to UB, I could get really to the nuts and bolts of taking the philosophy classes and history classes that were part of the major. And I love them. I love the instructors. I love that the classes were small. I remember when I was still in high school, we had, you know, colleges typically come to campus to recruit us. And so, they would do assemblies, and College Park had done this big assembly for us. And they had slides and they were showing us their campus and how big it was, and it was like a city unto itself. And that scared the dickens out of school that big that I knew even still in high school that I didn't want to be in that environment.

So, I was really happy with how the classes were really, you know, small 20, some were even less than that, you know, back in my time, which was about 96, I think when I started as a junior at UB, you know, they would let classes run sometimes with 10 people. [Laughing]. You know, these days, that would never happen. But that made it even more, you know, intimate where the professor really knew you, you really know the professor. And it just made me so happy to have classes like that. And instructors like that, who really knew you. And you could rely on them, you know, when you graduate to write letters [of] recommendation, because they really know you. And then they remember you, which is great.

Bedell Terry

So, one of the big benefits of the University of Baltimore,

Antoinette Martsoukos

Absolutely

Bedell Terry

Is the intimacy that you get in there. Did you see any major changes during your two years there?

Antoinette Martsoukos

Let me think about that. I haven't thought about this for so long, Bedell. I think there was talk and I could be wrong. I'm sure you'll do your research on this because I can't remember. But I think there was talk at that time of where the Student Center is now. There used to be a historical building called the Odorite building. And I think there was talk at that time, maybe of UB acquiring that property. And I think

it raised a lot of red flags that people like Dr. Nix [Laughing] before would have, you know, looked at it from a historical perspective, just you know, this, this is a preservation issue or something like that. But I think that was just starting to come to the surface of maybe UB adding some buildings, because when I was on campus during that time, we had so few buildings, the Law School was still the building that was next to where your professors are now, I forget the name of it. It's escaping me at the moment where the police academy is now [H. Mebane Turner Learning Commons Building]. And then the College of Liberal Arts Building, that's where I spent most of my time as a student, most of my classes were there. And we didn't really have as many buildings as we have now, that's for sure. [Laughing]

Bedell Terry

And the ethical studies part, what did that entail? You know, the legal part I know, but the ethical studies, I've taken ethics, but not ethical studies. [Laughing]

Antoinette Martsoukos

So yeah, so that was part of the master's degree. And what happened for me with a master's degree was, I took a moment, which was a whole semester when I finished school, and I worked. And I wasn't sure because I thought I wanted to go to Law School. But I still wasn't 100% sure, now that I was done [with] undergrad, I was back to like, not wanting to make a commitment again. And so, I didn't do well on the LSAT, I really bombed it. And I really should have just prepped for it like you should and taken it again. But I didn't. And I saw through the Bursaries Office, when I went to pick up my undergraduate degree, if I remember correctly, a brochure because we printed stuff back [Laughing] 98.

And so, they had like all of these, you know, brochures about different programs in the office, which was really smart when you think about it. So, I grabbed one, and I saw that it said, legal and ethical studies, and I saw professors who taught in my Jurisprudence, undergrad program, were teaching in that program, because they had the professors who taught in the program listed on the brochure, and the topics really interests me. I looked at things like Law and Morality, I thought, oh, how cool, you know, this is going to take what I already learned from Jurisprudence, and sort of fuse it with adding the ethical elements to looking at the law, which is so important. And it really sold me. [Laughing]. So, I applied, I was admitted, and I did the program in two years. So, it was a great experience.

Bedell Terry

Now, were you working at the same time, or?

Antoinette Martsoukos

I was. I was still in a job that doesn't exist anymore. [Laughing] But it's where I learned a lot of people's skills. I managed a local video store that was on South Charles Street across from Cross Street Market. And so, it was a sister and brother, they own like three different locations locally, and the sister owned that Federal Hill location. And her brother owned a couple other locations. But I worked like 40 plus hours a week, I managed the store. And so, I was still doing that when I went to school. I was really lucky because the owner of the video store, she knew, you know, what my school schedule came first. And so, you know, we would just build my work schedule every semester based on my school schedule. So that was really good.

Bedell Terry

So, your professional experience started with the Maryland State Bar Association.

Antoinette Martsoukos

It did not. It started, when I finished school, I left my job at the video store. And I went to Greece with my dad. He spent a couple of weeks [there] because he was running a restaurant at the time. So, we couldn't commit to the whole summer like I did. But he spent the first couple of weeks with me, you know, visiting our family over there. So, I spent the summer there. Again, like taking a moment like what am I going to do when I'm done with my summer fun. And then I came back. And I just can't believe how I was so fortunate. Because it was such a weird job to find just finishing school. It was a toy company [in] Hunt Valley. It was called Curiosity Kits and they made educational toys for kids. And so, it was one of the first places I interviewed and the job description, which is really, you know, strange. It caught my eye. Because you were doing a bunch of different things you were doing. You were looking over contracts, you were doing the tariffs for like, parts from overseas, that you know, you had to make sure everything was legal that was coming in. And you worked with the artists who created the kit.

So, I did that for I want to say this is like two to three years from like 2000, maybe to 2003 somewhere in that range. That was really my first like, you know, full time professional job when I finished school. And right around 911 when the economy went really bad, things started to go south for the company, and they just started laying people off. And I remember we were like one of the last departments. It was just like the two of us left, who did the ordering and the sourcing and everything. I just mentioned the contracts and things like that, and we were like two of the last people before the company completely shut down. We were still there. So again, I had to regroup and think, what am I going to do? And because I had bills to pay, like everyone, the only job that [I] liked hired me on the spot so I could continue to pay my bills. It's like such a sad part of my work history that I don't like to talk about. I worked for I don't know if you remember MBNA [Bank] it was in Hunt Valley as well.

Bedell Terry

Yeah.

Antoinette Martsoukos

And their interview process was crazy. It was so tough, you had to go from manager to manager and they would interview you. And I did that all-in-one day. And they hired me on the spot. I was like, oh, God, when I got myself into, and I probably had a week, I think they make you do like three weeks of training. And it's intense. They take your fingerprints, you know, because you're looking at credit card accounts, things like that. And their training was just like, very out of my wheelhouse, like very corporate, it's something I never really, you know, cuz I worked for the toy company that was not even close to like corporate stuffiness, you know, it was like artists and, you know, fun things to catch your eye, but not a bank. So, I was dreading the whole thing.

And I was like, it's for paycheck, it's for paycheck, I've never had to do this. So, I'm just going to suck it up and pay my bills. And I probably think it was the first week of training. And I got a call from the State Bar. And they called to have me come [for an] interview. And I interviewed with the executive director, and I think he called me the next day, and I quit, [Laughing]. [Dog Barking] Sorry, I'm gonna mute for a

second. They're very barky, right now, I hope you don't hear too much of it. That's why I wear the headset.

Bedell Terry

So, I have my dog in my room with me that way she won't bark.

Antoinette Martsoukos

I have one where we've got another space. [Dog Barking] So if you want to just pause, we can until they lie down. [Dog Barking]. It may have been the mailman.

Bedell Terry

The dreaded man in gray.

Antoinette Martsoukos

[Laughing] I think we're good. We'll give it a shot now. Sorry. [Laughing]

Bedell Terry

So, you're at the Maryland State Bar Association. Working with the lawyers of working with, what was your typical day there?

Antoinette Martsoukos

It was, I learned so much behind the scenes about really what a professional nonprofit association does. And the folks there were really, I know, it sounds corny, and cliché, but it really was like a family of folks who work there. It was so comfortable, everybody genuinely liked each other. But really, the nuts and bolts of the job were to serve these volunteer lawyers, because you don't have to be part of the Maryland State Bar Association. It's voluntary. So, these judges and attorneys voluntarily pay dues, in essence, to really learn from fellow attorneys, they have all these different sections and committees.

So, like family law, you name any kind of law, criminal law, they have a whole huge section of young lawyers who can get together and socialize and also learn things from each other. And then they do things like teaching folks how to, they call it put out a shingle, you know, if they do want to go on their own, to practice. So, what fascinated me was that their membership was so high, you know, because it was voluntary. And I saw how important even when you're in a profession, like the law, how important networking is, and that's really, you know, why these attorneys and judges volunteered their time to do continuing education, to do different conferences on specific legal topics. And so, when I worked for the executive director, you know, I had a bunch of different functions. It was pretty administrative for the most part, but I liked scouting out locations for different conferences, and then having to do the contracts for those.

I liked that we honored members who were retiring. So, we did like an honorary membership for them so they wouldn't have to pay once they retired, but they could still be involved. I really liked meeting people who clearly cared about their profession, because they would, you know, they would become president and treasurer. And those roles when they were elected to those roles took up a lot of their time. And so, we're talking like judges who would run for president of the State Bar Association and things like that. And it took people so long to climb up the ranks that I think it was five years that I was

there. I saw so many different people, you know, really give it their all so that they knew what they were doing by the time they became president. So that part I thought was really cool, too.

Bedell Terry

So, you were there for five years? How'd you find out about working at UB?

Antoinette Martsoukos

This was something [Laughing]

Bedell Terry

I mean, it's been great for me that you're working here. [Laughing] [At the time of this interview, Bedell Terry was a student at University of Baltimore]

Antoinette Martsoukos

Hearing myself talk about this, because of course, I can't remember ever doing something like this before, is kind of funny, because it really gives things context how, like non-committal, I was about certain things before, but UB was very targeted for me, I was constantly looking at their homepage for jobs, because it was the best experience that I had as a student. Don't get me wrong, I like B, triple C [Baltimore City Community College], it served its purpose. But I didn't make the connections there that I made at UB as a student, you know, the friends I made, are still my friends, you know, the friends I made in college, and in grad school, the professors I still, you know, stayed in contact with some of the professors I've had as an undergrad and a grad student.

And so just to put it, you know, really bluntly, I was so bored. As much as I enjoyed the job, being there for five years taught me so many different aspects, because during that time, I had filled in for different people who, you know, needed support. And so, I learned, you know, a bunch of different aspects of that job, and I just thought, I need something else that will fulfill me a little bit more. And I just thought about how nice it would be, to be part of the university that I felt gave so much to me that I would be able to give back to it.

And so, I just constantly looked through their job listings for like a good six months, I would say, and applied when they, you know, seem to be a good fit for me if I had the qualifications for them. The one that came up that I thought, okay, and I hope I at least get a phone call. If I don't get interviewed, I might at least get a phone call, like, why do you want this job or something of this sort. But I had applied as basically it was a title that was made up so that the pay scale was a little higher. It was academic program specialists, and it was basically an administrative role. And that didn't deter me because it was with the division, you know, professors that I had studied with during my time at UB, and a couple of them had left.

But for the most part, I knew a good amount of them. And so, I interviewed with Professor Carney, an academic advisor who was there at the time, and Professor Mulcahey who I don't think you met. I'm pretty sure he was retired by the time you got to UB. But he was wonderful. He passed last year, but he was a real mentor to me when I was a student in both programs, Jurisprudence and Legal and Ethical Studies. So, he was the only person you know, I was surprised he was the only person on the search

committee, but actually knew which I thought was good because he knew me as a student. But the other two people who didn't know me Dr. Carney and the academic advisor, who was just a generalist he wasn't part of the division specifically, could just look at my qualifications engage me in the interview, in a very impartial way, you know, instead of Dr. Mulcahey being the one to say, [Laughing] you know, I had her as a student, you know, give her the job. It wasn't like that. I felt like, you know, you had two other people there, part of the committee who said she has the qualifications, even though she hasn't worked in higher ed before. She clearly has done administrative roles.

And so, I secured the job, so I was thrilled. And then I was probably in it for a year and realized that I really wanted to be an advisor because I had worked with some of the academic advisors and I just saw it as something I inherently enjoy talking to students, because I was at a desk that was sort of in the middle. It was a different office than what you're used to know, where the professors are located, it was in the building, where I am now for advising. And it was just like this open space. And so, students would just come in and talk to me every day. So, you know, I basically worked with faculty, but I was thrilled to be able to work with the students. And so, I think I applied maybe twice, because the first time, they were very specific about how many years you had in higher ed, and I didn't have the time yet, in higher ed. So, the second time that I applied, I was hired as an advisor. So that was great.

And it's just been such a rewarding experience. I love, you know, talking to students about what their plans are, what their goals are, you know, hearing what they think about their classes and their next steps, it just gives me so much joy. And I just, I love doing it. And I'm happy to report that I was just promoted yesterday. [Laughing] So I got a new title. I'm now the managing academic advisor for the College of Arts and Sciences, so I'm really happy to share that. So, it's been a progression. And that was something I shared with them for the interview for that position, I just said, pretty much an overview of what I just told you and how I feel ready for this current position. And that, you know, I really have, you've started from one specific place and have continued, you know, to grow professionally, I'm just seeing the different things that I've seen, you know, first I was with one division, I was just advising History and Jurisprudence, and then roles change. And I started advising more students and in different majors. So, it kind of broadened my experience, which I really appreciate. And here I am now.

Bedell Terry

You know, I'm a stubborn man. And even if they made you a dean, you'd still have to be my adviser. [Laughing] I'd be thrilled. And you know,

Antoinette Martsoukos

I'd be thrilled to keep you on. [Laughing]

Bedell Terry

And you've been at UB [for] how long now?

Antoinette Martsoukos

It's, I can't even believe it myself. It's been 14 years. This is my 14 years.

Bedell Terry

How's it changed? I mean; besides the physical plan, you've been through different presidents, different administrations, you've been through different names. It was UB. Now, It's the University of Baltimore [Ubal], which frankly, I prefer.

Antoinette Martsoukos

I do too. I like it. I'm happy about this particular change. I think it adds a little certain something to it. Um, but yeah, I think beyond like you say just the changes in administration, presidents, etc. I will say, when I was a student, it was [a] completely different kind of administration.

The president at that time was H. Mebane Turner, and he was the president of UB for [a] very long time. And he was everywhere on campus as a student, you couldn't miss him. He was like, quintessential. And he still is because he's still, you know, takes part in things from time to time for UB, but he quintessential Southern, white Southern Gentleman, you know, bow tie southern drawl, he would be everywhere on campus. You wouldn't see him as a student all the time. And that's another thing. You know, that really struck me as a student that the administration cared that way, you know, he would walk up to students and talk to them, and it made you feel like, okay, this is a place that really isn't in it, you know, to collect our tuition and say next, you know, they really do invest in what the students think, what the student experience is, how the students come away, thinking about the institution, and that all showed just from his leadership, you could feel that and you could certainly see it and experience it as a student in the classroom. I know I did, you know, just enjoying the experiences that I had in my classes for both undergrad and grad.

So that part was very distinct from when I came back. In my interview for the first position that I took at UB Dr. Mulcahey, who was the professor that I had known as a student who was part of the committee at the end of the interview, he's a huge jokester. And so, at the end of the interview, he said, "Toni, did you know that we have freshmen starting with us in the fall?", because I had started during, I interviewed in, I think, November, December, and then I started in January of that year, so spring semester. And so, the freshmen were going to start, you know, in that fall semester, and I just laughed at him, like, you know, uproariously, I said, "You're joking. We're not gonna have freshmen". [Laughing] He said, "No, I'm serious", [Laughing] like his face completely changed, you know, he said, "No, I'm really serious, we are going to have freshmen starting here in the fall". So that really threw me for a loop, because I thought that was one of the huge perks of coming to UB, from my experience was that you knew that students and I experienced it, having people that were actually a cohort with me, you know, who you would go from class to class with, if they were part of your major, and you just knew that they will continue to be in classes with you, and you could really establish, you know, a lasting kinship with them, count on them. Like, if you're missing a day, they'll give you their notes, that kind of thing. So, thinking of UB, from a different perspective really threw me for a loop coming in as an employee, I was like, what, how are we going to do that? We've never done [it]. [Laughing] And so that was a huge adjustment coming in, at least I had a few months to prepare, [Laughing] before they really got to campus.

But I remember in that first year, it wasn't loved, you could tell that faculty did not love the idea of that change, either. And it wasn't because they didn't want to expressly teach freshmen, it's just that, I think

maybe it was just my guess that they probably thought the same thing that I was thinking like, that's what we're good at, we're good at be, you know, a transfer institution that caters to people who are coming in with any number of credits, you know, to finish their degree. So, I don't think that that has shifted, this is just my perception of worse, but I don't think that there has been a huge shift in everyone being on board with us being a four year institution, like I still think there are members of the staff and faculty, and maybe even administration, that thing that we would be better as an upper division institution and a graduate school again. So that part was a huge change when I came on.

Bedell Terry

Are there freshmen now?

Antoinette Martsoukos

Yes. Isn't it interesting that you've been at UB for several years now? And you didn't even know for sure if they were?

Bedell Terry

I didn't know at all that they were.

Antoinette Martsoukos

There are. There are freshmen. Yep.

Bedell Terry

How do you say the difference between a freshman and not somebody like me, but somebody who's coming back after a time? Is there? I know my experience has been different at a small university than it was at a major university. [Do] other people find the same thing when they come to the University of Baltimore?

Antoinette Martsoukos

We'll see, I think that was and you can tell me if I'm really answering the question, because I feel like I might be going off on a tangent. So, stop me if I do. But I think that probably the concern is that when students are coming to an institution at 18 years old, they're probably looking for a different experience. Remember when I talked about College Park coming to my high school, and I was one of those people who probably was not the majority in the group who thought that is not for me. You know, I think maybe that's the thought process that is this inexperienced then 18-year-old might want in that we don't have sports. We don't have housing that's specific to UB.

We don't have all of the things we don't even have a dining hall. You know, we have all of Charles Street, we don't have a dining hall. So, I think that's part of it. It is the experience that I know, the first year, if you did, since you didn't know we had freshmen, they attracted a lot of students that first academic year, because it was free, their first full year of undergrad was free. And they still have in place, I don't know how much longer they'll keep it going, that if a student who starts with us as a freshman will finish for free, if they finish in four years, meaning, you know, those eight academic semesters that they have to do in a way that you know, a lot of folks, look, it's the reality, sometimes you have taken a semester off, I did it between, you know, high school, I am going to college, I took a

year off between going from undergrad to grad, I took a semester off, I think that's just realistic, sometimes even just as an undergrad, you have to take a semester off because life happens. But yeah, as an advisor, I think, you know, the weird thing is, we separate them that way, too, is that I have a colleague who works in the same advising suite as I do.

And he only he sees freshmen, as the majority of his advising group, he does see just, you know, a portion of the students in who have "declared a major", but the way we have conceived with the whole freshmen concept that at UB, is that they don't even declare a major at first, but they are pre major. So, like, let's say you came in, and you didn't know what you wanted to do. So, you would think you might do history. So, you would be prehistory, you wouldn't be a history major, starting as a freshman, you would be prehistory. And that's how we do it. So, I don't even advise first year students, I don't see them until they can declare a major, meaning that they've had their math, their science, you know, that first year of Gen Ed's under their belt. So, I haven't even been able to really experience these students to give you a perspective of like, you know, what that would be like to see specifically just freshmen.

Bedell Terry

I love the experience in the 60s, where, how far away from home, can I get into a college?

Antoinette Martsoukos

Exactly. [Laughing] Exactly. That's right. Yep.

Bedell Terry

So, you've seen a lot of changes in how the work institution organizes itself, you know, moving forward in the 100th Year [Anniversary] where do you think we're going?

Antoinette Martsoukos

I hope we continue to see the value in undergraduate education because, you know, there's been so much talk, and there always is, in order to keep things going in the right direction, and to really be relevant to the audience that we need to serve. But there's been some talk of us primarily being a graduate, you know, institution instead of undergraduate. And I have had experience, I do advise graduate students in the program that I did, but they changed their name in the past few years now, just Legal Studies. So, I'm glad that I was able to do the Legal and Ethical together, but they're just Legal Studies now.

And so I think that's a main concern, I have just being able to serve that population, I wouldn't be able to meet students like you, and students who were like me, you know, who came from community college, and were able to take advantage of this wonderful scholarship, the one that I, you know, was able to secure is the same one, that students can still get, you know, to come to UB on a full ride, which is amazing. So, I just that part, I hope that we don't go in that direction explicitly. Because I think it's really important to serve the community, there's so many people, I have so many great stories of people, you know, who don't fit the traditional student profile, you know, I have had at least a couple of handfuls of people, anywhere from their 40s to their 70s, who come and say, I promised my parents before they passed that I would finish my degree, you know, and that is just that stays with you.

It's just so meaningful, that you're able to work with students who have like such a special commitment, you know, to do this, not just for themselves, but as something that they think will, you know, really be able to fulfill that for somebody else, you know, that they promised it to. So, I just think it would be really shame[full]. In so many ways, if we stopped catering to undergraduates, I just hope that doesn't happen.

Bedell Terry

There are those of us that said, I've gotten everybody else through college. Now it's my turn to finish.

Antoinette Martsoukos

I've had a handful, at least a couple of handfuls of students saying that as well, absolutely, that's the truth. Or one of my favorite things that I hear would be a single mother. And I've heard this a number of times, you know, one particular mom lost her husband, so she, you know, was a single mom, by surprise. And so, you know, she had spent so much time looking after her kids. And it's like, she said, I have to do this for myself, you know, and that's, again, I can't think of anything more rewarding when I see those students finish. And they're just, you know, it's not the same as somebody who started a teen and finished at 22 and had no bumps in the road. [Laughing] And UB doesn't have a ton of students that fit that profile. And that's why I find that my work has kept me so engaged all these years is that, you know, seeing students achieve those goals. It's such a good feeling. It's just. It's so nice to see.

Bedell Terry

Are you still serving on a Culture and Diversity Committee?

Antoinette Martsoukos

I am, I was on it several years ago. And then it's kind of inexplicably went away. [Laughing] The committee just dissolved mysteriously. And then it was re-configured, I guess. And for the Staff Senate, they have you nominate yourself or nominate someone. And I nominated myself, the first time I was on it, one of my colleagues nominated me, which was very nice, and I was happy to step up to the plate. But the second time, I really wanted to do the work again, to be on the committee. So, I nominated myself to get back on the committee.

Bedell Terry

And what's the committee actually do? Because I know the University of Baltimore is fairly diverse. [Laughing] Although Dr. Davis reminds me it's one of it could be ranked as a historically black college

Antoinette Martsoukos

Yeah, definitely. But you know, that wasn't even acknowledged by administrators until very recently. And I'm sorry, you know, that it wasn't because I think that's something that we should celebrate. And that's one of the many reasons that I want to be a part of the Culture and Diversity Committee, the first iteration, when I was on it, one of the most important things that we had to fight to do was to get out a survey to see where we were with students and faculty and staff, what they thought about how we, you know, how we serve a diverse community, what are we doing right, what are we doing wrong. It was called a Climate Survey. And so, it wasn't long after that survey was done.

And we got the results back that the committee was mysteriously, you know, not together anymore. [Laughing]. And so now, coming back to the committee, we're looking at, we have new leadership, which is great. And we're looking at different aspects that we were looking at the first time around, which would be, you know, what can we do better, and I think we have a long way to go. I think it's great that we can be classified as a historically black institution based on our population. But I still think we have a long way to go.

I think we're lacking in faculty diversity. And I think we can do a lot better. I think we've made some strides. I don't know, specifically, you know, with data, I would say, anecdotally, I think we've made some strides with staff being more diverse, but I don't know for sure. But I think we have a long way to go for faculty, it really concerns me, you know, for instance, that we do have freshmen and we do have, you know, young people who could benefit from seeing a male of you know, a black male professor and I we do not, in my opinion, have nearly enough representation in our faculty in that regard. So, that could definitely change my perception.

Bedell Terry

And you've participated in Ethics Bowls as a judge?

Antoinette Martsoukos

Yes, I have. So, one of the things that has been like a complete joy and an unexpected one, and that was to start teaching the Ethical Issues class about a decade ago, it's not more now, maybe a little more than a decade. And so, one of my mentors, Dr. Guy, who was the director of the Hoffberger Center for [Professional] Ethics, was looking for new folks to teach the course.

Because it has been one of the core requirements for students in every major for quite a long time. And so, you know, I volunteer, and he was a great mentor, and really, you know, helping me really understand how to be a teacher is the best way to put it and, and really being confident about the material that I teach, even though, you know, I studied Jurisprudence, I did the Ethical Studies degree, it was really good to work with him and get like refreshed on how to do you know how to really teach the topics well, but so, by doing that, he would wisely recruit folks to teach the class to come and be a part of these ethics bowls.

So he was doing ethics bowls at the high school level, at the community college level, and then at the four year university level, and so I've been involved for quite a long time now, being either a judge or moderator, I really like being a moderator, sort of like being the person who keeps things kind of like being the Alex Trebek [Laughing] keep things going, you don't have to judge the students and how they formulate their responses to the ethical issues. And I like doing that.

But I think I always like hearing their responses and not having to, like grade them on it. So, I've done that for quite a while. And it's, it's just been, again, you know, all of this stuff is just so rewarding to me personally, because you get to see high school students think about problems like, you know, you name the social justice issue, and really think about it and to hear high school students clearly put so much thought and effort into really dissecting hard ethical issues. It's just like, you know, I'll give up a

Saturday for that. Because that's usually when these ethics schools are like Saturdays from like, eight to 12, or eight to three, depending on who, you know, who's in the bowl, whether it's high school, we keep those short, or the community college or the four years. So, it's been great.

Bedell Terry

Those are the questions I have for me, is there anything you'd like to add? Looking back at your, well, I don't even like to say looking back at your career, because you're still there and advancing. And I'm so glad to hear you were promoted. You deserve it, for sure.

Antoinette Martsoukos

Thank you, I appreciate that. I just think it was fun to look back at everything. Like I said, I had never really given it the context. Because I, you know, you don't stop and see the patterns. [Laughing] Unless maybe you're talking to a therapist, and I have no education, you know, in that way.

Bedell Terry

[Laughing] That'll be \$150.

Antoinette Martsoukos

Thanks. I'll pay up willingly. But yeah, it did help me, thank you and help me like if they give some context, because, you know, I've been advising for so long. And maybe that's what helps me in, you know, my skills as an advisor is that I've been in that place where a student comes to my office, and, you know, they're not doing well, let's say in a major, and they're like, I don't know what I want to do. And I really feel like I can give them hope. It's like, you know, you'll be okay, you'll figure this out. You will be okay. I can say that from a place of experience. So maybe that is like the key to why I've been doing this so long. [Laughing] So thank you.

Bedell Terry

Well, we're glad you have been doing it that long. So that would be a good place to end the interview. Thank you very much. It's been a pleasure, Toni.