

NATIONAL AGENDA SPEAKER SERIES

BRIANNA WU

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and culture

Transcript of Event

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DR. HOFFMAN: Good evening everyone. Thank you for being here. This is our seventh annual National Agenda Program brought to you by UD's Center for Political Communication with support from the office of the Provost and the College of Arts and Sciences. Tonight's event is also cosponsored by the Department of Women and Gender Studies and supported by the Center for Political Communication. I'm Lindsay Hoffman. I'm the Director of the National Agenda Program in its seventh year and I'm also the Associate Director of the Center for Political Communication. This year we're delving into the many divides facing Americans in 2017. With nationally known speakers including one former Blue Hen that you might have recognized in the opening credits, also a Vice President of the United States, we're going to explore the many divides that exist in the nation now including gender, geographic, religious, cultural, partisan divides. We encourage students, staff, faculty, and community members to engage in this semester-long conversation. Coming up we'll talk with an Appalachian Southern Noir novelist, a Muslim-American journalist, a standup comedian with Cuban roots, a bi-partisan conversation with two former congressmen and Joe Biden. You can find the full schedule at udel.edu/nationalagenda. And, if you appreciate these programs please sign up for our email list to hear about more. It's out in the lobby as you leave. Also consider supporting the CBC so we can continue to provide you with such great high quality programming like tonight. Just go to cbc.udel.edu/support. Tonight's event is free and open to the public like all National Agenda events to create a space for thoughtful dialogue. So I encourage audience participation, both from the audience here in Mitchell Hall and via Twitter. We are live streaming tonight as well. Just tweet at the account @udelagenda if you want to have your

question in the discussion. But, before we get started, I'd like to remind our audience that civil and respectful dialogue is vital to the success of National Agenda. While we may seem more divided than at any time in our memories we are still bound together as Americans and as human beings. 2017 brings us into an era of incredible discord; overt racism, violence and a seeming inability to bridge our differences. But it is possible. That's what we do here with National Agenda. We demonstrate civil dialogue so that you can too bring that civility to your conversations. Our goal here is to tamp down the heat, to abate the anger, to recede from hate. Instead, we hope to inspire curiosity, create compassion, and offer real solutions for constructive communication. So, let's all be candid but also courteous of other's perspectives. And, tonight is a little more reactive. This year we are, with audience Q and A we'll be using a catch box, a microphone that you are literally going to toss back and forth to each other to ask your questions. So it'll be a little bit more lively. I'll ask you to stand when you ask your question into the microphone. We'll have two student assistants on either side of these aisles helping with that process. This year is also new for our Voices Audio Essay Contest which you might have seen in the credits. This contest examines the impact of a nation divided on University of Delaware students. Do you think that America has become more polarized as UD students? Have you ever felt marginalized? How has that experience shaped your own life and those around you? With support from UD's library, The Writing Center, and a number of other units on campus we're putting together this great audio essay project which has, as a bonus, cash prizes. So, we encourage you to enter. But let's get to tonight. Tonight our guest is the head of development at GSX, a Boston independent video game studio. Born in West Virginia, Brianna

Wu was adopted into a family of religious conservative Mississippians. She says some of her happiest memories as a child involve learning to program and modify computers that her parents bought for her. She's worked a number of jobs in the tech industry, frequently with emerging technologies, but working in the game industry she found herself frequently frustrated by what she described as the boys club mentality in games. This mentality led to the development of GSX's first game Revolution 60 which featured an all female cast of special operatives. She also co-host's the podcast Distraction which examines technology and culture. But, unfortunately, the more likely reason you have heard of Brianna Wu is when she came to national prominence when she and other women working in the tech industry were personally targeted in what became called "GamerGate" in 2014. Wu was targeted and harassed by male gamers and ultimately had to flee her home for safety. Her story has been told and fictionalized in several media outlets including an episode of Law & Order: SVU and on The Sci-Fi Channel. And now Wu is a 2018 Democratic candidate for U.S. Congress in Massachusetts, District 8. I want to point out that we are a non-partisan center and we're in no way endorsing her run as a candidate but her story, her background, her experience can add a lot to our understanding of divides facing the nation today. So there's much more to her life story than I have time to cover here. I'd like to hand it over to Brianna Wu. Please join me in giving her a great big Blue Hen welcome.

BRIANNA WU

Oh my goodness. That is a very daunting opening. I will try to live up to high quality programming. I'll see what I can do. Ah, so, let's see. Go back a slide. So, yes, my name is Brianna Wu. I am head of development and Giant Spacekat

and this year I am running for United States Congress. So, I think -- thank you. So, you know, keeping this nonpartisan, I think something, as I've been speaking to your students for most of today, I think I'm probably not the only person in this room that's looking at the shape America is in and is kind of asking themselves what can I do to fix it? How can my voice be heard? What responsibility do I have? So, what I want to do is I kind of want to take you through an abbreviated, you know, life story of what happened to me, tell you the condensed version of GamerGate, but in the wider sense look at the political forces that are kind of driving our dialogue here because I think it's really, really frightening what has happened. There we go. So, you know, one of the things that's most interesting for me is, you know, as recently as, you know, a year and a half ago I am spending my days as a software engineer. I am like wearing yoga pants and I've got the engineer's ponytail and, you know, I'm spending all of my days staring at a sheet of electrically excited plastic. You know? It's, it's very interesting to me because engineering is such a different profession than, you know, being a politician. And, you know, the truth is I've worked my entire life to develop the kind of technical skills that have allowed me to, you know, get funding and to lead an engineering team. That is a real challenge. So, like, how does somebody go from, you know, being a game developer that rides a motorcycle and has neon red hair to kind of, you know, look presentable on, you know, national television. So, I want to tell you a little bit about my story. So, you know, this is the last game that we shipped. This is Revolution 60 Special Edition. I'm very proud of this game. You know, when I was a child something really stood out to me and that was a lack of women characters. You know, when Super Mario came out I really remember loving that game and identifying with it because it was the first

time I was ever able to play as Princess Peach and I thought that was the moment that the game industry would get its act together. But sadly, you know, it was almost 25 years later until you'd be able to play as Peach again in core Mario game. And the truth is for most of the last 30 years of gaming history women, very generally speaking, have been the over sexualized damsel in distress or the reward. And it's like there are a thousand signs on the game industry that kind of tell women that you're not welcome here. So, when I started my studio I wanted to tell stories and I wanted to tell games about characters, but I wanted women to be able to be the heroes the same way that men were the heroes. So, you know, what's interesting about making a game is, you know, I look at, you know I look at these shots, and everything you see here is like a weeklong story. You know Holidays hair and the revisions we went through with the way I had to learn to alter the GPU to get the, the glow for the, you know, missive map on the, on the station down there. You know, everything here is a really big story and I'm really proud of the work that I did at my studio. But the truth is, there are things that have happened that have really forced me to take a, you know, take a leave of absence from the business I took a long time building. So, for those of you that don't know about GamerGate, you know, something I've heard from your professors over and over again is how difficult it is to explain. So I'm going to give you kind of the cliff notes of it. GamerGate is a reactionary hate group that is targeting women in the game industry. I think if you can look at games like Soulcalibur where you have Ivy, this hyper sexualized woman with, you know, breasts three times bigger than her head, you know, increasingly there have been women that have looked at that content and said you know what, maybe we could also develop some different kinds of games. GamerGate is a

very angry reaction against that kind of inclusion. They like games exactly the way that they are, you know, starring generally speaking angry white me. You know, very generally speaking, having people of color as the enemy type that you kill. Very generally speaking having, you know, women as the damsels in distress and the sexualized rewards that you get. So, you know, this is the story of how I found myself at odds with this really violent and, you know, frankly criminal, you know, backlash against women in the tech industry. So to me, GamerGate started really with feminist frequency. So, you know, back in I believe it was 2011 there's this story that came out that basically a feminist academic that wasn't really well known before that was going to be coming out with a series critiquing video games from a feminist perspective. And I remember this when this happened. IGM lost its mind. 4chan lost its mind. And you know, they were very, very angry at the thought of a feminist academic coming in and looking at video games. So, you saw this really angry reaction to it that was attack Anita; tell her she wasn't a real gamer. You even saw professionals in the game industry code games with Anita's face and then to punch her violently making her face bleed simulating violence. These aren't, you know, someone sitting in their basement. These were professionals in their field. So, you know, to me this kind of canalization of, you know, what really, just anger at anything other than the status quo. It really started with Anita. So back in 2014 I think generally speaking Zoe Quinn is credited at the start of GamerGate and as somebody that went through it I disagree with that. There is a woman, I'm not going to give her name because I don't want her to get targeted again, but in July of 2014 Giant Bomb came out and they hired another person -- this is after Jeff Gerstmann had passed -- and this is a woman, that was a very popular

writer Polygon and other sites, noticed the fact that Giant Bomb had never hired a woman, had never hired a person of color at that point. It was a site that had, you know, made the decision to only hire white straight men. And, you know, lo and behold they went through their newest search for a new employee and lo and behold they came up with another white straight man. You know, at this point they're owned by CBS so there's a really good argument about, you know, illegal hiring. So this is a woman critic that came forward and just sent out a rather erudite tweet critiquing Giant Bomb for their hiring practices and this is the first incident of what I'm going to call the playbook, the GamerGate playbook. So the idea is you find a woman and you controversialize her, you find something in her past you take out of context, you find something to attack her with. Maybe she's gay, maybe she's a transgender woman, maybe she's had a difficult divorce, maybe she's fat, maybe whatever. It doesn't matter. There's nothing they're not going to find to attack you with. And what they did to this woman is they went after her and went after her and went after her and sent her threats and said they were going to rape her and said they were going to murder her and tweeted her address and doxed her to the point that she just left the game industry and decided that it wasn't worth it. And I want to tell all of you, I have never been as angry in my entire life as I was when this happened because the men of Giant Bomb chose to say nothing when this was happening. They chose to do nothing when their audience was going after this woman. They didn't speak up. They could have used their privilege for good, instead they kept their mouth shut, and we lost a very important writer in our field. So, what happened very shortly after that -- this was August, this was right after we'd shipped the, the very first game from my studio and I was on a very well deserved vacation -- we

had the Zoe Quinn incident. You know, it's hard to talk about this without noting that everything that happened to her are just allegations from a former lover, and, you know, if this had happened and the genders were switched the woman making the allegation would just absolutely be dismissed. But what happened with Zoe is she's a Boston game developer just like me, have run in a lot of the same professional circles, and she had a former lover of hers write a, a blog with a lot of really sordid allegations about her and her personal life. And, you know, this person said the outright mission was to destroy Zoe professionally to silence her. And, you know, what we saw from that was even Adam Baldwin going through and attacking Zoe Quinn. Can you imagine what that must have been like to have the halfway talented dude from Firefly, like posting weird conspiracy videos about you on twitter? I was very, very uncomfortable. I would call it the most sexist incident that ever happened in the video game industry. And again, this is a pattern. The same thing that happened in, in July happened again. Did the men in the video game industry speak up? There are few articles about that but no, they didn't. And the game studios did not speak up. IGM did not cover it. GameSpot did not cover it. The men in our field were silent. So what happened is GamerGate found out they've got a really great formula for shutting up any woman they don't like and they started using it on all kinds of different women in our field. Jenn Frank they bullied and harassed until she quit. I'll never forget her taking a video of her twitter the night that they ran the playbook on her. It was just like her tweets coming in like this with threats and insults and just the most vile stuff you can imagine. She ended up leaving. Leigh Alexander. Katherine Cross has been subjected to just extreme things. She's still here. Mattie Brice ended up leaving. And again, it's this playbook that they found of

making the cost of any woman speaking up so high that it was easier for us just to be silent. I think this really speaks to what it was like immediately after this. And this is a Facebook from a well-known woman in the game industry. I'm not going to give her name here. We're not winning and if we do win it will be a pyrrhic victory. And that was absolutely right. You know, the truth is GamerGate which is a prototype of the alt-right had found a formula that made it impossible for women to continue working in our field. So, then they went after me and I want to tell you guys my story and how it ties into running for Congress. So, I had a show at the time. It was a podcast I believe on 5by5 at that point called Isometric. It was a video game podcast. Not huge. I think we got 20 - 30,000 listeners a week. And, I had fans of my show that had looked at some of my tweets with GamerGate and it had turned into a meme. So, they went on meme generator and made this and I saw it and I laughed, and I thought it was funny, and I sent this out in a tweet. They could see the site. This is making fun of GamerGate but this isn't exactly, you know, cutting edge brutal humor. You know, fighting an apocalyptic future where women are eight percent of programmers and not three percent. So I sent that out and I thought that was it. And what happened next was horrible. You know, immediately I saw my Twitter starting to go sideways and I've never been on "hatechan" before but somebody sent me a link and I started to look on there and I saw them running the playbook on me. So, what they were doing was they were going through my life and finding anything they could attack me with. They were finding my address, they were finding my phone numbers, they were going through my husband's life, they were going through the lives of his previous wife before we got married and I knew that if I kept speaking up the exact same thing that happened to Zoe Quinn

and Anita Sarkeesian, and all these other women was going to happen to me. So, you know, before I received this tweet I had put away my computer for 24 hours and I was really thinking, I was really doing some real soul-searching and you know I asked my husband, I said, you know, if I keep speaking up for women in the game industry I want you to know the blowback is really going to be extreme. We're in their crosshairs now. And, I said, are you willing to do that and he said that he was. So, I came back to my computer and 24 hours later I said, you know, guess what guys, I'm not going anywhere. Bring it on. And they did. So, immediately after that I started getting extremely terrifying specific death threats. This is the one that they made a Law and Order episode out of. Guess what, guess what, bitch, I now know where you live. You and Frank live at, and they posted my address. I've got a K-bar and I'm coming to your house so I can shove it up your ugly feminist cunt. I'm going to rape your filthy ass until you bleed and then choke you to death with your husband's tiny Asian penis. How's that for terrifying you stuck-up cunt? I'm sick of you fucking feminist's assets. Your mutilated corpse will be on the front page of Jezebel tomorrow and there isn't jack shit you can do about it. If you have any kids they're going to die too. I don't give a fuck. They'll grow up to be feminists anyway. I hope you enjoy your last moments alive on this earth. You did nothing worthwhile with your life. And this was the moment I fled my home. I had a really idealistic point of view at this point. I thought law enforcement would help me so I called them and, you know, I really was hoping they would find out who sent this, investigate it and justice would be done. What I found immediately after this was a media firestorm that I was in the center of. Will Wheaton ended up re-tweeting that. It went hyper viral and the next day I found all kinds of invitations from media coming in. MSNBC,

CNN, you name it I did it. And, for me, you know, I think back to that Facebook post from my friend, the message I wanted to get out there was letting the men in the game industry know that they were letting us down. That women in our field needed help. That law enforcement needed to do something. I actually, I had it on a sheet of paper and I wrote it down of everything I'm going to say to the media, and what I did for the next month is I think I did close to 100 interviews all over the world and I had my exact same talking points about GamerGate trying to let people know what people in, what women in technology were facing and about these kind of extreme harassment tactics. My friend Peter Cohan who is a tech journalist in Massachusetts, you know, he called this emotional terrorism. And it's a phrase I really think is accurate because again the goal is to inflict so much emotional fear on someone speaking out that they decide it's just simpler to be silent. So, we bring this over to where we are today, kind of fast-forward a bit. Like, I don't think this is funny, actually, you know, you look at who was behind GamerGate. Breitbart was a site that really brought this to national prominence. You know, the rest of the media kind of had a coherent message about GamerGate. Breitbart really egged it on and gave it legitimacy and ran stories that really targeted a lot of the women involved. So, you know, when we're looking at GamerGate and who were really the core figures from it, yeah, its Ralph and some of the, you know, people for 8chan but there are some figures in media that have a legitimately larger argument that gave them legitimacy. You know, you have Steve Bannon, you have Milo who I think your campus is familiar with, you have Mike Cernovich [sp.], you know these are, these are the people and a lot of them really, particularly Milo and Mike Cernovich, they really rose to prominence crusading against feminists. So, you

know, this brings it over into this really surreal territory. Like there's no good way to have a Law and Order episode made about you. Your life has made a left turn somewhere if that happens, you know? This was beyond bizarre. Like Sci-Fi also did a recreation of me -- can anyone here like imagine me in the bottom of a closet crying? Can any of you imagine that? That's what the actress that played me did. I thought that was weird so. But you know, the truth is, like I believed in the system. I thought the system would do the right thing and what I did, what, I wasted a year doing was building up like unofficial intelligence networks in, you know, 4chan and 8chan and these IRQ boards. Like we spent a ton of time -- I had someone at my game studio I hired whose entire job was to research the death threats that I got and to, like, you know, basically find these people so we could pass it on to the law enforcement. I had I think four meetings with the FBI, one of which was in my living room, begging them to do something -- like we have the names. The thing I can't figure out is I have the name of the person that sent me the death threat they based the Law and Order episode on. I sent it to police constantly. I sent it to the FBI. One of the correspondences we got from the FBI was a, like six months after sending them constant reports we got a notice that they had never looked at any of the names, had never looked at any of the information, had never gone and done any research because they said they couldn't, they were not allowed because of security measures to read anything that was emailed to them. So we put it on a, you know, we put it on a hard drive and mailed it to them and, you know, later after Freedom of Information requests I found out the FBI had not looked at anything that we sent them. So, you know, the truth is, and I'm really sorry to tell this to you, to all the women out there today, but if any of this happens to you under our current policy

help is not coming. There is no one that's going to show up and do the right thing. And sadly, there is no consequence for doing these kinds of activities on line. So, you know, in the run-up to the election I had been fairly active. You know, I was fairly agnostic. You know, I tried to not pick sides on, you know, the Bernie versus Hillary primary fight. Honestly I think both candidates had, had pros and cons. Like, I really liked Bernie's economic message and, you know? I was also excited at the thought of a first woman president. But, you know, after we picked, you know, our nominee I did a lot of work for Hillary and I did so much work that, you know, on election night this is 30 feet from where she would have accepted the Presidency. And, you know, before I went down that night I told my husband I've got to get back to work. We've got to ship our next game. We've got to keep going. And, I think we all know what happened next. For me what was most emotionally difficult about this is seeing all the architects of GamerGate now amassing massive power in the White House. You know Steve Bannon; we all know what happened there in Breitbart. Milo went on to get a lot of really terrifying mainstream success. You know, and Mike Cernovich, he's absolutely right there with the same kind of message. So, you know, unfortunately, you know, the Trump era really welcomed in GamerGate. I think of GamerGate as just the prototype for the alt-right. You know? You look at where we are today. GamerGate at its core was a movement about politicizing and weaponizing the resentment of white straight males in the game industry. The alt-right has taken that and has moved it into straight up white nationalism. So, it's the exact same resentment it's just for a much wider audience, you know? We saw this happen in Charlottesville. We saw this happen with Pizzagate where someone shows up to a pizzeria with an assault rifle based on a bunch of 4chan nonsense. You

know, it's really terrifying to see where the country has gotten today. You know, for the progressives out there, I think it's time we had a really honest conversation about where the Democratic Party is today. I recently did some training with Emerge America -- this is a, it's a group that trains women candidates for office -- and this is what you're going to see. This is, you know, red represents Democrats, blue represents Democrats, red represents Republicans. This is what has happened as far as power since 2008. We see how in that year we had all these seats of power but, you know, we've slowly started to lose and today the Democrat, you know, the Democratic Party has control over nothing. I think, you know, all respect to our party but we are getting our butts handed to us. Our party is in ruins. You know, I think it's time to give someone else the keys to the car. Something I think about a lot, and you know, for me this, this, this comes to why I chose to run for Congress, you know, in 1994 I was a sophomore in high school and the Republicans took over Congress. And immediately after we had this really aggressive shutdown of government where, you know, trucks weren't going out, mail wasn't operating, like, offices all across the country were closed because they couldn't agree on a budget. And I remember at the moment thinking, my God, I've never seen government this divided ever. I can't imagine anything this bad. But the truth is that has just been the norm for over 20 years now. Another thing about that 1994 election, this is the moment that historians look and note that baby boomers took over Congress from, you know, the World War II generation. So, when you look at who's in Congress today and the dysfunction, you know, the truth is both parties are part of, you know this gridlock that all started that year with kind of the boomer takeover of Congress. So, for me I think, you know, it's, it's generational, like

time moves on. You know, I just turned 40 this year. For me I think that it's time for a new generation of leaders to step-up, to do the right thing, to get engaged in the process, to, you know, not be cynical and to stand up and make our voice heard. Everything about the system is begging you to just tune out. Everything about the system is begging you to not care. Everything about the system is telling you that it's pointless because if you care, if you are out there acting, if you are out there engaging then you have enough to win. And, in my opinion, in this age where Donald Trump is president I think everybody has got to pick one of these three things and do them. You need to either run for office yourself; you need to either donate time for a candidate that's running. Or, you need to donate money for someone that's running. Pick one of these three very pragmatic things because the status quo is going to really harm our country if it continues much longer. See, I also think it's really time that we addressed the split in our party and part why I've enjoyed this trip to this campus so much is talking to so many millennials. I want to be really honest with you as a Democrat. We have utterly failed in listening to you. We have utterly failed in taking you seriously and I think a Democratic Party that treats you like a nuisance, I think a Democratic Party that just wants you to shut up, I think a Democratic Party that, you know, thinks that you just need to grow up and come over to their point of view, I think that's a failure. So for me and my politics, you know, as I'm moving forward and running for Congress, you know, I am a feminist and Hillary paved the wave for me and many women of my generation. I know that like for me -- many of you are too young to know this -- but when she came forward and said, you know, I'm not staying at home baking cookies and standing by my man, I am going out and doing the profession that I sought and worked for before I met my husband.

That's a very normal statement today. That was groundbreaking in the 90's and she caught seven levels of hell for that. I respect that legacy. You know, I'm really tired of the way the Democratic Party papers over women's issues. But with Bernie Sanders I personally feel that he has the only realistic path forward for the country. You know, this economic system is rigged for the rest of us. The elections are rigged for the rich and we have got to take a fundamental look at how we do these. So, you know, for me this is the exact same choice that I faced in GamerGate. For GamerGate I could have kept my head down, I could have kept my mouth shut and I could have enjoyed making games but I couldn't because I couldn't have lived with myself if I didn't. And in politics it's the exact same thing. You know, I am not sure if I'm going to win. I'm not sure where this is going to take me in ten years. But I am absolutely sure that I cannot sit still in the Donald Trump era and continue to do nothing. So, awesome. I guess this is time for our questions then. So, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: I'm going to get the remote real quick.

BRIANNA WU: Okay, [indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, thank you so much for that perspective. I think it's important for our audience to know, because you really didn't touch on this, that you haven't always been a Democrat --

BRIANNA WU: Nope.

DR. HOFFMAN: That you actually interned for several years --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah, I did.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- with top Republican law makers in Washington, D.C. shortly after college. So, you know, how did you make that transition from one party to the other because we talked about this earlier how these parties are so

club-like, you know --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- once you're in you're in. Right? Do you guys know what I mean? And, I think that it's a, it's a difficult thing to kind of come to a decision to, to leave.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah, yeah. Well, for me, you know, I was working in D.C. when we started the Iraq war --you know, right after 9/11 -- and, you know, working in, you know, D.C. I saw us rushing into that war without having all the facts. It was why I was really stunned that Hillary Clinton and so many Democrats voted for it because I can tell you as just a generic staffer it seemed very clear to me that the case wasn't there. So, what I did, and I think this is useful for everyone out there, is I started reading books from people on the other side from, you know, from Al Franken and, you know, Joe Biden, and other, you know, liberals and I decided that I wasn't going to keep like, you know, trusting what liberals were from what Rush Limbaugh said. I was going to read for myself and find out. I have to say, even in progressive circles I think one of our weaknesses is I think that we don't truly understand the other side and I do think that it's a joke but it's not but you have to watch Fox News sometimes just to understand what the other, how the other half of the country is thinking. So, for me it was being willing to read something I didn't agree with.

DR. HOFFMAN: And I think that's, that's such at the essence of what we do here is being open to other perspectives --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- and I think that it's, it's important to understand both perspectives. Well I have an image that you showed already --

BRIANNA WU: Ha, okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- on your slides.

BRIANNA WU: Yes. Oh my goodness.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, so, I, I blocked it out because I thought it was too harsh to actually show what these people have said about you --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- but you mentioned 4chan and 8chan --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- a couple of times. For those in our audience who don't understand what those platforms are --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- could you describe those a little bit?

BRIANNA WU: I'm pretty sure every millennial is going to know what, what 4chan is. Yeah, it's like it's a, it's an image site and it started in the -- God, when did it start, was it the 90's or 2000 -- this is basically an automated image board. It's this kind of roll with it anything goes race to the bottom. One of the, the interesting things about 4chan is it's this, this internet hive of scum and villainy but no one is attributed in 4chan as they're putting up the most racist, transphobic, sexist things you can possibly imagine. But what I find so interesting is if you go on 4chan because there's no name associated with the voice it's like your id is speaking to you. It's like the darkest thoughts you could possibly have are coming to you. Its, it's just very fragmented stream of consciousness [indiscernible]. It's, it's weird.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, I mean, we saw recently in the events in Charlottesville which --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- you showed an image of --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- earlier. These are some of the same people who are on those, those outlets. I'm just going back to the --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- the basic slide here. These are some of those same people who are active on those sites and --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- what is it about this time in this time in 2017 that makes a difference from the 90's or the 2000's when people were using these outlets to post these memes and post these images and post their id and post all these things. What, what changed in 2017 that gave them a feeling of empowerment to go march, literally, with torches --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- and confederate flags?

BRIANNA WU: I mean, I think its Trump being President. You know? In my opinion this is a president that's really embraced white nationalism that has, you know, campaigned explicitly on sexism and racism. You know, there's not a polite way to talk about this but you know I remember in 2013 you know Twitter was really struggling with ISIS using Twitter to basically recruit and radicalize people and Twitter stepped in at that point and shut down a bunch of recruits. And there's nothing magical about Americans where we're not susceptible to that same kind of radicalization. And I think unfortunately you are seeing 4chan and other sites like it, even Breitbart, becoming you know a, a force to radicalize you

know young white straight men into this kind of extremist ideology. You know, and I think unfortunately we saw it turn violent.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, so, I have a question from Twitter from Andrew. If you were able to have a conversation with Trump --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- what would you talk to him about?

BRIANNA WU: Oh, God. Wow? What would you talk to Trump about? I mean, I could talk to anyone. I, I actually love talking to Republicans. You do it on the campaign trail all of the time. I don't know what -- because he'd make it all about him instantly. I, I get a feeling it would just be like, yeah, that hurricane is the biggest one ever. Like, I, I would try to find common ground. I would try to work with him. I just don't think he's an emotionally intelligent person to go anywhere, unfortunately.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, I mean, that begs the question that we heard earlier today as well when, you know, when you look at what's wrong with Congress --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- what's wrong with government. People are so dissatisfied --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- with how things are going. How does running for office in that, that entity, how can you solve some of those problems?

BRIANNA WU: It's such a great question. So, do we have anyone in the audience today that's going to go to law school? Okay. I'm sorry for what I'm about to say. So, if you look at lawyers, lawyers are trained. It is your job and your civic duty to argue as strenuously as you can for your client and put the

strongest argument forward and win it. And sometimes you win by procedural tricks. You know, sometimes you win by just a legal theory. You know, Congress, if I remember correctly, is comprised by over 60 percent lawyers. So, I think that what has happened is we have so many people in Congress right now; it's so hyper sampled from this one background, that think people in both parties are more interested in winning than solving problems. And, you know, I, I don't think a Congress entirely comprised of engineers would be good but I think a Congress comprised of a few engineers would be a positive thing. And not just engineers, we need academics serving in Congress. How about therapists? I think we could use a few therapists in Congress. We need all kinds of backgrounds because the truth is all of our perspectives matter. And we're so hyper sampled from this one thing. Here's another thing, after I've been running for office I don't think an introvert could run for Congress and win. And, when I think about my engineering team, and the people smart enough to pull my butt out of the fire, its introverts; they have so much to offer. And it's like; it blows your mind when you realize that our government doesn't have any. So, yeah, I think that moving forward I think that the core principle has got to be thinking about the American people instead of the next election.

DR. HOFFMAN: I want to go back to doxing and if you could explain this for those who don't know what it is and the Charlottesville --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- incident because that, I find so many interesting contradictions in your background.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: You were exposed in a very vulnerable way and now you

choose to run and --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- be exposed in a very vulnerable way. Similarly, this doxing, the idea where people are releasing private information --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- about you came up again in Charlottesville. I don't know if you guys saw this but there was a lot of Facebook accounts and Twitter accounts that were offering reward money for people who had gotten pictures taken of them in Charlottesville engaging in violence. So, you tweeted this that, that identifying someone in public space makes it fair game.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Was that a hard decision for you to come to?

BRIANNA WU: It was. My initial reaction was thinking oh God, no, and you know it's worth noting that there was a Twitter account that identifies Trump donors and tweets out their addresses. And I had a piece in the Washington Post a, a couple of months ago and I caught a lot of heat from the left for coming out against that tactic. For me -- who else here, is anyone in here taking communication law? I was talking to one of your students today that has. This is, this is a really great class that teaches you the legal theory behind public spaces and all of that. So, to me in this case, I would not run that Twitter account personally. I would not engage in these tactics personally. I think it's gross and uncomfortable. But, I do think if you are in a public space doing a public demonstration, I think the legal threshold is you don't have a reasonable expectation of privacy there. Your, your whole point in being there is to make it known to the public which is why, you know, law has shown if journalists are at

something like this they can photograph it, they can identify the people there, they can release those names. So, maybe I'm getting a little legalistic with that but that's where that opinion comes from.

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. I'm going to move on to -- actually I'm going to skip over this because you showed your --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- your Congressional campaign.

BRIANNA WU: I did.

DR. HOFFMAN: The Women's March --

BRIANNA WU: [Indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: -- in, earlier this year in D.C. and across this country motivated a lot of women to come out and, and run for office like you. There are a lot of organizations, you mentioned Emerge -- She Should Run; Vote, Run, Lead -- these are all organizations that are attempts to help women gain the skills necessary to campaign --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- to raise money, and we are seeing a number of women be more involved in politics and in running particularly since the Trump election. So, do you think -- a, a student from my class, I, I gather questions from my students beforehand, Sharna [sp.] wants to know -- if in the 2020 election do you think more women will run and win?

BRIANNA WU: Yeah. Yeah. I know these women. We're, we're out there. We're angry. We're, we're running for office. Yeah, these are my Emerge sisters. So, I, yeah, I think it's worth saying; we don't just need women running. We need a lot more people of color running. Like, you know, the only thing

there's more of in Congress than, you know, men is white people. So, you know, like we need all kinds of different perspectives. Yeah, I definitely, I think that most men don't understand just how much Trump's video of grab 'em by the you know what, I think a lot of men don't understand just how much that pushed women one step too far. And, I think that we are going to stand up and make our voices heard at this point.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, I've got so many great questions from our students and in about ten minutes we'll open it up to a general Q & A from the audience. But, a lot of students, you know, throughout the day people keep bringing, bringing back up GamerGate --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: GamerGate, GamerGate and this is so much a part of your identity even though surely it's not something that you want to reflect on every day.

BRIANNA WU: It's not how I define myself. Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, but so a lot of the students, and I got a question from Twitter and I had a question from my students, have those same followers, those same GamerGate trolls, if you will, have they harassed you in your role as a candidate?

BRIANNA WU: Again they harassed your technician in the back. He tweeted and they, they --

DR. HOFFMAN: That's true, that's true.

BRIANNA WU: -- they sent him a bunch of terrible stuff. Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: That's true and I should mention that we opened up a Facebook or I'm sorry, a Google forum to request questions from the general

audience and I was kind of shocked that --

BRIANNA WU: [Laughter].

DR. HOFFMAN: -- at the comments that we got.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah. Yeah?

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah. I mean, this is, I guess from a very real place, like, how do you live with this every day?

BRIANNA WU: The truth is it damages you and at a certain point the damage itself keeps you safe. It's like there's a, a part of you that stops feeling anything. And it's probably not psychologically healthy that someone could send me a message saying, like, you know, I want to rape and kill you and I would feel nothing about that. But it's where we are. It, it feels like losing a part of your humanity. So, it's, it's difficult.

DR. HOFFMAN: So does GamerGate still exist?

BRIANNA WU: Yeah. Yeah. They're, they're on Reddit. Go there right now.

DR. HOFFMAN: Will it ever end?

BRIANNA WU: No. No, it's um, I mean, I'm sorry I'm a gamer and I'm going to bring up a reference. In Final Fantasy 4, when you beat it Zaroma says as long as evil exists in the hearts of men I will be here. That's GamerGate. So --

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter].

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

BRIANNA WU: Sorry to geek out. Yeah.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

BRIANNA WU: No, it's, it's, GamerGate is a, about a cultural resentment so I don't think it's reasonable to expect that, you know, at some moment that

angels will come down and the choirs will sing and that will be over. You know, I am somebody, like, at my core -- I think people don't know this. Engineering at its core is a profession about compromises. You know, next week Apple is going to come out with a new iPhone and the engineers that made it had to pick between two things. It's like, well we can make this thinner and lighter or we can make the battery suck less. Those two things are mutually exclusive.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

BRIANNA WU: No, I'm being serious here. So, engineering at its core is a profession about, okay, are we going to do this and like what dirty cheat can we come up with to make it closer. So, for me, you know, I'm generally willing to compromise with people. I'm very much a pragmatist. But I think when you're talking about white nationalism I; I don't think there's a conversation that can be had at that point. I think the only answer is to amass more political power and to, you know, do the right thing which is why, you know, I want direct action and I want to run for office myself.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, another thing we've talked about throughout this day which has been fascinating is about laws being put in place to protect people from online harassment --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- and from issues like this. And you struggled with this and you reached out to local police --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: You reached out to the FBI. What needs to happen for people to feel protected in online spaces?

BRIANNA WU: It's, it's very difficult, right? And this is a very difficult issue to

solve because let's be honest if we blow this, if we get this wrong like you don't want the government really cracking down on what you can or cannot say online. You know, we don't want to get rid of anonymity completely online. This is very, very valuable. So this is hard stuff but I think a good place to start would be, you know, I want to task a certain number of FBI agents to prosecute online death threats. I think we can probably all agree in this room that you should not be able to go on the internet and tell someone their dead mutilated corpse will be on the front page of Jezebel tomorrow. All right? That's a line that you're crossing and I do think that's when law enforcement needs to get involved. You know, I think honestly that the platforms themselves have a lot of responsibility here. Twitter has not gotten credit for all the work that they've done in making that product better. In my opinion Reddit and Facebook have much bigger problems at this point. We need to continue pressure on Facebook to improve their policies. I'll give you a really great example. As best as I can tell right now it is completely fine to harass and dead-name and to, you know, basically go after transgender people on Facebook. I've had members of my team try to report things and they won't do anything. So, I think that like for that this is the job of the, the platform to kind of think a little bit broadly about who their users are.

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. So, thank you so much for that. I think let's, before we toss it over to the audience I have another question from one of my students. Casey [sp.], made a little bit more of a positive note, who are some of your mentors? Who do you look to as, as someone who can be a role model and who might you recommend students who are, are themselves perhaps looking into running for office or being involved in politics?

BRIANNA WU: Sure. I'm a big fan of Captain Janeway so, because --

AUDIENCE: [Laughter and applause].

BRIANNA WU: Also, also Jack Bauer, I'm a big Jack Bauer fan.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter].

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

BRIANNA WU: No, I think one of the things that's difficult for me as a game developer, you know, I didn't really have women to look up to as a child to go into this profession. And just to be really honest, when I look at politicians today, you know, there are certainly people I admire. Katherine Clark, she's done a lot of great work in Massachusetts. But, I don't think there's anyone there that I look at and think like, that's who I want to be. You know, I think that being honest I see strength in people and particularly I find strength from stories and media with people that look like me. But, you know, I don't, I don't believe in heroes and maybe the reason is, like, when people come up to me and say like oh, you're great I love you. Like, I know how flawed a person I am and it never feels true to me. So, I try not to project that onto others if that makes sense?

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum, that's interesting.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I do have one final tweet that you posted.

BRIANNA WU: Okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: The weird thing about running for office when people ask you what you --

BRIANNA WU: [Laughter].

DR. HOFFMAN: -- what you do for a living --

BRIANNA WU: That is totally true.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- and you say politicians, they look at you like you're Satan.

BRIANNA WU: It's true.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

DR. HOFFMAN: So, how has it been running for office compared with, with your previous lifetime or your, your coexistent lifetime as an engineer and a game developer?

BRIANNA WU: Yeah, it's funny because if you're a software developer and you're at a party with a bunch of dudes, yeah, I make video games. They're like you're awesome. And if you're at a party with a bunch of moms and you say I'm a videogame developer and they go you suck. You're the one stealing my children from me.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter].

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

BRIANNA WU: No, it's so true. Yeah, people innately don't trust politicians. It's very awkward. So, I don't know what else you can do but it's, it's like, you know, like I would imagine from the founders of this country, like, you know this happened in Boston where I'm running. If you really look at the history of the American Revolution there's some unpleasant things that went on there. And, you know, the truth is when you stand up for something, when you try to do the right thing. When you try to change history, you know, it's not pleasant but, you know, I think few people are, are called to do the right thing. And just, just one more story before we, we pass it over to the audience. I saw so many times growing up in Mississippi adults doing the wrong thing. So, I went to a Christian private school through elementary school and we had one black girl that went to our school. And one day she just vanished. And I never saw her again. And I asked my mom what had happened to her a few months later and I heard just the

littlest bit of a story about another student that had stabbed her in the eye with a pencil. And, I remember feeling horrified and I asked my mom what was happening? Like was the student expelled? What happened? And they just kind of chose to wash it under the rug like the, the young girl as I understand it was able to see after that. What I've learned as I've gotten older is like we all want to believe that in that moment we do the right thing, we stand up, we speak our mind, we defend the person that's vulnerable from being hurt. But as best as I can tell most people don't do the right thing. So, you know, part of what defines who I am from growing up in such a, you know, sexist and racist culture, is I just, I consider it like my moral duty to like do what I can when I see, like, things like that happening.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Well, let's -- are Sarandu [sp.] and Katie [sp.], my student volunteers, are they already set to go with this fancy cube we've got here? All right. Let's get them setup in the aisles but I think I want to ask one more question.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Do you think we're at a pivotal point? Is 2017 a year that people will remember as a year of change?

BRIANNA WU: Yeah. Absolutely. This is the year that either, you know, the United States slides into becoming -- and I'm sorry, there's no nice way to say this -- like a white supremacist country or like all of us who believe differently, like, we stand up and we fight harder for something different. You know, scientists have this term called an extinction burst which is right before an idea is about to like go extinct it, it gets very strong. And I think that that's where we are in this country. But don't delude yourself. Like none of this is going to change if

we just stay at home and, you know, Netflix and, you know, do whatever.

DR. HOFFMAN: And chill.

BRIANNA WU: And chill. We've all got -- well. We've all got to do what we can. So --

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. So who's got the cube? Katie. Okay, so this is going to be fun. Someone who wants to ask a question, Katie can toss the cube to you and if you'll stand up and ask your question for our guest, Brianna Wu tonight? I see a hand in the back there, Katie.

BRIANNA WU: Throw it now.

DR. HOFFMAN: Can you throw it? All right.

Q: As being here tonight we were told that this presentation was going to be nonpartisan. Throughout the presentation you mentioned our party, we are losing, your campaign, among other partisan speech and I'd like to know why this was done in spite of us being told this was going to be nonpartisan.

BRIANNA WU: Well, I'm speaking for myself.

Q: Okay. Thank you.

BRIANNA WU: Great.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. Who's next?

Q: So, you and I were almost on the opposite sides of GamerGate --

BRIANNA WU: Oh really?

Q: -- and I say it almost because I was part of the movement, I was the part of the movement that really at the end of the day just wanted people to be able to write what they wanted and make --

BRIANNA WU: You -- I'm sorry, can you speak a little more clearly?

Q: I was a part of the movement that wanted people to be able to make what they want and write what they want and --

BRIANNA WU: Sure.

Q: -- just for me to be able to determine which steam games were worth spending my money on.

BRIANNA WU: Okay.

Q: And, for me at the time I would've, I would've denounced the allegation that it was, you know, this, this mob of violent criminals. Maybe not the same position looking back on it but I think that's, that story, the story of GamerGate is part of a larger narrative. So if you look at things like Third Way Feminism where you have a core of people who believe, who truly believe that women are equal to me and that we should build our societies on the basis of that idea and the idea of --

BRIANNA WU: I, I need to say, is, is there a, to the question?

Q: There is a question.

BRIANNA WU: Okay.

Q: I'm, I'm just giving --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah, it just --

Q: -- because I don't think it's --

BRIANNA WU: Go to the question, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

BRIANNA WU: No, no that's fine.

Q: [Indiscernible] --

BRIANNA WU: But what is your question?

Q: -- discourse is that there are, are these hate movements,

these movements that begin as a good idea and become, you know, something else. So, we, as people who are interested in those, those real ideas who want to solve social problems --

BRIANNA WU: Sure.

Q: -- how do we brush aside the sensationalism of the people in the movement, the sensationalism of the media coverage, and refocus the conversation on the issues that matter and the solutions to those issues instead of just allowing things to run rampantly out of control?

BRIANNA WU: Well, I think the, I would, I, I do think that media can be sensationalistic. I would agree with that part of your premise. I think I you're a woman in technology there's definitely no shortage of cameras that will be put in your face if you're harassed. Like that's the story that the media is very eager to tell. I think that, you know, such a broad question is hard to answer. Like, so for me, I plan to go forward and I do want to advocate for women in technology. You, you may not understand this because you don't have that lived experience but I have to tell you, women in technology really, and in games, really face an uphill battle that I don't think you can begin to understand if you don't work there. So, you know, for me I'm going to advocate for those things and my friends that I see. So, thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Let's hear from a student. Another student? There's one over here Katie. Or, Sarandu, I think it's easier to go toss over there? All right. Throw it.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: You got it.

Q: Hi. This is loud. There was an earlier tweet that you had up.

After GamerGate I am strongly against doxing but identifying someone in a public space, making a public demonstration is fair game. And, for me, living in Delaware with like the Beau Biden kind of policies on like cyber crimes and whatnot where does public space end because we've, I've learned as a kid growing up not only similar to you but with a Catholic background, adopted, etcetera, etcetera --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: -- that these things just because they're online by a person with cyber, you know, keyboard courage, it doesn't end there. So, where exactly do you say public, if you're against doxing --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: -- but you're okay with people being identified, you know, by pictures this that and the other, where does public space end and where does private space begin?

BRIANNA WU: Well, I -- that's a great question. And I do want to just say if you look at my overall record I have a very, very strong consistent record --

Q: Um-hum.

BRIANNA WU: -- against doxing of conservatives, of people --

Q: Um hum.

BRIANNA WU: -- I don't agree with overall.

Q: Yes, ma'am.

BRIANNA WU: So, I just really want to be clear about that.

Q: Um hum.

BRIANNA WU: To me, and maybe this is me being legalistic perhaps --

Q: Um hum.

BRIANNA WU: -- but, like, if you look at communication law --

Q: Um hum.

BRIANNA WU: -- with what public space is it's where you would have unreasonable expectation of privacy. So, if I'm outdoors I have no reasonable expectation of privacy as defined by jurisprudence. If you're in a restaurant you have some legal reasonable expectation of privacy. Like someone couldn't photograph or film me there but the person you're speaking with, like, they could theoretically record you. Like, courts have found this. So, it's a whole, like, legal distinction that's more of a matter for the courts. I would say overall my point was if you're outside at a public demonstration, meaning you filed for a license, you've paid the fee and you're out there just saying to the public this is what we believe, I, I don't find that to have a reasonable expectation of privacy personally. So.

DR. HOFFMAN: I think the, the question is great though because we were talking earlier about the enhancement of technology to the point where, you know, people are now putting chips in their hands --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- and can scan them in to get vending machines and to enter their office places. I mean, it's, we're going to -- this isn't a problem that's going to go away.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: And we're going to continue to face what is private and what is public.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: And, I mean, I think we're going to have to continually

reevaluate this, and, and the idea of thinking about communication law and policy is really important that, that you guys are going to need to have a, a say in that and, and --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- how it moves forward.

BRIANNA WU: Can I -- I want to say one more really quick thing on this. One of the reasons it is so easy to dox someone today and to find out their address, and their, all about their life is because of the financial motive for technology companies to collect as much information as possible and to sell it to anyone that will give them any amount of money for it. So for me if I'm in Congress one of the things I've talked to my friend Danielle Citron [sp.] about is we need an omnibus privacy bill. So one of the laws I want passed is --

AUDIENCE: [Applause].

BRIANNA WU: Thank you. Yeah. I like you. Yeah.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

BRIANNA WU: One of the laws I want to pass, it says if you sign up for X service, you know, they can't just sell your information. You're making an agreement with them. And if they do store this information about you and they don't follow infosite [sp.] procedures, if they don't salt and hash that, if they don't encrypt that data, if they don't, you know, if they don't follow these industry standard things I think they should be liable for that. Yeah, I think you should be able to sue them. So I think if we take someone with the financial motive out of, you know, collecting everything about people as much as you can I think that that helps alleviate this issue somewhat.

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay, thanks. How about another question? All right, I think

we might have to do a long toss.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah. You can do it.

DR. HOFFMAN: Can you do it? Oh.

BRIANNA WU: Ah, love it.

Q: So, in both the video game industry and like politics the people who are already in power are all the same, they are white, straight, male. In all of these industries how do people who don't have the power, how are we supposed to say get power? How are we supposed to get in? How are we supposed to like fight when we don't have much to work with and there's a lot working against us?

BRIANNA WU: So, you know, Lindsay, something you and I were talking about earlier were generational differences. Something I really believe and something that's helped me so much throughout my career is I really believe that women have got to be there for each other and elevate each other. Like, this is my motto for 2017. We elevate each other, we support each other. A really simple tactic that I've had for my career that has worked surprisingly well is when I go to events I focus on networking with other women first because I've found those are the people that will, you know, get me invited to events, or get me that job, or get me that connection. And what, at least in video games, a way we've kind of found around, to work around this really bad situation is to advocate for each other and back channel. So, we will have conversations like hold on, you don't want to go work for that team because this person did X, Y, and Z to me. So, I think that we need to really elevate each other. A difference in our generation and the women older than us is I think that we, we didn't get into the system by like being the only girl in the room and I think there's just a different

mentality. So, you know, that's really my answer. And, you know, this is a wider thing but everyone in a position of privilege has got to use that to elevate other people. I'll give you an example. With my last game that we shipped, Revolution 60, I did not have enough people of color on my staff. That was my own failing as a person. So, now as I'm running for Congress I plan to use that privilege and to make sure there are more people of color on my staff as we're moving forward. That's me using my privilege to elevate others. And I think all of us can, can do that a lot. You know, we've been giving, you know, white straight men a little bit of static tonight but do you know that a kind of white straight man in the video game industry that needs a lot of help. There are a lot of people on the autism spectrum in the game industry and they are treated like garbage in our field. They don't get promotions. They just -- it's a whole different thing and they, they are affected by bias too. So, all of us, all of us need to use the privilege that we have to look out for others and to be there for other people.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. Yeah, Katie, I think there's a question over here?

Q: What would you say to women in the industry like Liz Finnegan and liberal women like Professor Christina Hoff Sommers who disagree with the false narrative that GamerGate was a harassment campaign and instead believe that it was about ethics in journalism and online censorship?

BRIANNA WU: Unified women that are going to work with the patriarchy, it's, it's very inevitable. You find it in politics. You know, there are Republican women that defend Donald Trump and it's, it's not surprising. You know something I think a lot of people don't know this but, you know, women get it from everyone. They've done studies on this. So when it comes to sexist double

standards and critiques from the public women get it from other women nearly as much as they get it from me. So, that doesn't surprise me at all.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. Other questions? And then Katie, after that one we've got one in the front here.

Q: I was, so as somebody who wants to go into the game industry, I was wondering if you had any -- so you're talking about advocating for other women --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: -- in the industry but creative industries are kind of notoriously difficult to break into. So, like, how exactly did you start in game development? I mean, I know you're an engineer and --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: -- like an artist or a writer but --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah. All right, so, just being honest with you. I had a ton of privilege as a kid. I grew up in the poorest state in America and my dad was a surgeon. So, you know, basically any computer or anything I wanted to learn they would fund me how to do it. You know, my first car -- and the driving age in Mississippi when I got my driver's license was 14 and they bought me a piece of garbage and gave me the money to get parts and to fix it up myself. And that's been a really good tactic. So, I've taught myself, you know, from the word go. I was applying for patents when I was 19 for, you know, video game computer animation. So, that's what's worked for me. Like, I'm the kind of person that I don't care if I don't know how to do something. I'm not looking for a system. I just jump in with both feet and, and get going. I would say if you want to get started in the industry this would apply to anyone -- male, female, non-binary,

whatever -- employers are looking for someone that can add value or to solve a problem. So my game studio is a really good example. Our combat wasn't working so I had to go out and find someone that could play test and could like use that data to fix things. So we hired a woman that used to work at Harmonics for that. She was brought on because she can solve a problem. So my suggestion to anyone looking for a job in the game industry is to find one thing and to get really good at it. Pixel art, sound design, level streaming, freaking doing, you know, assembly on a PlayStation GPU to get a few extra frames. Like, find some solution that you can provide for an employer and do it. And if there's a company you want to work for and you've got a portfolio, email me and I'll see if I can hook you up.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

Q: Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Do you want to try?

MS. KATIE: Do you want me to --

DR. HOFFMAN: Are you going to try and throw it all the way from there? Oh my --

MS. KATIE: I --

BRIANNA WU: You can do it. I believe in you.

DR. HOFFMAN: I don't know.

Q: I have a two-part question --

BRIANNA WU: Okay.

Q: -- actually if that's cool? All right. So, one, you know, I, first

of all, it's kind of surreal seeing you here in person.

BRIANNA WU: [Laughter].

Q: I mean, I don't spend a lot of time on the internet but --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: -- I spend enough to sort of like have heard your name and to sort of like see you in person it's like, it's like a reverse matrix. It's --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: -- like the, and that material --

BRIANNA WU: This is an achievable life objective.

Q: Yeah.

BRIANNA WU: Meet Brianna Wu.

Q: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh, I thought he was --

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

DR. HOFFMAN: -- I thought he was talking about me.

BRIANNA WU: Oh, okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter].

Q: All right. Yeah, so I, I, I guess my question is the Trump phenomena.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: So, you know, you have these sort of characters like a Richard Spencer --

BRIANNA WU: Ooh.

Q: -- who will say things like, you know, we memed Trump into existence, right? And I guess from your perspective as someone who is actually,

you know, from the strange land of the internet, how much do you think, like, like sort of the growing cancer in strange boards of the internet actually has to do with the election of Donald Trump versus just, I don't know, like the fact that we had a Democrat in office for two terms and, you know, growing --

BRIANNA WU: Um.

Q: -- work, you know, white worker anxiety and, you know --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: -- other factors. Like, how, does that make sense?

BRIANNA WU: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah. And, yeah, second question -- I actually wanted to ask two -- is, you know, a lot to the time in here we talk about, you know, how we're going to, you know, have a, the dialogue between the two parties and I guess a place to start there is to find common ground. If you were to talk to someone who probably voted for Trump and you can probably assume we have a certain grouping of, you know, beliefs, what common ground do you think you could find with that person?

BRIANNA WU: Oh, a ton. I mean --

DR. HOFFMAN: Both great questions.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah, those are --

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

BRIANNA WU: -- good questions. Thank you. You know, something -- I'll address the second part first -- when you run for office, you know, you don't get the privilege of just representing the Democrats or just representing the feminists out in District 8. You have to listen to everybody. You have to serve everybody. You have to respect everybody. You have to hear everybody. And the weirdest

part of my job is I spend a ton of time these days talking to Trump voters. And, you know, what I try to do is I try to start the conversation with seeing them as a person first. And, you know, I, I, the common ground I'm able to find is I think all of us agree the political process is fundamentally broken. I think all of us agree that the American people are not making enough money. I, all of us agree that our politicians generally speaking lack integrity. And I think that when you're, you're kind of looking at this by a people first perspective, I personally find it very easy to find common ground partially because I've spent, you know, 20 years of my life believing the same thing. You know, as far as the first part of the question, you know, I think Trump has modeled something extremely dangerous. You know, he has come forward and he has really legitimized extreme sexism and racism in a way that terrifies me and a lot of other people. And I don't think it's just an internet phenomenon. I think he has legitimized it and I don't worry about the people that are, you know, 50 or 60 years old today. What really keeps me up at night is thinking about the kids. The eight-year olds who are out there watching this, seeing him treat women this way, seeing him treat black people this way and really wondering what it's going to be like for our country in a generation. It's, it terrifies me.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I think it's worth pointing out too that, you know, Trump -- how many people is he following? I think he's following only a few accounts. He's not utilizing the platform to engage in a dialogue per se, you know. But, but he's using it to present his viewpoints.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, I think it's complicated. I, so I should preface this, I study the intersection of technology and politics so, but I think that what you're

pointing out is, is that, you know, the online space is a space where these things can flourish. But I don't think they have to. I think that, you know, we can utilize those spaces for alternative dialogues that are more civil. And, again that's what we're trying to do here is just create like how can we have conversations about things that are difficult to talk about and you know there is a lot of hatred, there is a lot of divides but how can we use spaces like this as well as online spaces to really kind of at least if not agree, I mean, we're never going to totally agree with each other, but if we can at least respect each other's opinions and --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- listen and, and try and be curious about other's perspectives.

BRIANNA WU: Absolutely.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, thank you for giving us the opportunity. And I think there's one more question over here.

Q: Just a question about politics. Sorry.

BRIANNA WU: Great.

Q: It's the 2018 elections that you're running in and --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: -- those are midterms --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: -- where you can expect about 35 percent of the electorate to turn out and actually vote.

BRIANNA WU: Yeah. That's great news for me. Yeah.

Q: In, 19 -- well in, you know, 1994 it was the same thing. Contract with America. In 2010 it was the same kind of thing with the Tea Party

movement. What evidence do you have that Democrats are actually going to respond by turning out in greater numbers in a midterm because it seems to be Republicans who are more motivated in these elections?

BRIANNA WU: You know, for me this is great news according to my political analysts so, you know, you figure -- and forgive me because I'm trying to remember these numbers off the top of my head -- but I think its 135,000 people voted in the last election for District 8. So, okay this, you know, it's a Presidential year. A lot of people come in for that, right? So, you go, okay, it's an off year. How many people are going to show up for an off year election? To show up for that? Well, the numbers show, like you said, it's about 35 percent.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Indiscernible].

BRIANNA WU: Right? So then you chop it down a little finer and you get, well, this isn't even the election, it's the primary before the election of somebody that's never faced, that has rarely faced a challenger, right? So, then it's just a contest of wills. It's like how many hands can I get out there in my district and shake? Could I shake 20,000 hands? I think I've shaken, like, yeah, I've met like 1,000 people today. I can go out and shake 30,000 hands in two years and talk to people one on one and get them excited. Lynch is going to have the Democratic machine behind him. They love the status quo. This is, you know, it's a complete mistake to pretend like the Republicans are our problem. You know, the Democratic Party is a mess and as I've started working with them I really understand why we lose so often. It is really terrifying some of the stuff I see. So, you know, for me I'm going up against somebody that's got the political machine of Boston behind him. But I really, what I see when I talk to people is they are absolutely sick of what's going on. Right or left. The one theme is

unmitigated anger at Congress and I think that's going to play in my favor. So, you know, my job is if I win to be less of a jerk star than the people that were there before me. So --

DR. HOFFMAN: So, this brings up a question that comes up perennially when we have, when we face these very divided government. You know --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- sides of government. I mean, is there ever going to be a viable third party in this country?

BRIANNA WU: I'd love it if we could. I think, you know, if you look at other countries the lesson they learned from our, you know, our democracy is don't have a two party system. You know, don't do a first pass at the post system. I think it would be great if we could, you know, because right now we just root for two sides like a football team. And, I think it's very destructive. I don't know how you do that realistically without fundamentally changing elections in the United States and you know what, if I end up winning and someone puts that bill on my desk you better believe I'd sign it because I'm thinking it'd be good for the country.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. We've got time for one more question. Katie, there's one right here. I don't know if you can toss it all the way over there. You can pass it down.

BRIANNA WU: Throw it.

AUDIENCE: [Indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

BRIANNA WU: Woo. Boy.

Q: Okay, I'm kind of going back to the question earlier about,

like, finding common ground with people who don't agree with you. I agree that, like, conversations are very important --

BRIANNA WU: Yeah.

Q: -- and a lot of times when I try to, like, talk to people my own age who disagree with me it's easy and like they're open to conversation and we end up finding that common ground, But, I have, like, a very different political view from my parents and a lot of times trying to talk, like, as a college aged person to someone like my parents or my parents', like, their generation its, they, it's harder to talk to. They're not open to having those conversations. They'll say things like, you know, oh, when you're my age you'll, like, agree with me.

BRIANNA WU: Ugh.

Q: Yeah.

BRIANNA WU: [Laughter].

Q: And --

BRIANNA WU: Wrong.

Q: -- I was wondering if you had any advice on how to, like, start conversations with people who aren't open to it.

BRIANNA WU: It's, it's hard. I mean, I, I would say this, I turned 40 this year and it's, it's easier for me to understand now how people stop learning, you know? Or, just kind of decide they've figured things out and just stop listening to new ideas. I think that a real challenge for everyone in this room is as you get older, like, do continue learning new things. Continue hearing new perspectives. You know, continue learning new skills. I would say psychologically sometimes there's no point. Like, sometimes you just can't, it's just going to end in an argument. So, I, I think there's not really a fast rule here, you know? It's, it's

difficult. I think that we have to keep trying and I think overall something that we need is more respect for each other. But I also think that you can't look at Charlottesville and, you know, in my opinion, like there's not a, a conversation that you can have with white nationalists, you know? And I think you have to stand your ground. So, my, my overall suggestion to you and your generation is don't doubt yourself. And when people older than you, like, are pigheaded and don't want to hear about your ideas, don't, just keep pushing. Don't let it weigh you down. So, you know, it's a, I really hope, like, my generation is going to try to change the world as much as we can and I hope that you guys will be right behind me doing your part too.

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. Thank you. Just a couple of announcements before we thank Brianna for visiting. Our next speaker in two weeks is David Joy; he's an Appalachian novelist who will talk to us a little bit about geographic divides. He lives in western North Carolina in the mountains of North Carolina and we saw a lot of differences in geography in this nation in the last election. So, I think it will be a really fascinating conversation. He will have two books, two of his novels that will be for sale in the lobby at that event. And I also wanted to remind you about our Voices of the Divide audio essay contest. This is an audio essay contest for University of Delaware students. The deadline is December 1st. I'll be talking about it throughout the semester. But this is an opportunity for you to share your voice, your concern, your experience a lot like the conversations we've been having here tonight. So, with all that said, I want to thank Brianna for being here. Let's give her a big round of applause.

AUDIENCE: [Applause].