Katie Linder: You're listening to Research in Action, episode 181. Welcome to Research in Action, a weekly podcast about topics and issues related to research in higher education featuring experts across a range of disciplines. I'm your host, Dr. Katie Linder, Research Director at Oregon State University Ecampus, a national leader in online education. Along with every episode we post show notes with links to resources mentioned in the episode, a full transcript and an instructor guide for incorporating the episode into your courses. Visit our website at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast to find all of these resources.

Katie Linder: On this episode I'm joined by Dr. Julie J. Park, associate professor of education at the University of Maryland College Park. Her research addresses race diversity and equity in higher education, including the complex experiences of Asian American college students. Her book Race on Campus: Debunking Myths with Data from Harvard Education Press uses social science data to challenge misconceptions surrounding race in college admissions and campus climate. She is also the author of When Diversity Drops: Race, Religion, and Affirmative Action in Higher Education from Rutgers University Press, an examination of how bands on affirmative action affect everyday student life. Her work has appeared in venues such as the Washington Post, Huffington Post, and the Chronicle of Higher Education. Thanks so much for joining me on the podcast today, Julie.

Julie J. Park: Oh, I'm so glad to be here.

Katie Linder: So I am really excited to talk with you about your book, Race on Campus. Can you start by telling us a little bit about what it's about?

Julie J. Park: Sure. The book tackles some of the prominent myths or what I identify as myths within higher education, and concerning how people think race influences admissions and the campus climate, so sort of the environment that students experience. And so each chapter tackles a prominent myth and I bring in research and I try to use layperson's language to walk people through what the research says. And then there's also sort of a secondary aim where I draw on research from, on cognitive bias to help unpack, why might it be that people are susceptible to myths, are vulnerable to myths? How do these things, how does this field, which basically in a nutshell says that our brains are wired to make us trip, how can knowing some of that research maybe make us take a step back and think about why do we think what we think?

Katie Linder: Okay. So I'm curious, of course we have all kinds of things going on with admissions now and scandals, and there are always things that are in the news. When you were kind of originally wrote this book, because it came out in 2018 when of course we did have scandals but now we have even more. Who are you hoping this book is for? Especially when you're writing it in layperson's terms and trying to clarify, what are these things meaning in very practical sense. Are there different audiences that you had in mind for this book?

Julie J. Park: Sure. I think I just wanted anyone to read it, right? In making it more accessible, I definitely wanted my work to go beyond the academic audience, even though I hope academics will read it and I know that many have. But it was really inspired by, I would go and I would speak at college campuses and I would hear people, even people that I consider really well-informed or really smart people would say things, and I didn't always feel like they were supportive by the research. And so that's why I wanted to kind of tackle that topic. But yeah, I hope that a wide audience will find it and hopefully find it interesting.

Katie Linder: Okay. We'll definitely get a link to it in the show notes. I'm sure people are already interested and want to hear a little bit more. So you talked a little bit about what led you to write the book in the first place. I'm wondering what sources of data you're drawing on for this book. I would imagine there are lots of things that you could have been choosing from to really explicate this particular set of issues. What were some of the key areas that you decided to draw on?

Julie J. Park: Sure. Mainly in just research studies that have been published in peer reviewed journals that are concerning race in higher education in different ways. So whether that's research on tackling the mismatch, so-called mismatch hypothesis. So there've been a lot of studies done both in the social sciences and in the legal arena looking at that issue. Other studies come from interdisciplinary fields, sociology, education, psychology, et cetera, that have tried to look at different dynamics related to conditions that affect, like that are linked to admissions policies. And so things like around the effectiveness of race-conscious admissions policies or effectiveness of different types of policies. And then also a lot of research on campus climate that we have. And so how are students experiencing the campus racial climate? What are they encountering? There are a good number of studies on that.

Katie Linder: So I would imagine that one potential audience for this book could be students. What are some of the things that you're hoping that they might be able to take away from a book like this?

Julie J. Park: Yeah. I hope that they will be pushed to think about the issues maybe in sort of a different way than maybe they had thought. I think students, especially those who are going through higher education at the time, they're certainly forming their own opinions and assumptions, based off their campus, based off of their experience. And that's great. But I would hope that the book maybe could push them to look a little bit beyond their experience. And so there might be some things that resonate with them and I hope there'll be other things that might surprise them or make them think like, "Oh, I didn't realize that maybe that issue played out the way it does."

Katie Linder: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So one of the things I was really drawn to about this book, you have the subtitle Debunking Myths with Data, and we love data over here at Research in Action. I'm wondering to what degree this book is serving a role in terms of data literacy, helping people to kind of understand how you can look to data in order to better understand some of these mythologies or where they're coming from.

Julie J. Park: Sure. Yeah, I definitely tried to do that. I think there are places throughout the book where I might take other people's research and I might explain why, I might present someone's claim that say A causes B, right? A and B are linked together, and I might unpack that and say, "Well actually there are a lot of other things that could be potentially linked to B, right? The outcome. And we really need to look deeper into that. Or let me think of another example. One might be some of the research, Thomas Espenshade and Alexandria Walton Redford's research on college admissions, in my view has oftentimes been misinterpreted.

Julie J. Park: So there's this, they have this book come out a number of years ago that found that certain groups have a higher likelihood of getting into an elite college or a lower likelihood, et cetera. It's great work, but at the same time, the analysis only includes a certain number of variables that admissions officers take into account. So there are a lot of things that admissions officers don't take into account that they weren't able to control for. And so, I unpack that and explain like how some of the conclusions that people have drawn from their work are taking things a little too far, and actually Espenshade himself said, "This isn't causal evidence of discrimination."

Julie J. Park: So number one, helping people understand correlation does not equal causation. But number two, recognizing that, as great as stats are and number crunching, sometimes the way these things play out in the real world are different, right? What we see here, well we can draw from the data, we can draw conclusions around associations, or such and such is linked with a higher likelihood. But then the particular methods that were used don't establish causality. And then on top of that, there's a whole lot of other things that admissions officers take into view that weren't even included in the analysis just because it'd be very hard to get that type of data and information.

Katie Linder: Mm-hmm (affirmative). It seems like in some ways this book is kind of pulling a curtain back on what is going on when it comes to admissions, and like here are the things that are sometimes discussed and here are the things that are not discussed, and how would you know unless you're kind of in the field or you kind of understand what admissions really looks like.

Julie J. Park: Sure. That study that I talked about, the main variable city controls for our sort of standardized metrics of achievement. So things like SATs and GPAS and courses taken and other things. And those are all great, but there are things like essays and sort of the quality of extracurriculars or what people got out of them, how people are making meaning around them, all sorts of things. So yeah, all of those things are just as important I would say.

Katie Linder: Mm-hmm (affirmative), absolutely. So I'm always really curious, Julie, how especially people who have multiple books, how you shift from kind of the earlier work into the later work, or how certain books are connected. And you do have this earlier book, When Diversity Drops: Race, Religion and Affirmative Action in Higher Education. I'm wondering if you can talk a little bit about this book and how it relates to the first one that you wrote. Is this something that's building on the earlier work that you've done or are you shifting in a more nuanced direction?

Julie J. Park: Sure. They are definitely linked in different ways. Yeah, that's a great question. I didn't go in thinking, "Okay, this is going to be a two book sequence, right? I'm going to write this book first, and that I had no idea I would write this second book until basically a year or so before I wrote it. And so the first book, When Diversity Drops, it's kind of a weird book and I think people have a hard time placing it, and I totally understand because it's like two of these things go together and one does not belong. In the title it's like race, religion and affirmative action. And so people are like, "Well, I get race in affirmative action and maybe I get race in religion, but all three?"

Julie J. Park: Basically I use this campus religious group as this site to understand how a decline in African American enrollment at this public university on the West Coast affected, had this trickle down effect on this multiracial or religious student organization, and how it affected their ability to enact this vision that they had for being a multiracial student community. And so that was my dissertation that I developed into a book. I think it was really in that book that I first started exploring these interesting linkages between race and religion and the idea that religious environments could be a really interesting place to study racial dynamics. But that's a site that's often not talked about, right? You can have your usual suspects when you talk about campus racial climate. People talk about ethnic student organizations, people might talk about Greek life and issues there, but usually people are thinking about like campus fellowships, that's kind of totally in a different realm.

Julie J. Park: But I saw these issues playing out of this campus religious group. And so from there I began a series of actually quantitative studies. The first book is based on ethnographic work, right? So it's totally in the different direction of interviews and observations and field work. Because I also do quantitative work, I said, "Hey, could I explore this in the data?" And so that actually launched a series of papers where I looked at the link between participation in religious groups or being religious on outcomes like interracial friendship, cross-racial interaction, et cetera. And so we did find some interesting patterns, that participating in religious groups you are less likely to have close friends of other races, and some other things like that.

Julie J. Park: And so along that same time I was developing this broader body of quantitative studies, looking at these conditions that affect cross-racial interaction and that those studies all sort of comprise the foundation of what led to the second book, which was, "Oh, I'm publishing these studies and these peer reviewed journals that only a small percentage of people read." I wanted to bring them all kind of together and in conversation with each other. So that's a long way to say yes, all of my work is linked in kind of a weird way that isn't always apparent, but definitely it all connects together in this big mess, that is my mind.

Katie Linder: Yeah. Well that makes it very clear to me based on your description. Thank you. Okay. We're going to take a brief break. When we come back, we're going to hear a little bit more from Julie about some of the myths that she's discussing in Race on Campus. Back in a moment.

Katie Linder: The Research in Action podcast is delivered to you by Oregon State University Ecampus, the university's top ranked online education provider. One of the greatest things about working for Ecampus is hearing the success stories of our online students like Orman Morton III. After being suddenly let go from a decade long stint working at a steel mill, Orman turned to Oregon State Ecampus's Environmental Sciences program online. As a Native American passionate about improving the land, earning this degree changed his life for the better, ultimately leading to his dream job in a field he's passionate about. Read more about Orman and his journey at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/orman.

Katie Linder: Julie, I really wanted to do a deeper dive into some of these myths that you focus on in Race on Campus. I would imagine that there are probably quite a few myths that you had to choose from that you've encountered in your work as we mentioned kind of earlier in segment one. How did you choose which myths you wanted to focus on? How many did you include in the book and how did you kind of narrow those down in terms of what you wanted to focus on?

Julie J. Park: Yeah. How many did I include in the book? Let me click on the table of contents really quick if I can find it. Well, it looks like there're ... Okay, so there are seven chapters total, and the seven chapter is not a myth. And then the first chapter I think is an intro. No, chapter one. So one, two ... So six. Okay, so there are six myths, I'm a little rusty. There're six myths that the book addresses, and really it came together pretty naturally in terms of just like what are these like chunks that I felt like my research addressed. The book came about, there's sort of a funny backstory where I was, I did not plan to write this book. I mean until I actually started to write it.

Julie J. Park: I was at AERA, the American Educational Research Association, which is this huge conference. Gosh, maybe in 2016. It was a while ago, 2015 or 2016, and I was just browsing at the Harvard Ed Press booth and I got into a conversation with someone, borrowed someone's pen and they said, "Oh, what do you do?" I said, "Oh, I study higher ed race diversity. They said, "Oh, we're always looking for more higher ed volumes. Do you want to meet our editor, like our editor-in-chief? And I said, "Okay, sure." They brought me over and we struck up a conversation and he said, "Do you have any book ideas?" And then I said, "Oh, I've written one book with Rutgers and had a really good experience." He said, "Well, do you have any current book ideas?"

Julie J. Park: This is like supposed to be a golden moment, right? I guess you should always have a book idea in your back pocket. But I did not have one that second. And I said, "No, but could I have your card, and if I come up with anything, can I email you?" He was really kind and he said, "Sure." He was probably thinking like, "I'm never going to hear from this woman." And so I went home and I thought, "Oh my gosh, it's a great opportunity. This is really a great opportunity, what could I write a book on?" I think all along this the ideas had been percolating, right? And I always thought, "Oh, it'd be great to kind of bring them together." And so I just remember sitting down and just kind of the basic theme of the idea just poured out.

Julie J. Park: So with that, how did I pick my six myths? Is that I just thought of, what clusters could my research fall into? And then the only chapter, the second to the last chapter I think which is on mismatch is a little different because that's the chapter that includes more research that I did not conduct as much myself. So the first four chapters, four, five ... Yeah, five chapters I guess, I draw heavily from both other people's research but also my own quite a bit. And so the chapter on mismatch was the chapter that I knew a lot about because I followed this debate and then the research and I've been very interested in it, but I have done less sort of personal, like I myself have not developed my own line of work on mismatch, although I think some of my work might be able to be applied or involved in that debate as well.

Julie J. Park: So I remember thinking, "Okay." And I was also figuring out like, "Okay. Well the book should have five or six chapters," and then sort of figuring out how would they balance. And I thought, "Okay, well they mostly fall into either admissions or campus racial climate." I remember thinking like, "I need one more." And so that's how I was like, "I feel like mismatch crosses both of them actually, both admissions, and it has huge implications for climate and how students of color are seen." So I said, "Well there are plenty of myths around mismatch. I think I would like to include it." I say it upfront in the book that this is the chapter where I've done the least amount of original research, but I'm drawing from other people's research.

Katie Linder: Okay. So I want to hear a rundown of these myths and maybe we can start with mismatch just because people may not be familiar with what you mean by that. So can you describe what that is?

Julie J. Park: So the second to the last chapter is on, it's called The Problem of the “Problem of Mismatch”. Problem of mismatch is in quotes because that's how it's often referred to. And I'm saying it's a problem that we think that this mismatch thing is even a problem. And so mismatch is a, they refer to it as a theory, some people refer to it as a theory, I guess it's more like an idea that was developed and has been advanced most prominently by a faculty member at UCLA Law School, Richard Sander. He wrote a book with a journalist, Stuart Taylor, that came out in the late 2000s on mismatch.

Julie J. Park: It's this idea that basically students of color are especially underrepresented minority students, African-American, Latinx, Native American, et cetera, are mismatched at elite institutions, that they underperform, that these are not the places for them, that they're basically out of their league, they're mismatched. And so when Sander published some of his original research, I think in like the early and mid 2000s, this really created an uproar both in the legal community because he drew a lot from research on law schools and sort of passage rates of the bar exam.

Julie J. Park: And so there was a slew of sort of special issue journals where people were publishing articles back and forth, and it continues to be debated and examined from a number of different angles. And so that was, yeah, I felt like I learned a lot writing the chapter and I think it's really important, because people I think say a lot of problematic things just very casually about, "Oh, students of color they just kind of drop out. Or writ large, they would just do better ..." You know, we heard it from the Supreme court, right? Scalia made that comment where that basically was reflecting mismatch.

Katie Linder: Okay. So that is a great description of mismatch. What are some of the other myths that you tackle in the book?

Julie J. Park: Sure. In chapter five, I talk about both why the SAT and also SAT Prep fall short. I would say that this is a chapter that includes quite a bit of my own research, specifically looking at inequities with SAT Prep, both in access to who is able to take it, but then also I found the research that has been done by Derek Briggs and some other good people that found that really gains associated with SAT Prep are quite minimal. That not every group benefits equally, but overall the benefits are not the sort of 300 point miracle that's oftentimes advertised. And so I talk about that. Chapter four is looking at Asian Americans and affirmative action. So I say why is affirmative action good for Asian Americans, and the book came out at a very interesting time with a pending lawsuit at Harvard that I did some consulting on, on the side of Harvard in full disclosure.

Julie J. Park: And then the chapter before that looks at class-based affirmative action. And so this idea, is class-based affirmative action the answer? I say no. We need the ability to consider both race and class. And then chapter two looks at self-segregation, so-called self-segregation in college campuses. It helps maybe I should start with chapter one actually. So the intro chapter is looking at just broad myths about racial self-segregation on campus and especially the charge that it's notoriously like black students who are camping out in the cafeteria or only hanging out with each other. And so that's what chapter one looks at. And then chapter two takes that further, and says who is actually self-segregating. Because chapter one talks about how actually students of color actually have quite high rates of interracial engagement, interracial friendship, contact, et cetera. But we know that groups like sororities and fraternities and also religious groups, so that ties back to my first book, can sometimes isolate white students in particular.

Katie Linder: Yep. Okay. So Julie, I'm curious if there were certain of these myths that were kind of easier or more difficult to work with in terms of how you tried to frame it, what kinds of data you were pulling from. Were there certain ones that stand out to you? You mentioned the one that wasn't pulling from your own work as being kind of bringing its own challenges. But are there other things that were particularly easy or difficult?

Julie J. Park: I think the hardest part was just sitting down and writing the book, honestly. I mean I think it's just sort of that like getting your butt in the seat and sitting down and typing it out. I think somewhere along the line I got ... I forget, was I already pregnant or I got pregnant and then I had this due date. Like I had a literal due date and then I thought, "Oh my gosh, I want to get this manuscript in before I have this kid because I'm never going to get work done again." So I just remember feeling a little bit of pressure that I just had to kind of crank it out.

Julie J. Park: But once I actually got ... It was actually a fun, sort of a painfully fun, like most writing and a lot of research. It's sort of painful but it's also sort of fun and exciting, and I really enjoy writing in sort of a more layperson's voice. That's something I've done through op-eds and other writing. And so to write the whole book felt very kind of conversational but also natural, and it was like using a different part of my brain than the part I use to write these original peer review articles that comprise the foundation for the book.

Katie Linder: Okay. Well Julie, this is really fascinating. We're going to take another brief break and when we come back we'll hear a little bit more from Julie about her work. Back in a moment. We're proud of Research in Action, and I hope you find the episodes interesting, valuable and actionable. If you're enjoying the show, help others discover Research in Action by rating and reviewing it on iTunes.

Katie Linder: Julie, my ears perked up in the last segment when you mentioned writing op-eds because I do feel like this is a really kind of interesting form of public scholarship and it can be very different genre-wise from other kinds of academic writing that we do. I'm curious if you can talk a little bit about how you got involved in writing op-eds, and what that has looked like for you?

Julie J. Park: Sure. Well, how can I get started? I think some of my early ones, I used to have a Huffington Post column. And so that was a way ... I think they had an editor who just found one of my articles and thought it was interesting and he said, "Hey, would you be interested in writing a blog post or like a HuffPost column about this?" Back in the day, Huffington Post had this thing where if you had an author account, you could just publish anything you wanted. I don't even know how much they filtered. Once you got past the initial one, they just trusted that, you're at the mercy of the Internet to be truthful and accurate.

Julie J. Park: And so after that I would occasionally write them, and it was nice because it was just a way to get my ideas out in a different way. And then from that I had, I think my first major one that I landed in the Washington Post was in early 2015 and that one was related to the Harvard lawsuit. And then I've had a few more in places like Inside Higher Ed, and done some writing for the Chronicle and some other venues. And so yeah, I found it to be rewarding and just kind of fun. It uses a different part of your brain. It can be a challenge I think to just really distill your thoughts, to really switch from academic writing where I tend to be really verbose in academic writing, and also in academic writing I use a lot of very tentative language. This might, could, possibly be, right? Because you really want to leave all options open.

Julie J. Park: When I started writing op-eds I realized, yeah, you can show that you don't always know things 100%, but you have to be a little more to the point or you're kind of taking a stand more. And so it's just a different type of writing, and I find the word limits to be sort of like a painfully fun challenge. I don't know if fun, but interesting. I think it challenges me to figure out how to communicate my work in different ways. So yeah, I've enjoyed writing them.

Katie Linder: So op-eds are a very particular genre, and I'll post a resource in the show notes about an organization called The OpEd Project, which helps to train people about how to write op-eds because they are kind of particular. But I think many op-eds are kind of timely in they're meant to be connected to a particular event or something that's going on, and sometimes you can write them kind of spur of the moment, and trying to get them placed in a particularly timely way. I'm wondering, Julie, if you can talk about the decision making process of when to write an op-ed and on what? At what point do you say, "I'm going to try to write this within the next 48 hours and see if I can place it?" Can you talk a little bit about that?

Julie J. Park: Yeah. It tends to be kind of an impulsive decision.

Katie Linder: Right, right.

Julie J. Park: Yeah. I think it's usually like if I see something in the news that I feel like my work can speak to, then I just kind of if I have the time, or if I'm procrastinating on other projects, I just say, "Okay, I'm just going to try to go for it." I think it's also you're opening yourself up to a certain level of risk, very low level risk like it's not terrible, but because they tend to print things that are very timely, you kind of have this expiration date. And so unlike a journal article where you can kind of keep revising and resubmitting and revising and sending to other journals, I've had op-eds that I've shopped around that never got placed. They're like in the op-ed graveyard on my Dropbox.

Katie Linder: Me too. You're not alone.

Julie J. Park: So yeah, you're opening yourself up to the risk that it won't get placed. But when you get that feeling that, "Oh, I just really want to write something or I need to write something," I think you just, if you have the bandwidth, I try to go for it and yeah, I've enjoyed that process.

Katie Linder: I would imagine that in addition to the risk of not placing it, you're alsO putting yourself out there in terms of something that would be read by maybe a broader audience than some of your academic work, and people can comment and they can respond. Is that also a risk that you feel like comes with doing op-ed, that people will engage in the work and maybe not always in the nicest fashion?

Julie J. Park: Yeah, definitely. I actually make it a practice to try not to read comments just because I feel like you could just get sucked into this wormhole. Because when the comments are nice, it's great, but when they're not nice, they can get really nasty. I've had people write me directly in my email, sometimes just weird, very weird or sometimes rude emails, and I just don't respond. I just don't engage at that level.

Katie Linder: So Julie, I'm wondering if you can offer, I don't know, maybe some tips or strategies for people who are thinking about doing something like an op-ed. Are there certain things you've learned about that genre that are effective in terms of, you mentioned the length as being kind of a thing, but even kind of structurally, how do you present information in a relatively concise way? That can be pretty complex.

Julie J. Park: Yeah. I don't know if there's any one size fits all technique, but I think usually they're looking for some sort of hook. As a reader, you want something that's going to draw you in like right away. So whether that's your personal story or something that you're talking about, using that and then maybe connecting it somewhere at the end. And then probably another thing would just be not to overload the op-ed. I think an op-ed, sometimes less can be more. So I've had times when I've written a draft and I've wanted to get every single point in especially if it's academic.

Julie J. Park: I'm like, "You need to know about this possibility and this contingency, et cetera." And when I stepped back and reread it, I was like, "Well, that's fulfilling on some level to be like, "I told, I do everything." But as a reader, I can understand a reader is not going to follow that as well and we'll do a little better with just maybe one or two points being focused on more and developed a little more. And then just keeping the language, just remember that you're switching from your academic voice to a more conversational voice.

Katie Linder: So you've mentioned a couple of times in this conversation, Julie, the painfulness that can come with writing, and that it's fun but also sometimes a little bit challenging. I'm wondering if you can talk about this concept of op-eds and really your kind of writing very quickly. I mean you are trying to get something out in a relatively short frame of time so that it can be submitted. I'm wondering, can you talk a little bit about how you motivate yourself into that, to kind of sit down, do the thing and ship it out without having that revision time, without really having a lot of time to process and think about it and do that revision? You kind of have to get it out the door. What are some strategies that you have for that?

Julie J. Park: Yeah. I think if you're passionate about the topic, that's kind of just the driving force, I think. If you're just like, "Oh, I really want to add to the conversation in this way." I mean for me that's the main motivator. But then you kind of see this, you assess the right law of diminishing returns. There have been times where I've worked on one, sent it out again and it wasn't hitting and after a certain time, it's just isn't worth it, and just figuring out when you kind of just say, "All right. This one you never know. Maybe it'll come back later, but it's not going anywhere for now."

Katie Linder: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I would imagine too that there is some level of fear of putting out this kind of stuff that really is your own opinions. It's your own work, it's you putting your voice out there and maybe a stronger way than we sometimes do in academic writing. Is there anything that helps you to click that submit button once you're done with something, and how do you know it's done? Maybe that's a better question. How do you know that this piece is ready to go?

Julie J. Park: Yeah, you don't. I mean you just, you hit the word limit and you get it to the best place possible and then you send it off. And then if an editor likes it, they'll work with you a little bit or they might make some edits, but usually, it'll kind of go out not too differently from what you submitted. And so it's definitely different from the slower ... But I think there's a certain similarity with academic writing too. There's a lot of vulnerability, like you are putting your ideas out there on paper, and a lot of times you get reviewer feedback that is not friendly, and that also involves risk taking and sometimes you don't know whether an article has done or you just kind of get to that point where you can't make it any better. So yeah, there are some similarities, but I think the op-ed process is quicker, much quicker.

Katie Linder: What are some of the benefits that you've seen in your career from writing op-eds and from writing in this particular subgenre?

Julie J. Park: Yeah, I mean it's been nice. I mean, people have told me like, "Oh, I really enjoyed reading this," or, "Oh, this helped me think about an issue in a different way." I think it's nice when people who would never read my regular articles read an op-ed and they're intrigued or excited, or they circulate it on social media and they say, "Oh, you should read this, et cetera." And so that's really ... Yeah, it's cool. And then, I have a funny story where after I wrote the Harvard one that appeared in the Washington Post, I went to ... This one's really at 2015. I live in the Washington DC area and I went to this community screening of the premiere for Fresh Off the Boat, the ABC TV show.

Julie J. Park: I just sat down and I was alone and I wasn't really talking to anyone. And then this man in a suit sat next to me and he had someone else with him and we just started chatting, and then somehow like affirmative action came up. And as he said something I think contrary to what I ... He said like, "Oh, it can hurt Asian Americans." I said, "Actually I disagree." And I said, "Oh, I actually had a piece come out in the Washington Post where I talked about being rejected from Harvard and about how this has shaped my understanding of how race-conscious admissions works in different ways."

Julie J. Park: And he said, "That was you? I read that." I mean, even though that we weren't on the same page of the issue, he said, "That was you? I read that." But the funny thing is, it was actually Congressman Ted Lieu. So it was a member of Congress, right? And so that's a fun thing, when the Washington Post is your local paper, right? I mean I have not had anything published in the Post since then, but a member of Congress could read it, a staffer. And so it's neat in a weird way to get your work just into the hands of people who would never see it from a traditional academic journal.

Katie Linder: I love that story. Julie, this has been so fun. Thank you so much for coming on the show, sharing about your work and also sharing about your experience writing op-eds. This has been really great.

Julie J. Park: Oh, my pleasure. Thank you so much.

Katie Linder: Thanks also to our listeners for joining us for this week's episode of Research in Action. I'm Katie Linder and we'll be back next week with a new episode.

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