

LILY BOND: Welcome, everyone, and thank you for joining this webinar entitled, "15 Years after an OCR Complaint-- NC State's Accessibility Refresh." I'm Lily Bond from 3Play Media, and I'll be moderating today. And I'm thrilled to be joined by Grey Reavis, the University IT Accessibility Coordinator at NC State University, and Rebecca Sitton, the Assistive Technology Coordinator at NC State University. And with that, I'm going to hand it off to Grey and Rebecca, who have a great presentation prepared for you.

GREY REAVIS: Great. So I'm Grey Reavis. I'm the University Accessibility Coordinator at NC State. And we're excited to talk to you today about what it looks like today at NC State after about 15 years after an OCR complaint. So what we're going to do today is tell you a little bit of the history of IT accessibility at NC State. We'll look at our current risk assessment process, and then also examples of current accessibility initiatives. Then we'll kind of do both an overview, plus give you some examples of some of the things that we're working on this year and over the next year.

So I am going to hand it over to Rebecca now. And she's going to talk to you about the complaint that we received in 1999.

REBECCA SITTON: Thank you. So yeah, let's talk a little bit about the history of NC State. North Carolina State is a land grant institution, and we receive federal funds. We are known for having a strong history in innovativeness in engineering, science, and technology. So it's not unexpected that we would happen to be one of the first universities to have an accessibility complaint, as in 1999.

We were all stumbling head first into the digital age. Computers had replaced card catalogs in libraries. The internet, web use was growing. Publishers found a quicker and easier way to get news and information to the public. We were beginning online education and learning with Blackboard, as well as a few other systems to make it easier.

And we were all experiencing this at the same time, kind of transitioning from that paper to digital needs. And so the university, although advancing in technology, still used paper as its main form of communication. And it caused a little bit of confusion as far as being able to communicate with one another.

In 1999, three students with vision loss filed independent complaints with OCR, alleging that the university discriminated against them based on their disability with respect to computer

access, accessible notices, including bulletin board postings, dormitory notices in the form of paper mailings, and accessible course syllabi, and equal access to emergency warning signals and communication devices, such as our campus telephone system. These students were enrolled in our computer science programs. So they were active JAWS users and very good at using accessible technology.

Let's see. The university, through these complaints, entered into a voluntary agreement to provide access to university notices, academic requirements, course schedules, syllabi, all comparable to other students. They agreed to implement a plan using assistive technology to ensure students with disabilities had access to computer hardware and software that was comparable to other students. And they agreed to provide access to emergency services and campus telephones comparable to other students and implement a grievance policy with respect to disability discrimination.

As a result of the agreement, NC State established a new permanent full time position, the Coordinator of Assistive and Information Technology. This was one position which was eventually switched into the two positions that Grey and I both have. NC State amended its computer use policy to establish guidelines for official web pages to ensure that web pages for courses and other university businesses were accessible to persons with vision loss.

We also restructured the DSS office to report to the provost office, rather than the Division of Student Affairs. NC State provided funds for additional assistive technology through their educational technology fee. \$90,000 was set aside for additional university assistive technology purchases. And originally, \$30,000 was given to the DSS for assistive technology.

NC State amended its student grievance policy procedure to include specific disability-related complaints. We established an ADA advisory committee to ensure input from students, faculty, and administrative units regarding disability-related issues on campus. So we had a lot of things that we put in place as a result of these complaints.

NC State also enhanced the assistive technology center in the campus library. To make sure that the students have access to materials in the library, we set up a center that had a JAWS workstation, a Kurzweil 1000 reading machine, and additional CCTV in there. We still have that center today, and then we keep its technology upgraded.

In general, IT developers were becoming increasingly aware of the need to acknowledge and

implement accessibility. As a result of this climate, improved-- as an improved campus climate as a result of this complaint in regards to accessibility that started campus-wide initiatives.

So some of the policies that were created during this time were a course syllabus policy that included a disability statement directing students to the DSS for assistance. We developed the grievance policy. A policy on discrimination, harassment, and retaliation complaint procedures was established in '99. The Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities was official in 2001. And then our Information and Communication Technology Accessibility policy was established in 2005. And Grey's going to talk about a refresh of that.

The lasting results of the complaint have been that the university has an IT accessibility coordinator. And Grey's focus with the IT Accessibility Coordinator position is to ensure that accessibility of software, hardware that we use on campus. And my position as Assistive Technology Coordinator is to make sure that our students have access to technology to access our university.

We have the IT accessibility regulation, the IT accessibility workgroup, which Grey's going to talk about, which I'm very proud to be a part of, the accessibility website, which we will show, which is a good central resource now for faculty, students, staff, the public when they come to look for information on campus.

We have access to an automated website tool that checks website accessibility for us. It checks our public-facing websites. So we're very thankful to have that technology available to us, as well as an IT accessibility handbook, the trainings that we have for IT staff on the functional knowledge of accessibility. We have a captioning grant on campus. And we have continuous budgeting of assistive technology across campus.

So let's think about this. 17 years later, today, let's go back to 2000 and think about all the ways and all the things that have changed in higher education in the last 17 years. What do you think has been the biggest change in education? This is our question.

LILY BOND:

So if people want to type their responses to that question into the control panel, I'll read out a couple of them. Someone is saying mobile device usage. Someone is saying online classes, cost, several online and mobile responses, reduced state funding, use of technology in the classroom, MOOCs, cloud use, integration of blended and online learning initiatives, flipped classroom. That covers most of the responses.

REBECCA

SITTON:

So exactly. There are a lot of changes in education. Some of the biggest that we have faced over the years-- we spent a lot of our focus in the early 2000s on creating this move of accessibility across campus. But it's very easy for institutions to either lose ground or for things to become stagnant with staff turnover, administration turnover, reorganization within the universities and colleges.

Funding, again, is always key. If you lose funding for positions, or you lose funding for technology, it could, again, result in stagnis or just not the progression that you need to see with all these rapid advances in technology and how we're delivering education now.

So I'm going to throw it back to Grey to talk about how we have realized some of those things that have been happening and what we're doing to counteract that.

GREY REAVIS:

All right. Thank you, Rebecca. So as you might see, you can tell that those complaints in 1999 really did kind of lay the foundation for us getting started with accessibility, for building some pretty significant initiatives, and moving a lot of things forward. But as all of you mentioned and as Rebecca mentioned, there has been a lot of changes that have happened in the last 17 years.

So then the question is why we're here and why it makes sense for us to consider shifts and changes now. So I actually came on as the accessibility coordinator about a year and a half ago. And so it really was kind of a natural time to think about looking at strategic goals and doing some risk assessment, partly because I had to set my own goals and see how we could support accessibility across the campus within the accessibility office.

So the other thing is that there was a little bit of gap between the time when I took over and the last coordinator left. And my background was in a lot of doing faculty work for accessibility, so it was slightly different. So it became kind of a great time to think about how we might want to move forward as I transitioned in. So one of the first things that I did as part of my role was try to do kind of an informal risk assessment.

And I found the best way to do that was to look at EDUCAUSE's IT accessibility risk statements and evidence. It provides this really great example based on complaints [INAUDIBLE] that have happened at other higher education universities in the United States and what the resolution set forward. So it's basically this benchmark that you can compare what you have on campus with what's kind of expected.

And it was a great way to both see what we were doing well and also to be able to see if there were areas that we could improve. So those are the two big questions coming forward is maintaining things, but also looking to continue to move things forward, rather than accepting the status quo, you might say, of things.

So after that initial risk assessment, moved into doing some goal setting. And a lot of that goal setting happened in conjunction with the IT accessibility working group. So as a coordinator, I'm really blessed with having basically a committee of folks across the university that work with me in advisory capacity, but also do some of their own small committee work. And we have stakeholders across the university-- people from the libraries, from communication, from DSO-- Rebecca serves on that-- from legal. We have instruction designers. We have different college reps. So it's a great group of stakeholders that are able to provide significant feedback and advice when we're looking at moving things forward.

So when I started with that group, one of the things we did was we both talked about what our campus climate at NC State is, in particular at NC State, but then in particular to accessibility. How would someone that was actually on campus describe their perspective of accessibility at NC State? And compared that to where we wanted it to be. So we did some visioning with that.

And then we looked at these risk statements and began to set some goals and priorities for the next year, particularly, in essence, to answer these two questions at the bottom. How do we support what we're doing well? So acknowledging those strengths, but continuing to be able to provide that support for that. Because we could just move on and look at other things. But if we did that, we would most likely lag in that eventually. And then also looking at areas or ways that we might improve.

And after doing that work, we came up with two kind of sets of priorities. One was a set of priorities that would be part of the accessibility working group. So a couple of things they were going to take on and shift and change over the next year. And then we also set priorities for my coordinator position.

And in addition to ongoing work, what are some things we could do for me to do? So with the IT accessibility working group, after looking at those things, we chose two main priorities to choose. One was to do a refresh of the campus accessibility regulation. And then the other was to do an evaluation and selection of website accessibility scanner.

The second one we did primarily because we did have a scanner, but it was no longer up and

running. And so we needed to pick something moving forward to continue to support our IT developers have to have done a lot of work with website accessibility. And then we also decided to focus on the IT accessibility regulation. We had a regulation for a long time. Sometimes people looked at it to get some ideas about how they might set up their IT accessibility regulation.

But what we found when we actually looked at the regulation-- and this is the regulation that's currently up on our website if you want to go and look at it-- is that we found that we really needed to simplify the language of that, partly because when this regulation was established that we have now, a lot of IT and even ICT meant websites and software that you were using on the staff side of things. But in the last 10 or 15 years, there's so much more IT, or Information Technology, that's being used in the classroom. Whether that's online, or whether that's mobile, it's just everywhere at the university.

And part of the language that was used in our current accessibility regulation-- the words, ICT developer, which was defined to mean anyone that would need to be paying attention to accessibility. And as you might note, if you went into a room of people that work at a university, most of them are not going to identify as ICT developers.

And so what we need to do is make sure that people understood that this accessibility regulation applied to them. So we did a lot of work on that, simplifying the language. We went from 1,000 words to 500 words. And we worked on clarifying those roles and responsibilities.

And the other thing that we wanted to do was really focus on more proactive measures. So instead of saying, don't worry about accessibility until you have somebody in your classroom, we really wanted to focus on more proactive things. And so you'll see here, this is a draft on the screen of our procedures that will go in effect-- it'll be published in a couple of weeks formally. You'll see that they address NC State employees, so basically anyone at the university, rather than calling them developers.

We've also put in a place for the Equally Effective Alternative Access Plan, the EEAAP, which we plan to implement in the summer once this goes live. So we'll be asking folks to be able, if they are choosing or using or purchasing materials that are not completely accessible, to be able to think ahead of time about how they're going to actually provide alternative access to that. So we're hoping to get folks more aware of those issues by changing that regulation.

So those are the two things that the IT accessibility working group tackled. And we're happy to

say that those two things are basically-- except for the regulation that has two more weeks-- those things have been done. So it's been really exciting to have a group that worked together and were able to accomplish things. Then the priorities that the IT accessibility working group suggested that I focus on, in addition to other responsibilities as the coordinator, was to look at these three main things.

One was training. So there's been quite a lot of training of IT folks on campus, but not as much on faculty. So we're going to look especially about a lot of faculty training. We did a communications refresh. So we do have, if you go to accessibility.ncsu.edu, that's our big landing page for accessibility. It's in the footer of most pages at NC State.

But then that leads to our IT accessibility web page that has lots of resources and information. And so that hadn't been updated in a while. And so we decided to move it into our current process with web services and update all the materials, specifically to specify which particular resources we had related to staff and IT folks versus faculty, and try to direct people in those ways.

And the other thing is that I've worked with purchasing or procurement. And so I'm just going to talk a little bit-- a couple of those things in more detail. One of things we developed was a faculty workshop series. And we partnered with DELTA, which is the Distance Education Learning Technology Application group-- it's basically our online learning group-- to offer some workshops for faculty in person about the major issues that come up we see in the classroom. So those are going to be things like PDFs, like captioning your videos, big things that you can address.

And we're also-- then, I'm working on developing an online faculty course in accessibility in partnership with our UNC system-wide teaching and innovation group to offer ongoing training to faculty, but also at the same time, develop resources that could be just in time. So they could be put on our website. If someone needs to learn how to make a Google doc accessible, they can go and watch it, or they can take the whole course. We're doing those two things to reach faculty.

And then the other big thing that we've been working on recently is the IT purchase compliance process. This is something that was released last June. So we've had a little bit of time, about nine months, to see what it looks like in practice. And it's something that's completely new to the university.

And what this process does is it asks anyone that's going to be purchasing software to submit an IT purchase compliance form. And it asks them questions like, who's going to be using it? What kind of data are they going to be stored? And based on that information, we can know whether or not it needs a security review or accessibility review.

So it's basically a process that works for reviewing for accessibility, but at the same time, it's in partnership with software licensing and security. So we're working together on it, rather than having separate processes. So once we get a form submitted, then it lets everyone know whether or not they need to do review. We review the software purchase based on a couple of different things. And we then have the authority to approve or reject the purchase. And the customer has to have the email that shows their approval and be able to take it to purchasing in order to actually purchase the software.

So you might imagine, since this is completely new-- this is not something that existed before last June-- that it's taken some time for customers to get used to it and for us to develop a more refined purchase compliance process as well. So what we did was we started with purchases that were more than \$5,000. And particularly, we focused on that, because those are the purchases that have to get formal approval from our purchasing department anyway. And so there was a method to be able to pull them in. And we got permission from purchasing to implement this process so that they were required to have our approval ahead of time.

And then the other thing we did was set priority for accessibility reviews based on access levels. So if we get-- say we got five review requests today, if one was going to be used by everyone at the university or used by the public, that would have priority over a purchase that's going to be used by, say, a small team of graduate students that are doing research. And so we want to make sure that we're having impact on the ones that are going to have the biggest effect across the university.

And we do have the option to provide authorization for purchases and to also provide feedback to people that are choosing and buying purchases. So it's kind of been interesting to see what the impact is working with vendors and working with purchases along the way. And we'll be doing some revision and documentation of how the process is working over the next couple of months.

So those are a couple of the different things that we've been doing. We're looking at setting those goals. And basically, what we've seen is that we have this foundation of accessibility

that's been established. And it's partly due to those complaints that students set out 17 years ago. But if we didn't constantly evaluate and revise our plan of where we are, we could easily be back in the same situation, where all of our websites were not accessible anymore, because there's turnover of people that have been trained. Websites are constantly changing and getting updated, those types of things.

So it's important to be able to support those things that you're doing well, but also to move forward as well. So we try to set yearly goals and priorities so that we know what we're working on towards strategic goals. And then the other really important thing that's key in terms of establishing and maintaining accessibility and growth of accessibility across campus is to have working relationships with key stakeholders that are on campus.

And depending on your campus, that's going to look different. But for us, working with disability support services, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, and other key groups like faculty development, are really important in order to know what people need and to be able to provide those needs to campus.

So what we'd like to do is take some time and just answer questions that you might have.

LILY BOND:

Great. Thanks, Grey and Rebecca. So I want to encourage people to type questions into the control panel. While we go through this, we'll continue compiling. But there are a lot of questions coming in already.

So someone is asking, if you have an LMS with online courses, how do you train your online faculty to ensure that the courses are accessible for both blind and deaf users? Do the faculty build their own content? And if they do, are they required to have accessibility issues taken care of?

GREY REAVIS:

That's a great question. So when it comes to online classes, I mean, ultimately, faculty are responsible for creating their materials. And oftentimes, they'll work in conjunction with DELTA, our online learning group, when they're doing things like that. And DELTA sometimes provides training, and then the accessibility office also provides training for faculty. Ultimately, it's their responsibility. And we try to provide them both training and resources to make that accessible.

**REBECCA
SITTON:**

I was going to say, we also encourage-- we have the trainings for faculty. We've done checklists that we've put out there for faculty to use when they're creating their courses to use as a guideline. We also have set up a captioning grant so that as they are looking for content,

if it's not captioned, we've provided pretty good instructions and way to get funding for that through our grant. So it is a process.

There have been courses that have been online for several years that haven't been checked. And so we are occasionally coming up against materials that we need to convert. I'd love to live in an ideal world, where every course and every page that's up inside of a course management system or learning management system is accessible. But I think we have a responsiveness and a plan that we all work together.

And that's where those key strategic partnerships come into play. I communicate as the person in disability services that has some general awareness as to who's enrolled in courses, a method to let our online learning system know really which courses to check really well early before the semester even starts.

So I think between our education that we're doing to faculty and our checklist and our communication, our grant provision, those are some things that you may look at doing your own university to help you out.

LILY BOND:

Thank you both. A lot of questions coming in. Someone is asking, can you talk about the curve for adoption among faculty colleagues and staff colleagues? How long did it take to hit a critical mass of adopters?

REBECCA

Do you want to talk about this latest refresh?

SITTON:

GREY REAVIS:

Well, I guess in this case, what you're talking about in terms of accessibility, design, and techniques in terms of adopting, using accessibility. And I would say that probably, because the accessibility coordinator position is located with information technology, which is primarily a staff-focusing group, a lot of the initial work was working with developers in particular, looking at both websites and enterprise software that they were developing, and then they were giving across the university. And so there was a lot of work with that. And I mean, folks seem to be pretty open to learning and doing the right thing in that way.

Now that IT is spread across the university, what we're seeing is that we need to work more closely with faculty, make sure they have the key skills and knowledge to develop things and select things that are accessible. Instructors are not out there purposely not designing things not accessibly. So we have to be able to provide them with enterprise tools and with guidelines

so that they can do the right thing.

But we are a very distributed campus with over 10,000 staff and faculty members. So yeah, it takes time, but it works.

REBECCA SITTON: It takes time, but like Grey said, adoption comes pretty quickly once they're made aware. I think faculty are really good about wanting to do it right. But again, we come from a technical world here, Grey and I. Our humanities faculty may not be as used to using technology. And so once you point out or you help them, they have tended to get it pretty quickly and developed their materials and responsiveness pretty well.

LILY BOND: Thank you both. Someone is asking, you mentioned restructuring of disability services. Can you elaborate on that and how it was restructured?

REBECCA SITTON: Back in '99, we were under the student academic affairs, and they were repositioned up under the ADA coordinator. The ADA coordinator was a new position. So we moved into under the ADA coordinators, I guess that overreaching structure of the reorganization. And then several positions were provided as far as our director and our access consultants.

There were three that were brought on, two that were brought on at the time. And the case load kind of distributed based on disability. And that became the basis of how we operate today. The university had also, in response to the complaints, started sending the letters to faculty-- the accommodation letters to faculty-- around 2001 directly.

LILY BOND: Great. Thank you. Someone is asking what the difference between your ADA advisory committee and IT accessibility working group are.

REBECCA SITTON: So the ADA advisory committee was set up by the ADA coordinator to bring stakeholders together to talk about accessibility issues on campus. It included students, faculty, staff. And so it was more of a general group. Whereas the IT accessibility work group is really more focused on IT accessibility, electronic websites, course materials, assistive technology that's used on campus in that way. So that's the two main differences of the groups.

LILY BOND: Great, thank you. Someone is asking, have you set up a process for dealing with purchasing exceptions?

GREY REAVIS: Yeah. I mean, that's a good question. So is there a link in the slide to the [INAUDIBLE]? So basically, with our purchasing process, since we just started out, our big focus is on purchases

over \$1,000 and purchases that are used by larger groups on campus, let's say. And what we're now working on are conditions of approval.

Let's say, for instance, we're working with a piece of software where the interface is accessible but there are certain features that are not. So we're working on a process of defining what those conditions are and having the purchasers-- the people in charge of whatever the purchase is-- create an equally effective alternative access plan, so they know what they're going to be expected to do before it's ever an issue.

And in that way, we're hoping to encourage folks to more and more begin to have conversations on their own with vendors, rather than waiting for it to get to the accessibility office and us starting the conversation. We do expect that to take more time to do that. But that's kind of the goal.

LILY BOND: Great. Thank you. Someone else is asking, since implementing your grievance process, how has it worked, and have there been bumps on the road?

REBECCA SITTON: I would say that I feel like-- again, I'm in the disability services office and not our legal office and office of general counsel. But I feel like the grievance policy is working, because we do get communications when there is a grievance, whether it's from the employee or student. And I think they're handled effectively on campus and that we work together.

So I think it's working based on the grievances that I do hear about. There are concerns in this last year as nationwide, I think, the animal policies on campus are needing to be looked at and adjusted. And I think we had a grievance with our emotional support animals in the summer. And so we get those, and we work through them. And I feel that the process is working really well with our grievance policy.

LILY BOND: Great. Thank you. Someone else is asking, how is the captioning grant funded? And what was the process to acquire the grant?

GREY REAVIS: Right. So the captioning grant is funded through what we call ETF funds, which are like--

REBECCA SITTON: Education technology.

SITTON:

GREY REAVIS: Education Technology Funds. So they're basically funds-- so they're fees that every student pays. And it's tuition and fees, so part of that falls into there. And so we were able to acquire

\$60,000 a year for captioning. And depending on your role at the university, when I say \$60,000, that may sound like a lot, or it may not sound like a lot.

But what we've been able to do is to use that to both fund some captioning that's been requested by students and some that's proactive. What our goal is is to get as much proactive captioning as possible, especially for high impact classes.

But they were funded through that. And there is a committee for ETF funds. I don't know what the exact name of it is. It's basically the ETF committee. And based on research that happened, it was clear that the best way to get funding for captioning or any other types of things in that way was to go through this committee and justify it. And that's basically how it happened.

It's really that the previous coordinator that secured the grant knew some of these key stakeholders and was able to make connections with them and to get buy-in from those folks in order to secure the funding.

REBECCA

SITTON:

And I'd also add that we've done a pretty good job at creating vendorships and getting standard rates for the university. So we've already worked through the vendorship and the partnerships so that we have a list of vendors that departments can go through to get their videos captioned. It's a pretty easy process.

LILY BOND:

Great. Thank you. Someone else is asking, after you did the reorganization of the Disability Services Office, did you see an increase in students requesting accommodations? Were students more likely to seek the support of the disabilities office?

REBECCA

SITTON:

I would say I do not know that answer, because it was before my time here. I do know that when I started here in 2010, I had 700 students roughly that I was responsible for. And since that time, as of this semester, I have almost 1,500 that I'm responsible for. So I can't answer too much to the growth before 2000. On our Disability Services Office website, there is some demographic historical data there. I just don't have it in front of me at the moment.

But our services and our offerings are growing every semester. It's amazing what we do. And our Disability Service Office consists of a director, an executive assistant to the director. We have an executive assistant in our office that does the front desk responsibilities. We have three access coordinators. We have a testing coordinator, and we have my position as assistive technology coordinator. So with roughly eight or nine people, we're administering

accommodations across campus for about 1,500 students.

LILY BOND: Thank you. Someone is asking, do faculty have to apply to get videos captioned proactively? Is there a prioritization process?

GREY REAVIS: So if they want to work through the captioning grant, they do have to apply. And there are certain criteria that we look at. So let's say we get 25 faculty members requesting proactive captioning over the summer. We're going to give that to as many courses that we can.

But when we have too many requests for funding, we tend to look at the type of class it is. So is this a gateway class, a class that everyone's required to take? How many students are in it? Are these videos that have been created intentionally based on good instructional design techniques that are intended to be used for the next couple of semesters? Or are these things that are just recorded in the classroom without editing?

And it's basically looking at instructional intent, quality of the videos, and then impact it's likely to have on students when it comes to priority. We want to give it to everyone, but sometimes we do run out of funding and have to not. So they do have to apply and let us know those facts.

LILY BOND: Great. Thank you. There are several questions about your faculty trainings. Some of them are, how did you develop the faculty training? And what was the reaction among faculty? And is it mandatory?

GREY REAVIS: OK, so I will say so far, at NC State, there is no mandatory accessibility training for anyone. But we found the need, and so that's part of the reason that we developed the faculty workshop series. The workshop series is based on both some research that will-- let's say informal surveys that we did with faculty members on campus, along with adult learning principles, et cetera, and also just kind of figuring out what we think faculty should actually know.

There's quite a spectrum of information when it comes to accessibility. And so what we try to do is to narrow it down to what would have the biggest impact for the time that they were learning. So we've developed-- I think right now, we do six simple ways to make things accessible, and those are platform agnostic. So if they're in Moodle, which is our learning management system, if they're creating a Google Doc, if they're using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, whatever they're using, here are some techniques that they should always be

looking at. So that's color contrast, text, structuring with headings, et cetera.

And then we look at the other big things that we saw in terms of major issues on campus, which we see a lot with documents. There's still a huge number of documents, especially PDFs, being distributed to students either through email or through the learning management system. And so we gave them specific training on how to make sure that their documents and PDFs, when they made them, are accessible.

And then we looked at videos. Because we find that, especially as online learning increases, that more and more folks are creating instructional videos. So we want to make sure they know how to create one upfront that has accessible things, and then be able to provide captioning and audio descriptions depending on what they need.

And so those are the big areas. That doesn't mean we hit everything. But we're trying to hit the things that faculty are more likely to be able to adopt, especially since they don't necessarily have design background, and distribute that.

So far, it's been received pretty well. We asked them at the end to create a specific project they're going to work on, like maybe they're going to make their syllabus accessible, or they're going to create a new introduction video that has the accessible techniques in it. And it seems like taking those bite-sized chunks makes it easier for them. And we've gotten a pretty good response based on that.

LILY BOND: Great. Thank you. Someone else is asking, could you describe your process for using vendors? And besides product contracts, do you have a process for evaluating services or vendors?

GREY REAVIS: So is this going-- I mean if this is in regards to selecting vendors that we're working with like, for instance, for captioning, or vendors for most things, I guess?

LILY BOND: It doesn't specify. Someone is saying, e.g. hiring contractors to develop department websites.

GREY REAVIS: So NC State is a pretty large campus, and it's also very decentralized. There are very few required processes. So for instance, in OIT, we have a web services team that will work with the department to develop their website. And those folks are trained pretty rigorously in accessibility so that we make sure that we're depending on that.

But it's not required. People are not required to go through that service. They are allowed to

go to other vendors and get websites from those folks. And we encourage them, and we provide the information, so they can make sure they're asking the right questions and getting accessible content if they're getting developed outside of campus. But I guess--

REBECCA They're still held to the policy.

SITTON:

GREY REAVIS: Right, we still have the policy, and they have to follow it. And if they have something developed that's not that way. that means they might have to go out and get another website developed. I mean it's just-- we try to make sure they have the information upfront. is the key. And everyone is still held to the regulation.

REBECCA Yeah, NC State has provided the resources for the campus to use providers that will ensure
SITTON: their content, their websites are accessible. If they choose to go outside, they're still bound by the policies that we have in place. So that's kind of how we encompass the few that go outside of web services for development.

LILY BOND: Thank you. Someone else is asking, do you have standards in your policies to comply with accessibility like WCAG or Section 508?

GREY REAVIS: Yeah. The way that the regulation is set up is that we follow the Federal Access Board's guidelines. And so since those have been updated-- well, I guess they're in place now-- so WCAG 2.0, Level AA-- then that's what we are following. Yeah.

LILY BOND: Great. And someone else is asking, can you share the results of the risk assessment?

GREY REAVIS: Well, so the risk assessment-- well, it's not something-- we didn't have it done formally like we contracted with someone. What we did was do it internally with folks on campus. And so it's not really a resource that we would probably--

REBECCA Produce. It was looking through methodically and looking at the results, and kind of as a
SITTON: group, the IT, AWT kind of figuring out what was the priority in that assessment that we did. It wasn't somebody we paid to come in and do the risk assessment. It was our own. Again, that committee is comprised of pretty much members of every college on this campus. It's legal. And so we did that internal assessment. And then from there, decided the priorities and moved on it.

LILY BOND: Thanks. Someone else is asking if you used a website accessibility scanning tool for this

assessment, and if so, which one?

REBECCA Want to talk about our process? [INAUDIBLE].

SITTON:

GREY REAVIS: So for the-- well, so we have it-- sorry. Just making sure I answer the question. So we have-- and part of this, we will be looking at-- we just adopted an automatic scanner process, which, of course, hits some of the things, but not everything. And we have teams that are starting their scanning process now. And that will give us the information we need to look at really closely website accessibility as it stands right now.

REBECCA There are multiple vendors out there that provide automated tools for scanning public
SITTON: websites. Each university should probably make an outreach call and decide what works for their university. Every environment's different-- your size, how many public-facing websites you have, et cetera.

But we've had an automated scanner for a number of years. And one of the things we have found that helped us across campus to get people to check their websites is every year, during Disability Awareness Week, we kind of send out a call to, hey, here's your automated results of your public website scan. How many of these can you fix within two weeks?

And some of the folks out there may find that kind of enticement and bragging amongst their IT professionals and web developers on campus might help you use some of those automated tools and check some of those pages and get the buy-in from across their campus to increase their website accessibility. We interviewed I think four different companies when we were looking at upgrading our accessibility scanner tool. Again, we went with the one that seemed to work best for our university. Again, everybody's needs are different.

LILY BOND: Thank you. Someone else is asking, how has the legal department been involved in your recent endeavors, such as the refresh that you mentioned?

GREY REAVIS: So the revision of the accessibility regulation goes through legal as they have to approve it. We worked very closely with them to make sure that the language that we used and the way that we adopted it worked within our policies and regulation standards guidelines. And they were the ones that also helped make sure that we got to the right committees. I think it probably was in-- I think seven different committees had to look at it and give their approval before it moved onto the next one. So we tried to get a lot of feedback from stakeholders

across campus on that too. And legal was an essential part of that.

LILY BOND: Great. Thank you.

REBECCA SITTON: I was going to say our legal team responded very well once we got them the draft and helped us with that language and returned it relatively quickly to us.

LILY BOND: Great. Thank you. I think we have time for one final question. So 17 years after this OCR complaint, what would you say is your biggest accessibility challenge today?

REBECCA SITTON: What would you say our biggest is?

GREY REAVIS: Well, I think that the area that I think is really interesting to try to focus more on was looking at more of the new emerging instructional technology, especially the ones that instructors are able to select and use on their own. I'm an instructor, let's say, in my English class. And I'm like, ooh, I found this really cool thing. And I can accept and use it without having to pay for it or talk to anyone about it, and really kind of making sure that we're supporting faculty members in that selection, so they know what to look for.

REBECCA SITTON: And that's kind of my opinion as well. This is Rebecca. When I'm working with students and getting prepared for each semester, and we're working with faculty, I am still amazed at the new publishers' materials, their interactive websites, their supplementals. And so again, I think that the biggest right now is staying abreast of all the information and the resources that are available to faculty.

The public-facing websites I don't really concern myself with. Web design is pretty well taken care of on campus. And our content creators, I think, are covered and being trained to create accessible design. But I think the biggest barrier that I see in how we're going to have to adjust and figure out a way is course content for students, given new polling software that comes out, again, all kinds of interactive Chrome extensions. Again, the websites that publishers use-- it's a [INAUDIBLE].

LILY BOND: Those are great answers and I think challenges that everyone is definitely facing today. So thank you both so much for being on this presentation. It was a great session, and the audience was really receptive. So thank you, Grey and Rebecca, for joining us today.

REBECCA Thank for having us.

SITTON:

LILY BOND: And thank you to everyone who attended. A reminder that--