ELISA LEWIS: So thank you, everyone, for joining our panel discussion, "The Top 5 Challenges to Accessibility in Higher Education." My name is Elisa Lewis. I'm from 3Play Media, and I will be moderating today. I'm a fair-skinned woman with long, brown hair. And I'm wearing a maroon sweatshirt.

And today I am happy to welcome several higher education professionals. Joining us for this panel discussion, we have Ann Fredricksen, Disability Specialist and Coordinator of Accessible Media Services at the University of Illinois.

We have Ander Bolduc, the Associate Director of Operations Disability Resource Center at the University of Minnesota, and Alex Martinez, Academic Technology Specialist at the University of Dender-- Denver, excuse me.

We're so thrilled to have Anne, Ander, and Alex. We have such an A-team here. No pun intended. And we're happy to have this crew here to share their expertise as we address the top five challenges to accessibility in higher education. And let's kick it off. Like I said, we have lots of questions to dive into.

So first things first, I would love if each of our panelists could share a little bit about themselves, their role, and responsibilities at their respective universities.

ANN FREDRICKSEN: Sure. This is Ann, and I'll go first. I am a fair-skinned woman with curly, brown hair, wearing a multicolored green and blue top. I work at the University of Illinois. And I started here in 2008 as an hourly worker and then got hired on full-time in 2012.

Our entire office makes sure course content is accessible. And throughout my career, my job has been to make sure that closed captioning especially has been done not only for students with disabilities, but then in our free time, which keeps dwindling, for the campus at large, as we can. And so that's what we do on our campus.

ANDER BOLDUC: I'll go next. My name is Ander Bolduc. I'm a white guy with real short hair and short beard. And by short hair, I mean balding. And I'm wearing glasses and a button-up shirt here.

I work at the University of Minnesota at Twin Cities campus in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. And I am currently the Associate Director for Operations of the Disability Resource Center that has about 70 full-time staff, which is, I believe, the largest in the States.

The last six years, I've spent as an associate director focused on access programs. So my focus has been really on media captioning services, document conversion services, sign language interpreting services-- I'm also a sign language interpreter-- and real-time captioning services with a little bit of assistive technology dotted throughout. And I've been at the university for about nine years. So happy to answer any questions that I can today. Alex?

ALEX MARTINEZ: Thank you, Ander. Alex Martinez, fairly white-skinned, Hispanic, male, wearing a black polo shirt. So happy to be here. I work in our Information Technology division. And I also am very closely part of our Office of Teaching and Learning. So I'm sort of right in the middle between IT and our faculty support services. It's called here the Office of Teaching and Learning. And I'm also the Kaltura video administrator. That's more of an IT role.

And I'm also an adjunct professor. I've been teaching courses now for about 15 years in UX information architecture, web content management systems, and now, more recently, digital accessibility topics in my classes. It's graduate programs in the Library and Information Science program. And my key role is kind of like-- I also have three graduate students that support our efforts in digital remediation and also Kaltura administration.

ELISA LEWIS: Great. Thank you all for sharing that. So the first challenge that I'd like to discuss is one that we hear time and time again, particularly in the education space. And that is funding or rather, limited funding.

So I'd like to address the first question to all of you, as you all represent different universities and have different perspectives to share. So universities allocate budgets for accessibility differently, whether it's centralized or by individual department. Can you explain how accessibility funds are allocated at your university and share any helpful tips that have allowed your budget to go further?

ANN FREDRICKSEN: I can go first. This is Ann speaking again. So I don't get to play with the budget. And I'm very grateful for not having to play with the budget, although I constantly have to think about how I'm spending money.

So it's my understanding that based on enrollment, a certain portion of the fees that are associated with going to the university are then put into an accommodation fund. And that is used for all of our services here at what we call DRES. And so we have to share that between interpreting, live captioning, the AMS services, and then also our testing center.

And that goes toward paying student workers, software, the fees for those live captioning and interpreting services. And so you can imagine, that pool dries up pretty quickly. And so as someone who's trying to be conscious about how I'm spending state funds, I do try to research the different software options that are available to me for closed captioning or for text remediation and try to find a balance between what is cheap and what will be fast and efficient. And so we balance that back and forth.

We do try to use a large number of student workers. And when I'm looking for student workers, I try to think about what classes I know my students who are receiving those accommodations are going to be in because if I have a large computer science need, then it's better if I look for students who know computer science because our history majors, although they might understand the words, they might have to look up more words and spend their time doing research on making sure our captions are accurate.

I do know that at the end of the year when we have gone over budget, we give our bill to the provost. And the money gets paid to where it needs to go. And so I'm really fortunate that I have almost never been told that's too much, although there is always the problem with-- large universities have a limit of how much you can spend on vendors per fiscal year. And that money for service can quickly get eaten up. And so then you have to have two services and make sure you don't go over that amount of money.

ANDER BOLDUC: This is Ander. And thanks, Ann. I actually have a lot of similar experiences as you. The University of Minnesota Twin Cities, we are centrally funded. So there's a large auxiliary pool that's collected and put into a fund where we are-- the Disability Resource Center's entire budget comes from that. What might be unique is that we provide services for students and staff and faculty and guests, visitors, and for any kind of access to the university experience. So that includes campus clubs, events.

We have big concerts on our campus-- those kinds of things, a lot of conferences as well. And we do cover those.

We also go over every year and get a-- I'll call it a waiver. I might call it we are under-allocated, and some others might call it overspending. But the reality is that in order to ensure that accessibility is happening in meaningful and effective ways, we do need to spend money. So I try to consider ways to be cost effective, as well as balance that with what are the needs of students and staff, faculty, folks that are registered with our office, which are 8,000 or 9,000 people registered with our office. So it's quite a significant number. Meaningful access is important to us.

Another thing is we need to also consider the market rates for the folks that we employ. For example, sign language interpreters-- there's a shortage of sign language interpreters in Minnesota and nationally. So we need to make sure, as much as we are in control, to be competitive enough to hire and maintain competitive positions within the Disability Resource Center so we can attract sign language interpreters and keep sign language interpreters. So it's a bit tricky.

Like Ann said, there's really never-- I kind of read between the lines-- there's never really enough money to do the work that we need to do. So we are trying to find ways to keep costs down, which means examine alternatives to some technologies and keeping up with technologies as they become available. But ultimately, as long as we're meeting the needs of the students and the staff that come to us, I mean, that's our primary goal. And we just keep fighting for that, to make sure that we're meeting the needs.

ALEX MARTINEZ: Yeah. So thank you, Ander. So at the University of Denver, I think we're still trying to plant the tree [LAUGHS] and trying to establish a centralized funding system. We have various groups on campus. We have our ADA office. We have our Disability Services program. We have our Office of Teaching and Learning. And we have our IT group and also just a few academic departments that kind of self-fund.

So we are not centralized at this moment. And so hopefully, that is something that we're definitely going to look into. But in the meantime, I think that is a challenge that we have with being somewhat decentralized in this area is who's going to pay for what services.

So as Ann and Ander mentioned that these services that are campus-wide, over here we have to rely on a lot of folks around campus that have some experience with handling all these. And so it's kind of like, who's going to pay for what? So for our events, for example, when we do have some big events and accommodations need-- like, sign language interpreters-- then definitely that would come out of our ADA office.

And then we have education, the educational part. I think that's what's getting things rolling over here. The Office of Teaching and Learning has been very proactive in the education efforts. And that has been so successful that now there's increased demand.

And so that funding is centralized, in the sense that it is a core service for the university to have an Office of Teaching and Learning. And now more UDL workshops, more workshops on neurodiversity are occurring. And so now we're definitely seeing an increase in numbers because of that. But at this moment, in terms of the funding, we are decentralized at the moment.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you, all of you. These are great tips. And it's really helpful to see how each university approaches this challenge.

Ann, the next question, I would like to start with you. You mentioned that you have an internal team to help with accommodation requests. When working with your budget, how are accommodations prioritized for doing in-house versus outsourcing to an accessibility partner?

ANN FREDRICKSEN: Oh, that is a great question. So currently, we do not have a vendor. We do all our captioning in-house, which is slightly terrifying.

And we have been able to keep up with COVID. And by keep up, I mean we're only about a week behind, whereas we would prefer to be two weeks ahead. So the way we prioritize work inside our office is any student who is fully deaf or extremely hard of hearing who is attending asynchronous course or have recordings, those get top priority.

For students who are mildly hard of hearing, who are attending lecture in class that is being recorded, we tell those students that that is lower priority. We're going to get it done as quickly as we can, which is normally within three to four days, which is a typical turnaround for a vendor. And we let the students know that if they have an exam or homework and they need that turnaround to be faster that we bump that up.

We do ask our faculty members, when they send us links or videos, to give us some sort of priority so that way we can organize them by priority, and so we can meet those due dates. Of course, things fall in the cracks. And professors walk in and say, I need this tomorrow. And then we rush around and try to get that done.

For hiring, we mostly use, like I said, student workers. I do have five other people on my team that are full-time staff. And then currently the university is also-- we have a pool called Extra Help. And so we're also working with those because they're a little less transitory than some of the student workers, who also are students and have other commitments.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you, Ann. We do have an attendee question here. And this can go out to either or all three of you. But the question is, "how much autonomy do you have when you want to commit to signing contracts for new services and supports?"

ANDER BOLDUC: I can go ahead and answer that. This is Ander. Just a quick response to the last question, also for media captioning, it's opposite for us at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. We have a coordinator who sends out almost all of it to a third party vendor or multiple third party vendors for the sake of time.

But we also spend a lot of time trying to convince people to accurately caption their own media when possible or choose accurately captioned media, which doesn't always happen. But just want to throw that out there. It's a little bit different than what Ann's got going on. The question disappeared. Can you say that again?

ELISA LEWIS: Sure. So the question that we have from the attendees are about autonomy. "How much autonomy do you have when you want to commit to signing contracts for new services or support?"

ANDER BOLDUC: Sure. I'll speak to that for Twin Cities. I mean, it's our sole responsibility in our office to-- we don't physically sign a contract. Our contracts work in a unique way. But we develop and create contracts or agreements with vendors. We seek them out. Sometimes folks come to us and try to seek out to jump onto our pool of whatever kind of services that they are looking to provide.

So we completely handle that within the Disability Resource Center. And I think for us, that's good because we have a number of people who are specialized in the areas. So we have a manager for real-time captioning services, a manager for sign language interpreting services, a manager for document conversion services-- so people that know the work in and out so that they can appropriately send out the RFPs, which lasts for five years, or seek out smaller contracts. So anything under $50,000 at the U of M would not go through an RFP.

So I think having people that are especially knowledgeable in the area handle the contracts is really helpful. So they know what to look for and what are some red flags.

ALEX MARTINEZ: This is Alex. Yeah. Yeah, so we don't have any-- well, let's see. So our biggest contract when it comes to closed captioning is probably with Kaltura because we're using the Kaltura Automated Speech Recognition-- ASR-- services. And so that's our biggest contract.

Every single video that gets dropped into our Kaltura system has automatic captions applied to them, including Zoom. So people are still using Zoom quite a bit, even after the pandemic. And all those Zoom recordings are actually going over now into Kaltura because of its different pricing model.

It's more efficient to do that. And so because of that, too, now we have-- pretty much every single recording now, in some cases, has two types of captions-- the captions that come from Zoom, which, in itself, is sometimes problematic. And then you can actually then trigger the closed captions.

If it's a Zoom video, it'll just bring over the Zoom captions. But if it's a video that's just uploaded, either from Canvas or directly into Media Space, then it gets its closed captions. And then our other third party services, we're still kind of growing in this area.

But hopefully down the road we can have more partnerships once we have better centralized funding. But at the moment, if we need to pay for services, it's usually just a smaller expense. And so we just handle those. I guess we do have flexibility, to answer your question regarding those smaller accommodation services.

ANN FREDRICKSEN: And this is Ann. So if a vendor already has a contract with the university, it's easier for me to go ahead and say that we want to add money to a contract or create our own contract. But each department, each unit, can have their own contract with a vendor.

And so I don't know what the communications department is doing or the history department is doing. And so it does become a challenge. And then getting a contract I know that we have, that our board of trustees has approved a vendor for third party captioning, but getting money to that person seems to be very problematic. And we've been trying for about two months.

And so maybe someday I'll have a third party vendor, but not today and probably not Friday. So we don't have a lot of autonomy in choosing. And if it's above, I believe, $20,000, it has to go out to bid as well. And so then that's a whole other layer of I don't get to choose.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you, all. So I want to be mindful of time. And we have many other challenges ahead of us to tackle. So I'd like to move on to another challenges that universities face, which is a lack of centralization when it comes to accessibility.

And one of the issues this causes and can create is a really siloed approach. So Alex, I'd like to address this question to you. I know you alluded to this a little bit earlier. You mentioned your university currently has a more decentralized approach. So how have you worked to improve communications between the Disability Resources Department, faculty, and IT teams?

ALEX MARTINEZ: Yeah. So that's a great question. And I'm really happy to see-- I've been at the university for about 20 years now. And so most recently, in terms of faculty support-- so here's the reality of the situation.

So we're on the quarter system, which is 10 weeks, which is really crazy because it goes by really fast, from an accommodation perspective. So what we've been doing lately, though, that's been, I believe, just a wonderful growth area is more educational workshops around neurodiversity and learning disabilities. We have some resident experts in that field-- some faculty members that are researchers in that area.

So our team-- a wonderful team. We have a UDL specialist that has been putting together just several workshops and events that had been educating faculty members. So her name is Ellen Hogan-- an incredible individual.

And so what happens typically when those accommodation letters then get sent out a week or two before class starts, then Ellen makes the effort to actually reach out to some of those faculty members. And then a couple things happen. One is just I think the question of how can we support you. Because we know that you have been receiving these accommodation letters. Do you need any help? And perhaps even asking them the question, do you need us to maybe perhaps go into your Canvas course and just do a quick little audit? We're looking for PDFs, PowerPoints, videos that need remediation.

Especially if we know that if there's perhaps, for example, a student that has a visual impairment, we want to make sure that we're targeting and spending our time in those areas as effectively as possible. So I think that's the one thing that I've been really happy to see happen lately is just the awareness of how our neurodiverse students--

And there's a lot of misconceptions as far as with faculty members. What does that mean? How do I redesign my course? Is my course OK, or do I need to change things to better support our students?

So that UDL approach, I think, has really, really been promoted more here at the university. And I think now faculty are definitely now more aware. And so they're reaching out to us more, which is scary because now we have more requests for assistance.

But I think we're trying to make the argument that-- and at the University of Denver, too, the other thing that's happening is that we're trying to-- I guess from the marketing side of things, we're trying to welcome more diversity in general, but specifically neurodiversity students. So our numbers are increasing.

In terms of accommodations, one out of every five, I believe, students now has an accommodation letter. And so that is definitely a trend that's growing. And so we're trying just to educate our faculty members but, at the same time, do the best we can with tech support.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you, Alex. Ander, this next one is for you. I'm curious what strategies you have found to be successful when combating silos to work towards achieving greater centralization.

ANDER BOLDUC: Yeah. Thanks for that question. That's a hard one. We have a lot of-- while we are centralized, we also are siloed at the same time.

So within the Disability Resource Center, like I mentioned, we have about 70 full-time staff, not including student workers, which can sometimes equal as many full-time staff members that we have. But even because we are such a large department, we are sometimes even siloed within what's happening with student access versus what's happening with the interpreting and captioning unit. We may not even be bridging our communications as well as we could. Because we are so big, it's hard to all move together in the same way.

In terms of across campus, there's still challenges of being siloed because our Office of Information Technology does not currently own or sustain our accessibility tools. For example, our campus uses-- we have a license through TextHelp for Read&Write and OrbitNote and Equatio. Anyone with a University of Minnesota ID-- so an X500, an email-- can use those tools. And they don't have to register with the DRC to use those tools.

But we pay for that license because we recognize it's such a valuable tool for so many students and employees at the U of M. And if it was owned centrally and supported centrally and advertised and marketed to the larger university, we would have greater accessibility. There would be less barriers, potentially, and less people having to come to the Disability Resource Center to actually meet with us to talk about the barriers that they're experiencing because they would already have access to some of the tools.

So we have sought out and purchased tools and created tools. We have a lot of room to grow in terms of working more with our IT department to create a larger network where the software and tools can be university tools and not Disability Resource Center tools. So again, it's a concept of accessibility, not accommodation.

Accommodations will always be a thing. But I think that us seeing the numbers increase, like Alex and Ann have said-- their numbers are increasing-- to me, it might mean a couple of things. It might mean that people are understanding, like, oh, the Disability Resource Center is here and can provide us support and accommodations. Or it might mean that there are more barriers that are being put in place across the university. It might mean that there's more recognition of the barriers that are put in place across the university.

Even just by not having captions on videos on university websites creates another barrier. So barriers are everywhere. And we're just trying to lessen those things. So that's one way that being siloed and having a Disability Resource Center and not having, currently, an accessibility center of some kind, how that could present some challenges.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you, Ander. So the third challenge that we will discuss today is about promoting and ensuring faculty buy-in. And Ann, thank you. I know that you already answered a question about this in the Q&A window. So this next question I have is for Alex. Alex, what tips do you have for encouraging accessibility accommodation buy-in from faculty?

ALEX MARTINEZ: So I'm going back to the education part. So the buy-in really addresses the belief that it's absolutely necessary. And where does that come from? How do you change someone's beliefs and values when it comes to, in some cases, changing the content for your course?

So becoming more aware of how perhaps to offer different types of learning activities that are more UDL friendly-- so helping faculty members-- in terms of getting the buy-in, step number 1 is just education. So as I mentioned before, there's a lot of misconceptions in general as far as learning disabilities.

For example, around dyslexia-- what does that mean? Scientifically, what does that mean? And then once we have those misconceptions put aside and like, OK, now we're on the same playing field, I think people then feel like OK, we see that buy-in after that moment.

Once there's been that effort to do some one-on-one consulting with these faculty members that are getting these accommodation letters, there's this educational component. And some faculty are-- this is really new to them. We have a lot of adjunct faculty members that this totally catches them off guard.

And we try to then provide them some tips, some suggestions as far as making the course more UDL-friendly, but also just giving them some level of support when it comes to, for example, like I mentioned, is it OK? Can we do a quick little audit, with your permission, on your course?

And some people say yes. Some faculty are like, yeah, by all means because I don't know what I'm looking for. So I think those trained eyes, then, that go in and start looking for things, I think that makes it easy. So faculty buy-in comes in when you can try and make things easy for them.

And obviously, that takes skills and expertise. So that's what we have in our office. We have a group of instructional designers and also some edtech people that help each other. And we have a management system, project management system, that then, once we find things, then we log them. And then we start assigning different parts of content to specific people that have that specialty area and remediation-- so PowerPoints, PDFs, videos. It gets channeled to the right team.

But in terms of faculty buy-in, I think the biggest thing is just that understanding of what's happening right now, that the neurodiversity community now is, I think-- I've been doing this for a long time now, 20 years. And now in these recent years, it's been great to actually have those discussions now, finally, at a campus-wide level.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you, Alex. And Ann, thanks again. I know there was a question coming in about sensitivity training. So thank you for tackling that in the chat.

I'd like to move on to the next challenge around accuracy and availability of accommodation resources. Ander, you alluded to this earlier a little bit in terms of a lack of ASL. So I would like to address the first question to you. What are some challenges that you have had to overcome when it comes to accessibility accommodations in the classroom?

ANDER BOLDUC: Sure. Well, I'll speak to that first in relation to sign language interpreting services because we do have a staff of full-time sign language interpreters. We have six, and that's the smallest group we've ever had.

We have two full-time positions open that have been open for more than 200 days. And the challenge is finding qualified interpreters to fill those positions. And what our current process is is we have a pool of hourly interpreters that we have longstanding relationships with that we have that fill in when we are in a place where we don't have enough staff interpreters. And there's always a need for contractors and agencies to help and support because you can never really have enough full-time sign language interpreters on staff.

So when we're talking about accuracy, that's kind of a different tool. I don't want to get too far down the rabbit hole. But we have a manager of interpreting services who observes and provides feedback and does diagnostics and really works with the interpreters to help give them opportunities for professional development and give them feedback on the actual interpreting services being provided.

In terms of our real-time captioning services, we now vendor out our services. And what we do to ensure accuracy-- we have remote and on-site CART for our real-time captioning services at the U of M. And with our vendors, what we do is we log in, and we observe some of the sessions just to ensure accuracy and identify any potential issues that are happening with the actual services.

We rely on students to let us know if there's any issues with any kind of accuracy issues, like, my documents are actually not accessible in the ways that I need them to be. We really rely on students. But then that kind of puts the burden on the student, and they already have enough burden in having to ask for the accommodations, probably provide documentation, register with our office, all of those things.

So we try to, on our end, ensure that folks are receiving the best services as possible. Does that answer the question? Or is there more to that you would like me to address?

ELISA LEWIS: I think that's great. Thank you, Ander. I appreciate that. So Ann, maybe you can kick us off with this next question.

It's hard to define or really pinpoint what true accuracy means. From your experience in the classroom, how would you describe accuracy in the context of captioning? And have you seen poor accuracy negatively impact students?

ANN FREDRICKSEN: Well, great question. Thank you. So with captioning, if you're going to compare a fully accurate file, where all the words are correct, you also have to worry about making sure that punctuation is correct because commas, quotation marks, question marks-- I have student workers who don't put question marks when there's a question.

And I explain to them that question marks are a really good part of the English language, and we should include them. And so it's not just making sure all the words are correct but making sure that the punctuation and all those other little things that go into it. So I would make sure that I include that when I talk about accuracy.

And then there's also reading speed because sometimes if I have time to create a closed caption file after the fact, before the student gets to watch it, I'd really like to format it according to the Described Caption Media Program guidelines because they talk about verb phrases and noun phrases and making sure those are together because it makes it easier for students to read and process. And so for accuracy, I would argue that if we're going to-- this isn't live. Can we also focus on making sure that there's a standard formatting, so that way, the student can ingest the material and understand it?

And then I also, according to the DCMP, which is how I was taught, I put ums and ahs into our captions and all starts and stutters. And some students love it because they read lips. And because they're not fully deaf, they want to make sure that the captions and what they're understanding is what is in the caption file.

And then other students, especially those who are fully deaf, ask me, why are you doing this? You make it painful for me to read. And I apologize. And I say, how would you like? And so then we do some tailoring.

Even though, if it's fully accurate-- one of my students who's in an engineering course, it's just too much for her to comb through while she's trying to read everything that the professor's writing on the board, plus look at the captions, plus take it all in to understand it. And so even if it's fully accurate and all the sounds are represented, that doesn't mean that it works for the student.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you, Ann. Alex, this next question is for you. There are other considerations beyond accuracy that accessibility teams need to keep in mind when they're providing accessibility solutions to students. Some of these include storage and formatting errors. Can you elaborate on what you're doing in your role to solve some of these problems?

ALEX MARTINEZ: Yeah. So storage-- and just to make sure I understand the question correctly, are you referring to just the media storage of, for example, videos?

ELISA LEWIS: Exactly. Yeah, where videos are stored.

ALEX MARTINEZ: Yeah. So yeah, that's a great question. So what I do like what's happening right now as a Kaltura administrator is that we've been able to, as I mentioned, pull in all these videos from Zoom to go into Kaltura. And Kaltura is actually integrated with Canvas.

It's been really great because we have-- our same accessibility remediation team, a few of them are also Kaltura administrators. So they can actually then go in and help remediate captions in the Kaltura side of things. And so once the Kaltura automatic captioning service kicks in, then we go in and help.

So I think the centralization of video is really important because when we do these audits, faculty are just pulling in videos from all different types of sources into our Canvas LMS program. And so however, the more we can pull into a repository system, such as Kaltura, then we can then have more people look at that media file. So for video specifically, that's been great because now we have access to those recordings then that we need to remediate because they're all centralized.

And for example, on YouTube, for example-- there's a lot of faculty that use YouTube-- there's a few ways of bringing in YouTube into a Canvas course. You could just use the Canvas YouTube importer, which you get what you see. You just bring it in.

But what's really been cool lately is we've been trying to educate people to import their videos into Kaltura using the YouTube integration. And so what that means now is that the problem of having some YouTube videos that don't have remediated captions-- and which, by default, I think most of YouTube content needs to be remediated. If we use the Kaltura integration with YouTube, then Kaltura will actually then create a caption file for that YouTube video. And then we can actually then clean it up. Either we could do our own cleanup using the built-in tools that Kaltura provides, or then we can work with a third party program and just load that VCT or SRT program. But I think that's important.

In regards to video, if you could centralize it in one place and have people that are trained and with the right permissions to, again, get into those videos to support people with external video content or content coming in from Zoom, YouTube, stuff that they're making on their own-- that's been great.

And also, there's also multiple languages supported in Kaltura. So it supports up to about 15 different languages. So our Spanish department faculty, they're just so excited now because they use a lot of YouTube videos. And they notice that there's a lot of inaccuracy when it comes to closed captioning. So now they just import their YouTube videos into their Canvas Kaltura account. And then they start cleaning up the captions. And that's been a game-changer.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you, Alex. And as we start rounding out today's discussion, I want to shift to our final challenge for today, which is managing and growing your accessibility teams. So Ann, I'll start with you for this question. What tips or advice do you have for universities that are looking to grow their accessibility teams?

ANN FREDRICKSEN: Search nationwide would be first because, like Ander said, we also have an interpreter position open that has been open for a while, years, and finding someone. I would suggest to the university that maybe creating-- we have someone in our department, or in our college, that is trying to create a program of teaching people about disability services at the university level, so teaching, having a course on how do you create accessible documents, how do you create closed captioning, because this isn't something that we're taught anywhere else.

So my background is not in closed captioning or media. My background is in physics. I ended up here. And so how do you get from one part to another? And so you need to start training them. And so if you want to have a pool, then you need to make sure that you're educating people to create that pool.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you. And the next question is for Ander. How do you build best practices for accessibility across a college or university?

ANDER BOLDUC: That's a great question, and I don't know. No, just kidding. I think partnerships and relationships is critical and key and cross-departmental relationships. I would like to give an example of a way I think that the University of Minnesota does some things that are really effective.

And we have some groups of folks that are on a Listserv called Accessibility Ambassadors. And those are folks that are students, staff, faculty, employees, anyone, that are on any of our five campuses. And they pose questions.

We all volunteer, do trainings, and teach each other about things like this. What are some best practices in media captioning? What are some best practices for accessible Zoom calls? What are best practices for xyz?

So I think that having those kinds of interlaced, intersectional relationships across campuses and across just different groups of folks, I think that is a way to get the word out of the importance of accessibility and that everyone has a role to play.

And there, we advertise things, like the university has created a-- I can share these resources with you because folks might want to just actually take a look because they're on our public websites. We have what's called an Accessible U-- the letter U-- website that creates this culture of inclusive design and digital accessibility, which is pretty exciting. And then we also have what's called a Digital Accessibility Badging Program, we as in the U. And it's kind of been created out of these groups of people that have done this work not as their primary role, but they've created this to enhance accessibility. But the Digital Badging Program teaches people how to create emails, slide decks, documents, et cetera in accessible ways, in simple ways, so without using code, but just through self-paced online workshops.

And then once you, for example, you learn how to create a PDF in an accessible way, then you create one. And you send it in for an assessment. And they'll give you feedback, like, yeah, you're almost there. Here's a few more things to learn. And then you get a badge, which is like a mini accreditation. You can put it on your LinkedIn. You can put it on your email signature, things like that.

So really getting out within the university in small ways and developing and continuing relationships is the way. I think until there's a giant accessibility center with a president's stamp of approval on it, this is the way that we are finding it to be more accessible for folks.

ALEX MARTINEZ: Ander, that's an awesome-- I'm going to definitely bring that up. Accessibility ambassadors-- and I just wanted to chime in one quick-- one thing that's really working out really well. I'm not sure how many other universities are using Microsoft Teams. But we recently adopted that right before the pandemic.

And so now we have channels. We have an accessibility remediation channel. And it's growing. Building community, I think, is what you're trying to do, Ander. You're trying to build a community because this just is too much for just one or two people. I mean, even though you have bigger shops, but it still takes a huge army. And that's one thing that we're doing is that we're trying to use Microsoft Teams and channels and just to bring all these people and have discussions, have workshops, and then just to support each other.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you so much, Ander and Alex. And thank you for sending those resources in the chat. We had an attendee question come in earlier that I would like to end on. The question is, "what is the biggest point of stress or fear for the future, whether immediate or long-term, you all have for disability services and for your team?" Ann, why don't you get us started?

ANN FREDRICKSEN: Sure. I think it's getting administrative buy-in is my biggest fear. We seem to make movement on that front. And then somebody moves to another university or goes to private sector or retires. And so it feels like we're constantly resetting to build those relationships again and find someone or teach someone why accessibility should matter and why universal design should matter and why this should be part of our university.

And so from my perspective, way down on the totem pole, I feel like we constantly keep rebuilding that bridge. And it would be nice if that bridge could be cemented into the ground and stay up, and we could build the road after the bridge.

ELISA LEWIS: Ander or Alex, do either of you have additional thoughts here as closing remarks?

ANDER BOLDUC: Yeah, just real quick to Ann. The lowest on the totem pole holds everyone else up and is actually the most highly revered and powerful. So I think those of us who are not senior administrators and presidents and vice presidents and provosts, I think we do have a lot of power and influence. And that's why we're doing this right now. We're volunteering our time to talk to people to try to help even answer a few questions about accessibility because our work does matter.

And my one thing I'd like to say-- and I think I put it in the chat-- is that I see attitudinal barriers as our greatest challenge. And maybe that when Ann said why it matters is important. And it's because a lot of folks, they don't understand the need for accessibility, creating things with inclusion in mind. And so hopefully everyone-- all 70-some people on this call-- will continue to push that work forward. It takes a village. It takes all of us to do that.

ELISA LEWIS: Thank you.

ALEX MARTINEZ: Yeah, I'll just add. Oh, go ahead.

ELISA LEWIS: No, go ahead, Alex. Why don't you close us out with your fear or even something that you're excited for?

ALEX MARTINEZ: I'm just really excited to have people on our team that are just-- we have a small team. We're about a team of seven. That's how small we are that are actively involved in digital remediation. And I guess my fear is that because we're not centralized yet, people come and go from the university constantly.

And to Ander's point, it's like, well, yeah, we do this-- a lot of us are doing this because we just know that this is important work. So greatest fear is that I'm always fearful of key people that are so passionate-- and I think everyone here that attended this webinar, you're the passionate people that keep everything going.

And we all have our own reasons. So I have a daughter that has dyslexia. And I see every single day the struggles that she has. So everyone really has a personal connection. Everyone knows somebody that needs some support. And I think that's what drives us and keeps us going. And just, we never give up. And so that's my final word is that this is a great-- it's not just a legal compliance issue. But it's the right thing to do.

ELISA LEWIS: Absolutely, Alex. What a great takeaway to close us out. Thank you for that. And thank you to all of our panelists. Ann, Alex, and Ander, thank you so much for a fantastic discussion. Amanda, thank you for your interpreting today. And of course, thank you everyone who joined us for today's presentation and asked great questions.

That is all from us today. And I hope everyone has a great afternoon. Thank you.