

Tips for Supporting Faculty with Disabilities

[00:00:00.05] JENA WALLACE: Thank you so much for joining us for today's session on Tips for Supporting Faculty with Disabilities, presented by Sheryl Burgstahler. Today's presentation will cover key topics such as how campuses can recruit faculty members with diverse characteristics, including disabilities, and how they can make their employment positions, resources, and activities more inclusive of people who have disabilities. My name is Jena. I'm on the marketing team here at 3Play Media, and I'll be moderating today's session.

[00:00:32.58] Just a quick self-description, I am a white woman in my 30s with light brown hair, and I'm wearing a black shirt and green cat-eye glasses. And with that, I'd like to introduce today's speaker, Sheryl Burgstahler. I'll pass it off to Sheryl to get started on the presentation.

[00:00:49.71] SHERYL BURGSTAHLER: Hello. I'm happy to be here at 3Play Media again. I've enjoyed doing these presentations, and we always get a lively audience. So that's a good thing, too. So I'm going to talk about tips for supporting faculty with disabilities. Most talks with 3Play Media and most everywhere are mainly about supporting students with disabilities when we talk about higher education, the vast majority of them anyway. But this is a time to reflect a little bit and think, well, what about faculty members who have disabilities?

[00:01:16.93] How can we recruit them? How can we support them? How can we make sure that everything is equitable to that population? So I'm Sheryl Burgstahler from the University of Washington. I'm actually the founder and director of the DO-IT Center-- Disability Opportunities Internetworking and Technology-- that I started in 1992, and my role ended at the end of 2023.

[00:01:38.79] I actually retired from the University of Washington. I haven't retired from my job, by the way. I work, but I retired from the University of Washington. So I don't work full time anymore, but I'm doing a lot of interesting things. I'm doing a lot of writing as an author and then as a consultant with various projects.

[00:01:56.50] So I'm an affiliate professor at City University of New York. I teach online there and also at the University of Washington and affiliated with both the College of Education and our Disability Studies program there. So let's get started. I'm going to talk about access challenges for faculty members with disabilities, so think about that for a minute.

[00:02:14.37] What access issues might they have? And talk a little bit about disability and the social model of disability, just really quick, and then access approaches-- accommodations versus universal design. And then leave a lot of time for just plain old examples on accessible and inclusive practices relevant to faculty who have disabilities. And we'll have some time for Q&A.

[00:02:36.96] We're going to keep that Q&A to at the end of the talk, unless you have something very important to say that I need to make a change. Then just put that in chat. So here we go. In chat-- speaking of chat-- is, I'd like you to think of some ways that faculty members might be challenged in getting a job, perhaps at your institution or elsewhere, and then getting

employment, in other words, but also being successful in that job and moving along to tenure and other things that are important for faculty like research and so forth.

[00:03:08.49] And so you might want to think about that. Just pop it into chat. We'll take a look at what people have said, but I'm also going to put up some examples to keep us moving along a little bit. We actually surveyed-- informally, actually, through a community of practice-- faculty members who have disabilities-- and, actually, women with disabilities, in this case-- and asked them what some of the challenges are that they're facing in a faculty position. And so they shared a lot of different things-- the inaccessibility of online tools, even applying for a job.

[00:03:43.59] I hired someone who's blind, and he had difficulty applying for that job, all aspects of it. He couldn't get through all aspects of it. So I did hire him and then put him in charge of making our HR system more inclusive of people with disabilities like his own-- he's blind-- or other disabilities as well. And then collaborative meetings, that idea that we have captions at your disposal here-- disposal and also a sign language interpreter.

[00:04:12.53] Uncaptioned videos are often a case of inaccessibility. Grant portals, National Science Foundation, other grant funding agencies, are they fully accessible? And some of the larger ones like NSF and NIH and so forth have made efforts in that regard, but they, too, need to be held accountable for that in all cases. But also journal articles-- often those portals are not accessible to people who are blind and other types of disabilities.

[00:04:43.34] And the process itself, even the review process, so a person with some types of disabilities might not be able to be a reviewer because that system is not accessible to them. So those are all important things for faculty. Inaccessible physical spaces, of course, disability-related issues related to course schedules. Some people who have disabilities have travel limitations. If they're taking public transportation, maybe can't teach a class late at night and so forth.

[00:05:10.47] Confusion about requesting accommodations and difficulties getting them. This is the one that's mentioned most often from faculty members that I talk to, is they didn't even know they could get accommodations, and they don't know where to request them. Again, accommodations are publicized more for students with disabilities. And that's generally not the office you go to if you're a faculty member or other staff member. It might be on your institution, particularly if it's small-- but generally, there's maybe someone in HR that you'd go to. But not being aware-- faculty members not being aware of where to go is a problem.

[00:05:42.36] And then mentors-- not really having a community on campus or elsewhere for faculty with disabilities. We actually have one in a project I'll share. And attending conferences, disability-related issues that impact productivity. So there are opportunities to have a student helper or whatever. Sometimes campuses are hands-off in that department.

[00:06:03.63] And concerns about the impact of a disability on their tenure and promotion. Specifically, some worry about people thinking that they have-- they're taking extra-- they're getting extra help and it's not fair. So there's a fairness issue. So that's something that people with

disabilities are well aware of. And it can interfere with their collaboration with fellow faculty members.

[00:06:26.82] So Jena, is anyone else kind of popping in some new ideas?

[00:06:33.06] JENA WALLACE: Oh, yes. We have a big list. I'll just start reading them all off. Administration doesn't acknowledge disabilities they cannot see. Low-vision disabilities associated with current computer systems. Physical barriers in classrooms. Inaccessible training materials. Attitudinal barriers for use of accommodations.

[00:07:00.73] We got mentions of migraines using current computers and needing to have a computer with an older version of Windows loaded. People with disabilities and deaf people are still perceived and relegated to recipients of information, never providers of information. We're only in the audience and not in the faculty. HR doesn't change or update posting responsibilities to be appropriate. For example, many say that you must be able to lift up to 25 pounds, but for many jobs, there isn't really a need for that, yet it's still there.

[00:07:35.67] Inaccessible courseware and tools found in learning management systems. IT positions do not require WCAG-related competencies, so desktop support staff don't or won't provide support for assistive technology. Yeah. That's a pretty long list, but yeah. Thank you, everyone.

[00:07:56.55] SHERYL BURGSTHALER: And one example that draws together a lot of these different issues that are brought up is teaching classes. Using your learning management system, and even some maybe add-ons, often the attention is given to students with disabilities but not enough attention given to the accessibility of the teacher having disabilities. It reminds me of our campus here in the library. They did a new addition not that many years ago, and they added an auditorium.

[00:08:23.55] And they really made it accessible for students with disabilities. It's really a nice auditorium, small auditorium. But they didn't anticipate that the presenter would be giving a presentation, obviously, because they just have stairs down to the bottom of this auditorium and no other way for someone in a wheelchair with other issues that might affect their mobility for them to get located there.

[00:08:48.41] So a lot of issues, tons of issues. And we interviewed a lot of people with disabilities for this project that we're working on that I'll share. So what does it mean to be inclusive? I think it means that everybody is encouraged to participate, even if they need accommodations, not just people who can get in the classroom or work area or whatever, or they don't need captions or whatever. Everyone feels welcome and is fully engaged and accessible and inclusive environments and activities.

[00:09:14.98] So that kind of sums it up, but that's kind of-- it's harder to do than it is to actually say. It's a pretty simple concept, I think. I don't think people intentionally make things inaccessible to faculty members who have disabilities, but that could be said about students as well. But there's much we can do to be proactive.

[00:09:31.85] The project where some of these materials coming from is called AccessADVANCE. And I was the PI of that project. Of course, I don't work in that-- officially work in that area. So Brianna Blaser has taken over the direction of that project. But it's a project between the UW and North Carolina State University-- or North Dakota State University. And it's ongoing.

[00:09:57.61] And the idea is-- funded by the National Science Foundation-- to implement systemic changes within institutions to make academic positions more welcoming to, accessible to, and inclusive of faculty with disabilities. Those who are familiar with the ADVANCE projects-- this one is one of those-- focus on women with disabilities. And so we've been talking to women with disabilities, but we found for our research sources we're creating and so forth, they have applied to men with disabilities as well. But you'll see that focus if you go to our website.

[00:10:28.27] And they support an online community of practice. I'll give you the URL for ADVANCE right down at the bottom of the screen. And develop and share resources. And we have created a number of resources already, one I'll be pointing to. And there are many more that will continue, I'm sure, with that particular project.

[00:10:47.21] One thing I think that's useful in any type of accessibility endeavor to try to make things more inclusive is to, rather than think about disability, think about ability. All the people in this room right now all have different levels of ability in different functional areas.

[00:11:06.14] We don't all have disabilities. There might be some people with disabilities. And it sometimes seems kind of arbitrary, but there's a point on the continuum from "Not able" on the left side of this double-edged arrow to "Able" on the right-hand side. And at some point, you are labeled as being blind or deaf or having a learning disability and so forth.

[00:11:24.89] But the idea is that all of us have the abilities. And so the ability, for instance, to understand English or understand social norms, those are two abilities. And someone might be rating themselves low in either of those two items because they have a disability, maybe a learning disability, autism and so forth, or it might be something not related to a disability. It might be their culture that they grew up in and English is not their first language and so forth. And so it's not disability, necessarily, but people have different functionality in these different areas.

[00:12:00.95] So the ability to see-- I always assume that there's someone in the audience who can't see the screen. And I'm assuming that today. And so you'll know that I'll articulate orally some of the content that I think is most essential. There will be some images that are just not essential to the content, so I'm not going to describe all of those. But if you assume that someone is blind in your class or your presentation, then you'll accommodate them along the way.

[00:12:27.37] And it might not be because of a disability. Again, it might be because they're in the car and they're just listening to the presentation, hopefully not looking at the screen. So the ability to hear, walk, or read print, to write with a pen or pencil, or to communicate verbally, tune out distraction, ability to learn, or manage physical and mental health, dot dot dot. We could

have a huge list of abilities. If we turned it into a spreadsheet and each of us turned in our rating on some kind of a scale on our abilities in this area, I doubt if two of them would even be close to matching totally.

[00:12:58.06] So thinking about disability and the broad range of abilities is sometimes, people get stuck in that. Well, I don't know if I have people with disabilities in my class as a faculty member. How am I supposed to know or whatever? Well, kind of get over that and just think about, well, assume that the people you're working with, people that you're teaching have a range of abilities.

[00:13:17.74] Another thing to think about is that most disabilities are not obvious to other people, either in a physical environment like a classroom, or even online. And so we, those of us giving a presentation or those of us teaching, may know of some of the people have disabilities, but certainly not all of the potential people with disabilities in our group. And it's also surprising for people to learn that most employees do not report disabilities to their employer. They're worried about discrimination, and they're worried about how they're going to get resources and how the whole thing is going to work. And so they just don't report them. So they don't get accommodations.

[00:13:55.27] And most campuses services for individuals with disabilities, as I mentioned earlier, focus on students. So it might be hard for them to find any resources. Institutions are obligated to provide accommodations for people with disabilities. That doesn't mean they always do.

[00:14:11.31] And the disability services offices that are available, those services primarily offer accommodations. And so they're the people that already have faced an inaccessibility, and some time, we're supposed to resolve that. And so those are some challenges and what we're doing.

[00:14:30.96] If you look at the history of working with disabilities, people with disabilities, it's a long history, unfortunately, and many years ago, and even to this day, that people with disabilities are eliminated or excluded or segregated in some countries but also in some different contexts in any country. And then there was a movement, particularly middle of the last century, to develop medical ways to cure people with disabilities, but also to rehabilitate them to make them increase their function in various ways, and then, if those two approaches don't work, the ability to accommodate them.

[00:15:07.64] There's nothing wrong with curing or rehabilitating or accommodating people with disabilities. I just am one who believes that should be kind of your second approach, not your first-- well, I guess it could be in any order. I'll just say it shouldn't be your only tool in the toolkit.

[00:15:23.09] And so now we're in an age of social justice for many different groups. And that requires us to think about the idea of inclusion, that they should be naturally included. If we know they're going to be where we're working or teaching, why should we be unprepared and wait for them to tell us what they need? Because there are some things that might be just automatic we could just provide to everyone.

[00:15:46.28] And then universal design-- you've heard of that. I'll go quick, run through it just for those who haven't or are maybe not thinking as broadly as I am, but universal design being the proactive approach to making things more accessible and inclusive. But looking at accommodations for a minute, if I'm talking about accommodations, I mean it's to an individual. The individual has been selected, they have a disability, and we make some change so that they can get access to something.

[00:16:12.34] For instance, when we remediate inaccessible documents to make them accessible to a person who is blind, maybe a faculty member who is blind, that would be remediation. If we were proactive, those documents would already be accessible.

[00:16:26.95] Captioning videos-- again, if we did that proactively, that would be great. But captioning them after the fact for a person who is deaf would be an accommodation. And yet, those captions may be provided only to the individual. And so someone who, say, is an English language learner who could also benefit from captions won't necessarily get them, because they're not protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

[00:16:52.03] And arranging for sign language interpreters would be an accommodation that's being provided here today, but it's been provided in a universal design way. And 3Play Media is providing captions and sign language interpreter, I believe, without the request of any individual in the group.

[00:17:13.72] So inclusive practices embrace a social model of disability, where we think about the whole society and how can we make things more inclusive of everybody, rather than just this focus on an individual. And then sees disability as a diversity issue. You might look at your DEI efforts on your campus if you have them. Are they including disability? We continue to push that here on our campus, and technically they are. But like a lot of things, you kind of have to keep pushing a little bit in practice.

[00:17:41.92] And then intersectionality, where we look at all the identities that a person might have and how they might figure into the accessibility part of what they need as far as disability. And then universal design, of course-- talked about that.

[00:17:55.46] So it's the design of the product environment that we should reconsider when we apply universal design. In any product that's poorly designed-- I've got this coffee pot with a handle and a spout on the same side-- we can sometimes identify it's just obvious. We can identify that that's a poorly designed product. It's not so obvious when we're working with people with disabilities, for faculty, for us to see, oh, that is not a very good conference room or other thing that they need to use, a website or learning management system.

[00:18:23.48] So the formal definition of "universal design" that comes from the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University-- it's been around for a few decades-- "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation and specialized design." If you notice, it doesn't mention "disability," but we're trying to make things usable for all people, for everyone. So it's really a universal design approach when you look at that definition.

[00:18:52.21] Three characteristics of universal design practices, including those for faculty, would be it's accessible. So how are we making things, let's say, physically accessible to all faculty and thinking about that proactively? It's usable. So it should be comfortable. Having somebody go some crazy route through the building to get to somewhere that would be close by if there was an automatic door in the right place would create, maybe, an environment that's not very usable. Same with a website that's not fully designed to be accessible and inclusive would not be perhaps very usable. Trying to navigate would be very difficult.

[00:19:29.64] And then inclusive-- everybody's using the same product as much as possible. So we don't get a different learning management system for faculty members of disabilities, we make sure that the system we're using is accessible. I'm going to share a reference to my book on universal design in higher education. And in that, I elaborate on a framework and make it more concrete than we're talking about today, where we talk about the scope. What are you universally designing? And the definition, we already talked about that.

[00:19:57.57] But the principles and guidelines that go along with that definition, and practices and process, we'll just hit on a few of them. So if we look at higher education, we could look at applications of universal design for instruction, for services, for information technology, and for physical spaces. Each one, there are characteristics that need to be used. I'm not going to list of items under each one of these. But again, you can get the PowerPoints if you'd like to have them, to see more detail in that regard.

[00:20:27.28] So I think for me, if we have three sets of principles of universal design, that will guide us in everything we do in higher education, including provide accessible and inclusive departments for faculty. And the three of them are-- there are seven principles of universal design that are used still today, particularly with the physical environment-- making sure we have space for left- and right-handed users. That's not a disability, to be left-handed, but making sure that there's that flexibility, and that there's adequate space to maneuver for everyone in a facility.

[00:20:58.55] It also can be applied to websites, but there are three more specific principles that come with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. This was mentioned earlier. WCAG, that's what that is. There are four principles that underpin all those guidelines, and they should be applied.

[00:21:16.31] And then also, there are some details provided in the three universal design for learning principles. So what I'm suggesting here-- suggesting is to use all three of those. Don't just do UDL, because you may leave out some accessibility issues as far as technology and the physical environment.

[00:21:35.57] I like to think in a nutshell of all these principles, if you put them together and apply them to higher education, that we provide multiple ways for individuals to learn. Now, that could be a student, but it also could be a faculty member trying to learn what their process is to do various things on their campus, including accessing disability services.

[00:21:53.30] And then you have multiple ways to demonstrate or apply what they have learned as appropriate and then the different ways, multiple ways for people to engage. And so you don't use a system, for instance, that's not accessible to a faculty member. You think about that ahead of time when you choose communication methods. But also when a person with a disability is in the group, you pay particular attention to making sure things are accessible.

[00:22:21.06] And then making sure that all the technologies and the facilities, services, resources, strategies are accessible to individuals with a wide variety of disabilities. So again, we're getting to that proactive thing. And so I think basically, we need a paradigm shift. We too often have this reactive approach to designing products and environments for people with disabilities.

[00:22:47.62] We need to make it a proactive approach and also make that proactive approach to not just focus on the average person but to focus on everyone, to think of people at the margins. Sometimes, you'll talk about designing something, a facility-- someone might bring up something. Well, what about for older citizens or children that might be in the facility? Well, that's not our primary audience.

[00:23:07.92] Well, that's not a universal design way of thinking. It's OK to have some discussions about the average person. You certainly want to make it accessible to them. But also, you want to look at the people at the margins, what their different characteristics might be, and how you can make it accessible to them.

[00:23:24.75] We already did this, quite well, actually, in the case of sidewalks. So in the 1970s, here's a picture of a young man in a wheelchair with a sign on the back of his wheelchair that says "Ramp the curbs, get me off the street." This is actually in our student newspaper here at the University of Washington, came out again in 1970.

[00:23:46.87] And so he seemed kind of lonely at the time, I imagine. And there are a lot of sidewalks at the University of Washington, and most did not have curb cuts or little ramps in them that he could use, kept him out on the street many times. And so what's happened since then?

[00:24:04.17] Well, back then, there was a lot of pushback from post-secondary institutions-- well, we can't do that. That'll take a lot of money, and it would take a lot of time. And how many students with disabilities do we really have here? Well, that certainly isn't universal design thinking.

[00:24:16.46] But today, sidewalk curb cuts are standard practice in sidewalk design. It's hard to find one that doesn't have a curb cut except in old facilities. But I think if we moved into a brand new neighborhood and noticed that the sidewalks didn't have curb cuts in them, a lot of us would make complaints, and not necessarily just people using wheelchairs. But people come to expect that they can use them for delivery carts and for skateboarding, I guess, people who use walkers, and so forth.

[00:24:49.92] And so what we're trying to do is get that approach to be used in other contexts. To emphasize the inclusive access, I have two images on the screen in the physical environments. One has a ramp and a series of two steps going to the main door in a building. The ramp is ADA compliant, and it has two guardrails where a person can use to get up the ramp if they want to steady themselves. And it's a nice, flat slope.

[00:25:24.69] It's accessible. It's usable, very, very usable, but it's not inclusive, because a person walking with me into a building, if they use a wheelchair, the practice-- they would probably go up the ramp, and I would go up the stairs because that ramp isn't wide enough for both of us to go side by side. Otherwise, I would go up the ramp.

[00:25:47.19] But on the right-hand side, we have even an older building at the University. And it has a really gently sloping ramp to the main door. And it's quite wide. So a person who's walking and on a wheelchair can still go side by side, and people can come the other direction at the same time. And this is a building that's quite high, has a lot of floors. And there are stairs all over the place. And so someone wanting to use stairs will have no trouble finding stairs, but the main entrance is the one that's most inclusive. That's what our departments should be like.

[00:26:24.17] Technology, same thing. If you look at your smartphone, there are features-- changing the foreground and the background, the size of the characters, and so forth. In the olden days, those features would just be assistive technology that would be add-ons. Now often, the features are included in the technology like in iPhones. But then the vendors also ensure compatibility with the assistive technology, like, for instance, a Braille printer that someone who's blind might be using for themselves.

[00:26:54.05] And with all of these applications, just like curb cuts, there are beneficiaries that maybe wouldn't have been thought of if you think of the average person. Captions is a good example. They're for people who are deaf and can't hear the audio, but also, as I mentioned earlier, English language learners; people who are in a noisy environment like an airport can appreciate those captions, or a noiseless one like a library; people with slow internet connections that want to turn the images off; and those who want to know the spelling of the words-- that's a lot of people; and who need to find content quickly because with the captions, if they're in text-based format, they can be searched for content, like we like to do with our Google searching for content.

[00:27:38.95] So kind of in summary, what universal design provides-- and thinking of this with faculty-- is on the left side, there's a large circle. It has UD in it-- Universal Design. And then it has another large space within it labeled "Accommodations." And so if we compare that to this circle on the right, which has "Universal Design" in the big circle the same way the first one did but "Accommodations" in a much smaller area, the second example here, then, is representative of a campus that has really served the people with disabilities on their campus by making things accessible from the get-go, born accessible. And so it doesn't eliminate accommodations. It just means there are fewer accommodations that would be required.

[00:28:29.28] For instance, if you make all of your videos captioned, there would be no one that would need that common accommodation of having a person caption a video for someone who

can't see the images or doesn't have-- someone who needs those captions so that they will understand the content because they can't hear the audio.

[00:28:54.86] So in summary, then, an attitude, a framework, a goal, a process, universal design values diversity, equity, inclusion because it thinks about everybody. It promotes best practices. It's not lowering standards at all.

[00:29:09.32] If you're lowering your standards for your faculty members by providing accommodations or universal design, then you're doing something else. You're not doing universal design. It should not be lowering the standards. It just allows everyone to be on the level playing field and meeting those standards. Benefits everyone, or at least it strives to, and minimizes the need for accommodation.

[00:29:32.34] So that's a good sales slide here on why everybody should apply universal design. So now in chat, you can chat a little bit more. And this will continue through the next section that I'm going to be talking about. And in chat, you can describe practices that can be employed to promote access, equity, and inclusion with respect to faculty members who have disabilities.

[00:29:55.15] So what are some of the things, particularly think of unique things but not necessarily, that would make things more accessible and inclusive for faculty members who have disabilities?

[00:30:10.49] I'll give you a minute or two here to think about it at least and maybe get started on a message.

[00:30:28.73] JENA WALLACE: Well, we got one to begin with. Course creation and management and online courseware.

[00:30:37.98] SHERYL BURGSTAHLER: Oh, yes. Course creation. We have a faculty member who is blind, and he's new to using the learning management system. And it can be a little tricky to know, What is the access issue? Because it can be the learning management system, or it might be that he's not as familiar with some features in his screen reader. So it takes some technical consultation sometimes.

[00:31:06.07] JENA WALLACE: We also got another few comments rolling in. So Sue mentions, accessible versions of campus flyers and communication documents. Lauren brought up classroom design, adjustable lighting, adjustable podium, automatic opening doors.

[00:31:32.19] Here we go. Here's some more. LMS always say they are ADA compliant, but they often have not tested adequately with screen readers.

[00:31:41.61] SHERYL BURGSTAHLER: Yes. And with faculty. They may have tested with students but not faculty.

[00:31:48.51] JENA WALLACE: Let's see. What else we got here? Providing various types of training materials-- so text, visual. Anticipating needs by identifying and having software and

other technology available for when the need arises, as well as doing a climate needs assessment, websites being accessible.

[00:32:12.61] SHERYL BURGSTHALER: Yeah. Sometimes faculty will say, well-- or administrators, well, we'll just do-- we'll talk to this faculty member. We encourage people with disabilities to apply for jobs here, and all they need to do is tell us what accommodations they need.

[00:32:26.47] We had a person who uses a wheelchair apply for a job, actually, in a department that's in an old building. And not much effort had been made in making that physically accessible. And she loved coming to the University of Washington but actually was very open about saying she didn't feel like she'd be able to engage enough with faculty in the department because there was no elevator. And so providing her with an office space that's accessible to her wasn't satisfactory to her, understandably.

[00:32:55.12] But it really got the department thinking about, well, I guess we should be paying attention to these things. And it's like, yeah. So that's good, too. Let's go through a couple of others, and then we'll ask Jena to share some things that maybe isn't on the checklist.

[00:33:08.35] In the AccessADVANCE project, when I was still the PI, we created a handout called "Equal Access-- Making STEM Departments More Accessible and Inclusive of Faculty with Disabilities." And you might notice the STEM-- Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics. That's because this was funded by the National Science Foundation. So almost everything applies to other subject areas, as well.

[00:33:33.83] But we'll just go through some of the examples. This is not the whole checklist. So I'm not going to fly through it, but I'm going to move rather quickly. And some of these things already came up. We already talked about recruiting and hiring. How do we ensure that faculty recruit materials and application forms are accessible?

[00:33:49.49] It can be hard to make forms accessible, PDF forms and otherwise. But there's a lot that's kind of the low-hanging fruit, so to speak, in that your process and the information that you put up there, like how to request disability-related accommodations for the application process, and including in-person and online interviews. Ideally-- and this came up with the people we interviewed for this checklist-- is, there should be in there an indication of where you can get accommodations.

[00:34:23.27] And it shouldn't be the person that's handling the hiring, because a lot of people with disabilities would hesitate to ask for an accommodation because they might be discriminated against. But if you can give them a neutral party, like the Disability Services Office, that's where you can make requests. They could make those requests, and the accommodations could be and should be provided by that office. Some faculty members have experienced cases where they get an accommodation, but again, it makes other faculty feel like they're getting special privilege and all sorts of ways to be discriminated against, and that type of thing.

[00:34:57.29] Then policies and evaluation-- new hires and other faculty made aware of this accommodation process. So not only in the application process, but once they're hired-- remember, some people would never indicate they had a disability before they're hired. And some worry about that being fair. Shouldn't they disclose their disability?

[00:35:17.17] Well, not necessarily. I guess, if they can't do the job, they should. Certainly, that would be an ethical thing. But if they can do the job, there's no particular reason why they should have to disclose any more than I would have to disclose something in my personal life that I choose not to share. So anyway, knowing what that accommodation process is, is important, then, in the faculty manual or the website for faculty support because they may not have disclosed a disability and they don't know that office is available. So that should be clearly explained.

[00:35:52.00] Maybe even give some examples that came up when we were surveying some people, because some people wonder, well, what if it's an invisible disability? What if I have a mental illness or I have a learning disability? Does that count? So just simply giving some examples could help them understand the services provided. And all of them should be provided, by the way, if they have a disability. But that's another issue.

[00:36:14.71] Do the policies and procedures require accessibility to be considered in the design, development, and procurement process? So when you're making choices about furniture and computers and whatever, about architecture and so forth, be sure that accessibility is considered. When we built a new facility, a STEM facility, quite a few years ago now, I recruited some students in our project with different types of disabilities to provide input to the architects and to the administrators of that facility.

[00:36:50.89] And it was interesting to me to watch the architects and the staff and faculty with disabilities. They all showed up for this session where they were giving input. And they're students that are very competent and been asked to give input before. So they get a small stipend for doing that.

[00:37:09.77] And the architects were very nervous, and the faculty and administrators, as well, who happened to be there, I talked to them later, and they were kind of worried about having this. They didn't know if this was a good idea. And the reason that they gave-- I hadn't thought of myself-- but it's they're worried that they won't be able to do everything that the students with disabilities were providing in their suggestions. And I said, well, it's just like any focus group you'd have. You get the suggestions, and you should consider them, but you don't want to necessarily employ all of them.

[00:37:39.81] And most of the stuff, they reported later, too, were really no-brainers. A little bit of adjusting the design they had for the bathroom so there's more room, but no walls or anything, changes in the surface that's on the floor, and where the presentation screens were going to be, and so forth. So they actually used, I think, all of that input to improve the facility.

[00:38:02.37] And then make sure that disability-related access issues are addressed in the evaluations. Make sure that when you do the evaluations, those ask for if they had any physical barriers that were erected for them.

[00:38:21.18] One thing that came up quite a bit, too, is just the culture of the campus. Do the campus or departmental DEI initiatives address issues relevant to faculty members with disabilities? It makes a strong statement when disability is considered in those efforts as a diversity effort. And some people don't consider it that.

[00:38:40.24] But even if they don't, which I would disagree with, they need to provide accessibility because they might be working with women faculty, for example, or people who are racial ethnic minorities who are faculty members. Well, those, people because of intersectionality, might also have disabilities. And so you can't just get off the hook about accessibility, because you're not targeting that as a diversity area. I do believe it should be a diversity group, though, pretty strongly.

[00:39:08.70] Do you address disability issues on campus in the climate surveys? We did a climate survey years ago. And I provided some input on the accessibility piece. The first thing that the group wanted to provide is a separate survey for people with disabilities. Then they wanted to have a separate section so that they fill out this extra section.

[00:39:32.02] But I convinced them-- and it actually went quite smoothly-- to just think about every item and, if there are some issues related to accessibility, to make sure that it's worded in such a way that you pick up on those things along the way. There are very few new items they had to add. It was mainly that they had to edit the things that they were already working on.

[00:39:51.70] Do you address disability issues in other areas such as going beyond compliance, going beyond accommodations for individuals to also focus more broadly on universal or inclusive design? And so it's important that you provide how to get an accommodation but also, in your policy, to talk about the importance of proactive processes and getting feedback and input from faculty to increase the environment for everyone.

[00:40:24.46] And then we already talked quite a bit about physical environments, but think about things like routes of travel, doors with sensors or buttons for automatic opening. Most facilities will not provide it for every door, but some key ones at entrances to the building and entrances to restrooms should be high on the list and then maybe some in facilities that are commonly used, particularly by a lot of people, like an auditorium. If you have to make choices, figure out what the priorities would be.

[00:40:55.23] And ample, high-contrast, large-print directional signage. Sometimes, there's an accessible route to a building, and the person doesn't understand where it is until they're already in the inaccessible area and have to maneuver even more. Elevator controls that are accessible from a seated position. That's commonly practiced now but not everywhere. And even, as appropriate, have some Braille labels as well.

[00:41:21.64] And then wheelchair-accessible restrooms and adjustable-height tables. You don't have to have adjustable-height tables for every workstation in a science lab, but how about one? And put it in an area where there's quite-- a large enough area to maneuver using a wheelchair.

[00:41:40.06] Ergonomic chairs. Some people, in their lecture classroom-type environment where they have individual chairs, are now purchasing, maybe, a variety of chairs in terms of size to make them more comfortable for a broader audience. Adequate and adjustable lighting, ventilation. That's particularly important as far as COVID, as we know. And policies and procedures that address access issues when facilities are constructed or remodeled, as I already mentioned that example with my students.

[00:42:13.99] And then if we look at support services as far as through the faculty lens, do staff members know how to respond to requests for disability-related accommodations and your faculty support center or the learning center for faculty? What if the faculty member that's using the facility has a disability? Are you proactively designing the facility for them and the resources you provide, like the classes, or communities of practice, and so forth?

[00:42:46.00] Are staff members familiar with the availability of alternate document formats? There are several services-- we have some on our campus-- where you can get some help with that. And some departments provide quite a bit of help as well. And do they know that? It's an important thing.

[00:43:04.78] We, in our social work department, have made a lot of progress in helping faculty members make accessible documents. And so the question for them would be, how are you making sure the new faculty know about this service right away? It's mainly for making them accessible to students in classes, the services, but it can help faculty members as well if they need accessible documents.

[00:43:31.00] Are staff members are aware of issues related to communicating with individuals of different races, ethnicities, ages, abilities, for instance, and discussions to make sure that, if there's a person who's deaf in the conference meeting, that when you go around the table and people are adding comments and so forth in the discussion, that they are reminded to state their name, particularly at the beginning before this person can identify people by their voice.

[00:44:01.69] Are staff responsible for designing and developing websites knowledgeable about accessible web design? You probably have an IT department in your college or school or department. And does that person, do those people in that group, know how to make accessible websites? And so they would make the unit websites accessible, but did they work enough with faculty members who are often creating their own websites for their classes? And so they can have some basic accessible design work and training to do that, or with a unit providing that training and removing that as a need for faculty other than just knowing about it.

[00:44:47.44] Captioning videos, same thing. We have the business school now that, after we worked with them for many years on other accessibility issues, but they just decided to adopt a practice where they would caption, through their IT unit, all of the videos that faculty members use when they're teaching remotely. And that's huge. We have a very large business school.

[00:45:09.82] Now, the business department or the School of Business, they are kind of a large group, and so they have quite a bit of money. So that would be, maybe, not affordable for some departments. But it's an interesting idea to just take something off the lap of the faculty members to make sure that accessibility guidelines are followed. And that's fair game, because sometimes faculty say, well, how can we do all this for students or other faculty? We don't have any time. Well, maybe your department could step up on some of these things to make some of these things happen.

[00:45:45.35] So as far as meetings, are they captioned, recorded, and posted online so someone who might miss the meeting can actually see what happened, but also, someone that-- maybe it was accessible to them, but they need to watch it again to make sure that they gain all of that content? It could be disability related, maybe not. Maybe they're just diligent, and they're making sure they got all the content when they heard it the first time, and now they're hearing it the second time. That's a universal design practice.

[00:46:20.80] Do the web pages adhere to accessibility guidelines? Do the publications have a statement about requesting disability-related accommodations, particularly in the faculty resources? And is it clear how faculty can request this guidance? How can they request assistance with choosing technology? We on our campus have the IT accessibility team and even have a showroom of accessible technology and assistive technology. That is a good resource for faculty.

[00:46:51.68] But how many units on campus that serve faculty actually point that out to them, that they can get help in that unit? A good question to ask. We always ask that, try to-- when I was working there. I'm not working there now. But that's important, too, that you can have these resources that are just not available because people don't know about them.

[00:47:12.24] And then, how are central funds available? As I mentioned earlier, faculty members are very nervous about asking for accommodations, particularly from the chair. It might be the chair of the department that's very comfortable doing that. But the concern is that it does take a financial hit on that departmental budget. If it's a small department, that could be significant. And it can create negative attitudes of other faculty that this person is getting some special treatment that they're not getting.

[00:47:42.17] And then the last one on the list is the whole area of accommodations. In a universal design framework, you also should develop issues and deal with issues related to accommodations, because I consider accommodations, for example, part of the universal design. As I mentioned earlier, universal design does not eliminate the need for accommodations, it only reduces them.

[00:48:05.25] And so when I think about accommodations in a universal design framework, here are some that I would think about for faculty. Does a simple transparent procedure to ensure a timely response to requests for disability-related accommodations exist? Some campuses, faculty members report that it takes them forever to get accommodations. And so they need them now. I mean, they're starting their job, right?

[00:48:31.37] And so they end up sometimes paying for equipment and stuff themselves because they don't want to be a bother. So it needs to be efficient, whatever the service is. And they need to know about it, as we mentioned before.

[00:48:43.55] Are faculty made aware of the services? And are all disabilities considered in disability accommodations and initiatives? And so again, considering, emphasizing the inclusion of non-apparent disabilities, making sure that they realize that those are considered disabilities on their campus, as they should. But sometimes, faculty members aren't so sure about that. And so they need to know whether they can ask-- I would encourage them to ask, by the way, even if it's not listed. But make sure they get those accommodations.

[00:49:16.74] And I think it's important that these accommodations, again, are funded centrally and so a person who maybe has a disability that is going to require quite a bit of extra technology and so forth is not discriminated against in the hiring process. Even if people don't say it out loud, they're politically correct, that doesn't mean you're not being discriminated against.

[00:49:41.08] So today, just an example of what I have done-- and we talked about meetings, just get into a little detail-- is, what did I do? I assured adequate lighting on me. I'm using Zoom. Zoom is the most accessible conferencing system in the world. It wasn't always that way.

[00:50:02.69] And my institution chose Zoom as a standard product. And when we choose something at the University of Washington, all the other campuses follow-- most of them, anyway. And so once we made that decision, it wasn't fully accessible. We pointed that out to the people who were making the decision about choosing it.

[00:50:23.90] But what we did do is get some wording in the contract that the Zoom staff would continue to work with us to make their product more accessible on an ongoing basis. And they did. And so we and other, probably mostly large, institutions are the ones that put a lot of pressure on Zoom-- because it was a very small company at the time-- to prioritize accessibility work. And they continue to do that. Even it hasn't been that long that you can have sign language interpreters be more flexible, have them in the breakout rooms, and so forth. So that showed what can happen when you have a lot of institutions working together and pushing on these vendors. And they're very thankful for it.

[00:51:04.13] Enabling captions-- we did that today. Using Microsoft PowerPoint template-- this is a simple thing, using a template provided by Microsoft. They're kind of designed in a way to make-- to encourage you to promote accessibility in the PowerPoint design. I used UW PowerPoint for these slides, and we worked with that unit, my team, and making sure that the template is designed in an accessible way.

[00:51:32.93] Using uncluttered slides, plain background, high contrast with the text, more than color to communicate content. That's actually for people who are color blind. And then speaking critical content all along the way. And spelling out acronyms and explaining jargon when it comes up. Using large, sans serif fonts makes it that easier to read by many people who have disabilities.

[00:52:00.02] And then the document itself-- I said that you can request receiving this PowerPoint file. And you'll find that it's in a text format that the headings are structured in a way that it's accessible to someone using a screen reader to read that text aloud. I also structured the lists and tables using these formatting tools.

[00:52:19.34] And provide text descriptions of the content and images. So all those images, like the one on the screen right now, they do have alternative text. So someone who is blind using a screen reader will get a description of that if they look at the PowerPoints, even though I haven't described them, because they're not critical to understanding the presentation today.

[00:52:39.60] So I'm just going to-- a question for reflection, and then we'll just slip right into Q&A. What steps can you take to make your department more accessible, welcoming, and inclusive of people who have disabilities, and to be thinking of that? Some of the ideas here-- looking at the checklist itself, and so you get that longer version, would be a good idea. We have a lot of checklists in the Center for Universal Design here at the University of Washington that focuses on education.

[00:53:05.99] And initially in our projects that created these checklists, I didn't think we should have checklists, because it just seems-- universal design is just a feeling, and you ought to make things happen, and so forth. But we had so much pressure from different stakeholder groups to develop checklists.

[00:53:23.39] And the reason is-- and oh, how they changed my mind-- is people need a place to start. And once you look at some examples-- first of all, you might find some simple things you can just do right now. But also, that would be, maybe, a motivation to think about some other items.

[00:53:38.13] So these resources on here have also been copied into your chat, has a URL for the Center for Universal Design in education, the one that we have at the University of Washington, and the AccessADVANCE project, and Accessible Technology, and my email address. And I mentioned I would refer to this book that I recently published, *Creating Inclusive Learning Opportunities in Higher Education-- A Universal Design Toolkit*. And it's all about what we talked about today but also just everything else, all the things that we do on campus, and how can we make things more accessible and usable and inclusive?

[00:54:17.79] So are any questions popping up, Jena? Or any ideas?

[00:54:23.06] JENA WALLACE: We do have a few questions that have accumulated over the presentation. I will try to get to as many as I can before we have to wrap things up. But first one-- I know this webinar is on faculty with disabilities, but staff with disabilities on campuses are often entirely overlooked more so than faculty. Could you discuss how disabled staff could also be included in this?

[00:54:48.89] SHERYL BURGSTHALER: Yeah, they definitely could be included. And I think you'll find the checklist. We thought about that a lot when we developed the checklist as part of

the AccessADVANCE project. We have the handout for faculty because that's the AccessADVANCE project, what we're supposed to do.

[00:55:06.18] We do have some other checklists that talk about employees, though. And so you might find some looking at our Center on Universal Design in Education with that first URL on the screen. But definitely. And I think-- I don't know if they're left out more. We hear complaints from that group but also from faculty. And so it doesn't matter, really, because all groups should be included.

[00:55:25.70] And most of what we provide on this checklist, again, is something you could do for employers. One thing we recently did at the University of Washington is set up an affinity group for faculty and staff who have disabilities, and allies. And I thought that was part of discussing this group we were going to set up. And I thought that was a great idea to include those groups together. They're just getting started, so we'll see how that goes. But people are showing up. And so that's a first step. But I agree with you. Employees need to be considered as well.

[00:56:00.19] JENA WALLACE: Yeah. That kind of folds into the next question that we have. Someone was curious about the role that disabled student advocacy groups might have played in the accessibility at the University of Washington campus.

[00:56:15.49] SHERYL BURGSTHALER: Yes, students with disabilities have been instrumental. And we've provided ways for them to give input, as I mentioned that one facility. And there are others examples where we drew them in to give them advocacy work like that so they can think, oh, I can actually give input on things. And so they get some confidence in that regard.

[00:56:36.02] We also, using money from funding of grants is, we would provide students with disabilities as panelists in faculty members' classes. And so for instance, we have done one for many years for a class on sociology of education for students with disabilities. And they like a panel of about four students with different types of disabilities.

[00:56:59.63] And basically, the questions we ask-- the facilitator might ask-- or the instructor or the other students would ask-- are things related to whatever the topics are in that course that they're teaching. And so we tailor it to that audience. And that gives them opportunities as well. Because I think we need to give them opportunities to give input. Students with disabilities don't necessarily think that that's their place. And we do have a disability focus group for students with disabilities that is pretty good at advocating around campus.

[00:57:32.75] JENA WALLACE: Great. We just have enough time to do our wrap-up. But I would highly encourage everyone to check out all the resources that Sheryl mentioned. Her email's in there if you want to contact her after this presentation.

[00:57:49.64] So yeah. Just thank you so much, Sheryl, for today's presentation. It was really great. Thank you, everyone, for engaging in the chat and sharing resources. It's always so great to see such an engaged audience with our presentations.

[00:58:03.96] Thank you again. And I hope everyone has a great rest of their day.

[00:58:07.67] SHERYL BURGSTHALER: Absolutely. Thanks for coming.