

JACLYN LEDUC: Thank you so much for joining this webinar titled "Motivating Faculty to Embrace Accessibility." I am Jacqueline Leduc from 3Play Media, and I'll be moderating today.

I'm joined today by Dr. Jennifer Pedersen. She's an educational psychologist with more than 15 years in higher education. She specializes in helping faculty incorporate universal design principles into new course material. Dr. Pedersen has assumed responsibility for campus-wide accessibility training at the University of Alaska. So thank you for being here today, Jen.

And with that, I will hand it off to Jen, who has a wonderful presentation prepared for you all.

JENNIFER PEDERSEN: Thank you so much. I appreciate that. Let me go ahead and share my screen here with everyone. In just a second I'll set this up. OK.

Hopefully everyone can see this screen. Thank you so much for allowing me to share a portion of your day, and we'll move right in to "Motivating Faculty to Embrace Accessibility." And you'll see on the title slide here in quotations, "This isn't why I became an instructor!" I can't tell you how many times I have heard that since I began this journey.

So a little bit about what we're going to talk about today. I'll give you a brief introduction, and then I'll kind of walk you through our approach here in terms of motivating faculty to embrace accessibility. So where do we start?

What were the motivators? Some faculty perspectives-- I'll give you some faculty perspectives at the beginning and some faculty perspectives-- I'm not going to say at the end, because we're certainly not at the end-- but more towards the middle of where we're at. And then we'll talk a little bit about embracing accessibility initiatives.

As Jaclyn said, please feel free to have any questions or comments as you go through this webinar. I have no problem making this very interactive versus me just talking, because I want to say upfront that I want to come to this presentation as well. I certainly do not have all of the answers. It's a constant, I'm not going to say battle, but if you work with faculty, maybe you understand my hesitation for that one. It's a constant challenge to get folks excited about accessibility and get them working on making their courses accessible.

So a little bit about me and the University of Alaska System. So my introduction to Alaska happened about 20 years ago. I was married to a man in the military, and we were stationed

in the Interior, and I absolutely fell in love with it. I have searched for an opportunity to get back here for that entire time.

I will tell you that psychology professors have a tendency to stay put in the University of Alaska System. So my opportunity to get back came in the form of working with a group of instructional designers, as well as educational technologists, which kind of fits into my background of being an educational psychologist and working with faculty. So I kind of joke around sometimes when people ask me what I do. I still teach, it's just now my students are faculty instead of students.

So I wanted to share with you a little bit about the University of Alaska System, because we're a little bit different than maybe some other institutions out there. So we have an overarching University of Alaska, and that's comprised of three main campuses. We have the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. We have the University of Alaska, Southeast. And we have the University of Alaska, Anchorage.

So I am a part of the University of Alaska Anchorage System comprised of 13 different campuses, and my main office is out of Kenai Peninsula College. So with Kenai Peninsula College is also kind of an umbrella system, and we have three campuses that my folks here take care of here in Soldotna, where I'm located right now. And you'll see this picture of me and my son. He came to visit me this summer, and it's bright, and it's sunny, and it was a beautiful day. And it was nothing at all like the snow-covered chill of the minus 4 degrees it was when I got to work this morning. We also have campuses down in Homer and then also in Seward.

As I mentioned before, I'm in charge of a group of educational technologists and instructional designers, and we make up what is called here locally as the Educational Technology Team. You might hear me refer to it as ETT throughout. We are also, again, a part of that University of Alaska, Anchorage System, and so our sister organization up at UAA is Academic Innovations & eLearning. You might hear me refer to that as AI&e up there.

We're basically two groups that do the same types of things, just one at a larger campus and one at a little bit of a smaller campus. Those of us who are within ETT and AI&e make up what is known as the Instructional Designers Alliance. And oftentimes we go even a little bit broader and work not only with those of us at UAA, but also at UAF and UAS as well. So that's just a little bit about the system and how we're comprised and what we are responsible for.

So this journey of accessibility, I feel like we need to take it all the way back to the beginning. And I will tell you that this kind of happened right as I was coming on board. I've been here for almost two years. And right off the bat when I showed up, and my first day, and they said, oh hey, we have this Office of Civil Rights Complaints, and accessibility is obviously going to be a big part of the Voluntary Resolution Agreement, and it's your baby now. So the University of Alaska, Anchorage-- it was UAA who had the OCR complaint against them, and most of it was centered directly on public-facing websites.

As a part of that Voluntary Resolution Agreement, we agreed that all of our public-facing websites would be 100% accessible, and our date was November of 2019. I'm happy to report that everything looks good so far. Pretty sure we met that objective, and we're trucking on along as if there's no problems. An additional part of that VRA, we had to provide training for faculty and staff on accessible document creation.

And then the last three bullets you'll see here-- misunderstanding, confusion, and chaos. This was kind of the norm. This is what I walked into. I go, oh, my gosh, we have this Office of Civil Rights Complaints. Oh my goodness, what does this mean?

It was confusion. It was chaos. And I will tell you the main reason why is our online faculty-- or those faculty who maybe taught blended courses or some of each-- were like, well, I teach online in a public space. Like, what? The online, it has to be accessible? Like, what are we going to do? How am I going to do this? I don't know what I'm supposed to do.

So it was definitely chaos, and the misunderstanding comes in when we're saying, OK, well, yeah, you do teach online, however, not public-facing, behind password in terms of working with Blackboard. And so really trying to clarify what that complaint was, and what we had agreed to do was really kind of that first step.

And as I mentioned, I come from an academic background. I taught psychology for a number of years before I kind of stepped into this current position. And so as an academic, I was handed with a problem, and they said, this is your baby, go and run with it. And I'm like, ah, OK, what do I need to do?

So I hit the literature, because that's my default, and I came across a concept called the A3 Model. It was by Schwanke, Smith, and Edyburn. And I do have a whole series of references at the very end, so you're more than welcome, if you're not familiar with this particular model,

to look them up and get a little bit more information on them. But I thought, this is it for me-- advocacy, accommodations, and accessibility.

So this dynamic transitional approach, this A3 Model, dealt with raising awareness in the form of advocacy, modifications in terms of accommodations, and then equitable access was the end goal with accessibility. And it really emphasized "at the same time." So I thought, this is perfect. We have a blessing and a curse in the form of this OCR complaint when it comes to advocacy.

Wow, it was in everybody's face. A large part of advocating for accessible content was done for me. I didn't necessarily need to raise a lot of awareness because it was, as I said, thrown into everybody's face. However, I'm going to say the curse part of it was that chaos and the confusion and the misunderstanding, and we definitely highlighted a need for change.

But because it was an OCR complaint, there was heavy, heavy emphasis on compliance. We have to be compliant. We have a deadline. You have to do this. There is no ifs, ands, or buts.

So my particular goal from this first start of the Triple-A Model under advocacy was to try and change some perspectives. So how do we get from a compliance-based perspective to more of a this is what we should do because it's the right thing to do? We're looking at eliminating barriers to learning, and the focus is on student success. I tend to think that everybody who teaches has that end goal in mind. We are here because we are invested in students, and we want them to be successful.

So I really tried to take that perspective and say, don't worry about compliance. Yes, we need to. Yes, it's an issue. We have to deal with it, but if we focus on eliminating the barriers to learning so that students can be successful, compliance then becomes a byproduct. So I really just tried to, within that advocacy, change the mindset.

So then we move on to accommodations. And this is very reactive in nature. And I think it's probably a pretty typical university response to accessibility. A student needs particular accommodations. The way it works at UAA is probably similar to the way it works across the board. Students have some type of self-disclosure to a Disability Services office. They then qualify for accommodations. DSS comes up with a plan, and they notify the particular faculty member who are involved.

Kind of the problem, if you will, with this particular accommodations mindset is it reflects really

a medical model, where the emphasis is really on-- we're going to diagnose a specific deficiency. The disability is the problem. And the burden for the solution really is put on the students. They have to start the whole process from that initial self-disclosure to going through and coming up with a plan, going through the accommodations process of qualifying, and then really being at the mercy of whatever professor they have in terms of following through with that.

So we ultimately wanted to get to the third A in the model, which is accessibility. So instead of being very reactive-- the way you are with accommodations-- accessibility is, in my mind, meant to be more proactive. As I talked about changing perspectives, we wanted to eliminate the barriers. And so for me, it was actually twofold. We need to eliminate the barriers for students so that they can be successful, but then we also, on my end, need to eliminate the barriers for faculty that they can produce accessible material.

And I really like the A3 Model, because when they talk about accessibility, they're really coming at it from a social or a cultural model. Where now it's not deficiency, now we're talking about differences. Now we don't have problems in terms of disability. Now we can value the diversity that all of our students bring to the table, and everybody is on an equal playing field.

So that's where I start in my head. So how do I start out in the real world? So my very first workshop on accessibility that I had here at KPC, I kind of took a play off of Kübler-Ross's stages of grief. I took some liberties. I'm going to show you what those liberties are.

So the stages of grief, I kind of turned it into the stages of accessibility. It starts off with anger. It kind of moved into denial.

Here's where the liberties begin. Now we get into the bargaining and the overwhelmed, and the end result-- you'll see there in the middle-- it says simply Accessible. That's what I entitled our workshop series on accessibility-- Simply Accessible.

So anger, the things that are in red up here, were actually things that our faculty yelled out that I wrote up on the board. You know, who's to blame? You'll notice I put not ETT. We're not to blame. This isn't fair, who did this? Oh, we were making the emphasis on liability versus me being able to have a better class.

And the big one, I don't have any students with accommodations. And this was kind of the crossover into denial. Like, this isn't happening. You know, they won't really make my courses

accessible.

They won't let me do that, because, again, remember, oh, it's a public-facing website. Mine's not public-facing. They won't really make me do it.

And my favorite one, this isn't why I became a teacher. I can empathize with that a little bit, and that kind of gets into the bargaining stage. Like, well, OK, if you're going to make me do it, can I get a course release?

You know what, I'm going to do anything else. What else is an option? You know, can I take an extra class for you? Can I stay after and clean all the boards?

Then we get to the overwhelmed stage, where, OK, it is what it is. It doesn't matter if we're angry. We tried denial.

We tried bargaining. Nothing's working, and now we know we have to do this, but holy guacamole, Batman! I am completely overwhelmed. You know, what's the point? Why am I even going to bother? I can't do it all. And you know what, they were right. You can't do it all, especially in an immediate fashion.

I loved this one too-- they're trying to make me an accessibility expert. And yeah, maybe we're trying to make you an accessibility novice. How about that? But the end result was, you know what, I got here one step at a time. And so for me it was really just kind of working through all of these emotions that we got hit with on our end from faculty.

So I want to share with you a few early faculty perspectives, and these are actually direct quotes that I got from faculty. I'm going to read them off for you. "Overrated. We are catering to the lowest common denominator, in which most cases is not necessary and adding to the workload of faculty. Students are not requesting accessibility and do not seem disenfranchised over accessible documents."

You know what, "I think it's very important, but I am not sure how I can find the time to put into getting everything accessible for those rare occasions when I have a student who needs it."

"It is a slow process, but one that needs to be accomplished. However, there is no way that faculty can do it on their own without getting paid as much as the private companies charge."

"It is a nice concept, but it's actually not possible. Some types of degrees are not possible for

folks with certain accessibility issues. Those courses should be made exempt from the unnecessary accessibility modifications."

"If a degree never has a student that needs it to be accessible, it seems that making it accessible actually lowers the look, feel, appearance, and ease of understanding."

And this one is my favorite, I had to add it up here. "Accessibility is one of the reasons I am retiring."

So when we're faced with comments like these, oh my goodness, where do we even start? So I'm a start at the end and work backwards kind of girl. So if I go back to that Triple-A Model, and accessibility is the end goal, and the bottom line was removing barriers for students and then for me for faculty, that's where I chose to start.

So Barriers to Accessibility. These are the ones that we came up with here, accommodations versus accessibility. And you'll see what I mean when we talk about these individually.

A lack of skills was a barrier. Time constraints was a barrier. Tool constraints was a variable. Financial constraints, that was a huge variable. And boring content.

And then you'll notice at the bottom of most of my slides there's a little reference section. And again, the full references will be available for you, but I wanted to point this out here, because the barriers that we found really kind of mirror what's out there in the literature. So I wanted to just say that these particular barriers I don't feel like are confined to UAA or even UA. I think they're pretty much across the board in terms of faculty being motivated towards accessibility and making their content accessible.

So we need to remove these barriers in order to get to that end result. So we'll kind of work through these one at a time. And I want to start with the big one-- accommodations versus accessibility.

I found very early on that a lot of times people thought that these were the same things. They hear accommodations, they think accessibility. They think accessibility, they automatically assume that I'm referring to accommodations. So the first barrier that I had to eliminate was operationally defining those terms. There I go being an academic again.

So what do we mean by accommodations? What do we mean by accessibility? And really trying to get people to break those two things apart in their mind and not think of them as

being the exact same.

So you'll see that in all of these slides, I pulled direct faculty quotes. And this one starts off with, "None of my students need accommodations." OK, that actually might be true, but again, doesn't necessarily have anything to do with what we're talking about in terms of making your course accessible.

So we really had to work on changing that perspective, and I did that by kind of redirecting the operational definition within the context of what it was that I was talking about. So, OK, none of your students need accommodations, that's great. But it doesn't mean, like, oh phew, I got a pass this semester, I'm good to go. So what can we do to start working towards what happens if you do have a student who needs accommodations next semester?

The other one that I got was really big-- and I get this all the time still-- "You can't be a professional in my discipline with any form of disability." So this one required us to challenge stereotypes and biases. I think that a lot of times folks think about disabilities with something that you can see, without recognizing that a disability might be something that you can't see. So we're really trying to challenge the stereotypes that are out there and trying to challenge personal biases that faculty members have across the board.

So now we move into a lack of skills. This is something that is maybe a little bit easier to accomplish on the outset. The quote here is, "I don't know how to make my course accessible."

So there were two problems that I found. And the first one is a huge one-- inconsistent message. So I mentioned the Instructional Designers Alliance. There's a number of us out there, and we are all trying to help faculty make their courses accessible.

And the problem was, especially on my end at a community campus or one of the three community campuses versus the main campus, somebody would hear something from somebody up at AI&e, and then I would tell them, oh no, that's not actually what you need to do. You need to do it this way. And they're like, well, no, so-and-so said I was doing it right, and I'm good to go. I know how to do that. Like, no you can't-- I don't need to listen to you.

So it really produced a problem of confidence in our ability as instructional designers to help them get to that ultimate goal. We didn't have any unified direction. And so what we did pretty immediately-- once this became clear that, hey, we've got inconsistencies across the board in

what we are telling faculty to do-- we came together as an alliance and created this great, big, giant, working document where we had everything listed out.

We had it linked to [INAUDIBLE]. We had it linked to QM standards. And really kind of tried to nit-pick it down and say, here's a problem in terms of accessible content, and here's why it's the problem, so that we can all share the same reasoning. And here's what we're going to do in order to fix it, and these are the resources that you have available. So that was an issue.

The second part of the problem was a legitimate lack of knowledge, skills, and ability. You go back to that-- I'm not an accessibility expert, you're trying to make me into one. A legitimate lack. So they honestly had no idea how to go about making accessible material. And this resulted in feeling overwhelmed, feeling frustrated, and becoming defensive.

So if you only take one thing away from this particular workshop, I would say let it be this-- be a duck. That's what I tell my instructional designers. Be a duck. You've got to let it all roll off your back, especially when they're overwhelmed, and they're frustrated, and they become defensive. And the human tendency-- I'm not trying to pick on any particular person individually-- but the tendency is to lash out at whoever it is. So you've just got to let all that go, and it's not personal.

Moving on to another big one would be time constraints. And I love the visual aid on this particular slide, "I don't have time to make my course accessible." And it's like down the rabbit hole. It kind of reminds me in a way of *Alice in Wonderland*, your kind of downward spiral. Once you get down into that hole, you can't get back up.

And this is where a lot of times I'm like, you're right. You don't have the time to make your entire course accessible. So we had an approach to this where we said, you know what, don't tackle the mountain. What we want to do is start small. And you're not working towards perfection. You're working every semester towards better. So that was our mantra across the board-- better, not perfect.

We also chose to prioritize the first two weeks of content in an online class, and this is because, in a perfect world, you would get that accommodations letter before class even started, but that's really not how it works in reality. It might be the end of the first week. It might be the beginning of the second week when all of a sudden you get this email that says, hey, we need this particular accommodations. So if we prioritize the first two weeks of content, go through and make everything in those first two weeks accessible across the board, now you've

kind of given yourself and us a little bit of a head start. Or if you do have somebody in your course that needs specific accommodations that would require us to alter content in any way, we have a little bit of leeway.

And then the big one-- don't make the mountain any bigger. This is the proverbial sword that I choose to die on. Very, very, very strong in my encouragement of this particular one.

Make a commitment that from this day forward I am not going to introduce any new content into any of my course unless it's already accessible. Focus on that. Start small.

You don't have to take it all on in one fell swoop, because it isn't going to happen. There's a saying, how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. So it's kind of that same thought process here, is don't try and tackle it all at once. Find a way that you can get started, and then work towards being better.

The next issue that we came across in terms of barriers were tool constraints. "I don't have the tools I need to make my course accessible." And this one is very valid. If you don't have the knowledge, skills, ability, and what you need in order to utilize that knowledge, skills, and ability, then you're really kind of spinning your wheels.

So what we chose to do to get the tools into their hands was we worked with accessibility workshops. We are a Blackboard school, that's our LMS, and so we got Blackboard Ally, and that's available to all faculty. We provided them with training on Ally and how to use it and how to incorporate it in their classrooms, and provided sandboxes for them to go in and kind of troubleshoot. Let's play around with it a little bit.

What I mentioned earlier, our Simply Accessible series. That was on a monthly basis. I did three to four accessibility workshops every month for that particular calendar year. It would have been '18-'19.

We have something at our institution called eTech Fair, and this is where we highlight pieces of technology that faculty can use in their classroom. And on the instructional designer side, we work really hard to find tools that are either already accessible or help you produce accessible content or in some way enhance what you already have.

For National Distance Learning Week, we had a bunch of daily communications that went out that dealt specifically with accessible content creation and highlighted, again, some of those

tools that faculty have available and gave tutorials. We have something called EduTips, and that is another avenue that we use to get the tools into their hands. And then, of course, individual consultations.

I don't have this up here, and I really maybe think I should, but one of the big issues that I had in terms of helping faculty make courses accessible falls into the STEM category, so the science and the technology and the math. Particularly our math professors, we have some that are very strong advocates for making math accessible, and they're like, Jen, I need something to help me. And something that we're using and we're very, very excited about is from a company called Texthelp, and they're using EquatIO.

If you haven't heard of that, I'll give them a quick plug. Definitely look into it. It has really opened the world of accessibility in terms of our math faculty specifically, but our chemistry faculty are also really kind of getting on board with using EquatIO. It's a lot of the equations that they've got for chemistry are being incorporated into that particular tool.

So we are constantly, within my office, digging out there into not only the literature, but plain old Google searches and listservs that we're on. We're constantly looking for tools that are developed specifically to help folks make things accessible.

Financial constraints is another big one. And I will tell you across the board that the biggest thing that we heard from faculty is, "I don't have the money to make my courses accessible." And captioning was a huge thing for them. We've got a lot of videos that are out there that faculty have created and used, and they don't want to not use them. I don't want them to not use them. Students love them, right.

Like, I can't caption. I don't have time to caption. How am I going to do it? So our solution here was using 3Play Media. We were able, through the use of a grant, to purchase a large number of minutes that faculty have access to.

Now, we do have a few guidelines that faculty have to follow if they're going to be eligible to have their videos captioned through 3Play Media. We want it to be reusable, so nothing that's course-specific and something that, of course, they create themselves. So we have a lot of times folks who have pulled in videos outside, and they're like, hey, can I get this captioned? And we're like, nope, has to be your own original, and kind of moving forward from there.

But this was the biggest bang for our buck, because this was the number one thing that faculty

were asking for and that faculty identified when they say, I don't have the money that I need in order to make accessible content. So we were like, OK, this is our big-ticket item. This is where, if we can find any type of money to put into it, this is where we're going to get the most return. And the faculty across the board are very thankful for that. And it's been a huge blessing on our campus working with 3Play Media.

And I saved maybe the best, if you will, saved the best for last, because this is something that I hear on the daily. Making my class accessible strips it out of anything innovative and cool, and it's making it boring. Like, when you talk to me about an accessible class, you want me to go back to black text on a white page and that's it? Well, no, that's not it.

So we're really trying to work with, again, changing that perspective, and looking at this as, hey, this is an opportunity that you have to refresh your course. And I'm always trying to get my instructional designers, as well as my faculty, to ask better questions. So if you're saying, oh I'm doing this innovative thing. It's so cool. It's wonderful. Well, what's your end goal?

If I'm saying to you, OK, this isn't accessible, so we're going to need to figure something else out, what is it that you want from that? What is it that you like about it? Let's ask better questions so that we can then find something that is accessible that you're going to like even better. So it gives us an opportunity to look at a class with fresh eyes.

Sometimes, and myself included-- I will lump myself in here-- it's easy to get into a little bit of a rut. Particularly if you have a class that you teach regularly and it works really well, it works for you, it works for the students, it kind of gives you the tendency to go on autopilot, if you will. And so making things accessible and talking about, you're trying to make me have boring content? Well, no, let's think about how we can jazz up that content.

One of the things that we were also able to do through a grant is work with CourseArc and make that available to our faculty. And the whole benefit of CourseArc is the accessibility components are built in. You don't have to be that accessibility expert. What you put in, the output comes back to you in an accessible format.

One of the other things that we're doing when we talk about boring content is not everybody has the opportunity to get paid for course development, and it's way beyond my pay grade in terms of the circumstances that they do get paid for it. But when they meet all of the criteria and they do get paid, it comes out of my budget. So they have the benefit of working with me directly, and we have regular check-ins that we're talking about accessibility, and we're really

looking at how we can make it interactive and innovative and cool and make it something that students are going to enjoy and be engaged in and come back asking for more, but kind of keeping accessibility on the forefront of their minds.

So Faculty Motivation. And I really maybe think that I probably could have either split this into two or at least gone column by column, but I really want to talk about it from two perspectives when we talk about motivation, because we have instructional designers who are working on this, and we have faculty who are working on this. And in a more leadership administrative role that I'm in, I'm having to manage expectations of both when it comes to motivation. So on the one hand, here are my instructional designers that are like, man, Jen, we're providing workshops, we're doing one-on-one consultations, we're doing builds with faculty, we're creating tutorials, we're coming up with all of these things that are really trying to get all of what we know into their hands, and we're giving them the tools. We're giving them everything that they've asked for.

Like, here are the barriers. This is why I can't. We're addressing these barrier by barrier by barrier. We're working day in and day out, and faculty are saying, I don't feel supported. Well, what else can I possibly do? And from the faculty perspective, they're saying, you know what, I really don't feel supported. I'm not motivated to do this. And it was for three main reasons. There was no time, no recognition, and no recompense.

So really when I talk about faculty motivation, those three things have to be at the forefront of everything we do when we try and eliminate all of these particular barriers. And some of them, again, outside of the, OK, great, there's not a whole lot that we can do. When we talk about I don't have time, OK, well, I can't give you a course release. That's not within my purview. I can't say, OK, cool, you have a course release to work on this other course.

The recognition-- you know, nobody is recognizing the amount of time that I put into this, the effort that it takes, and nobody is recognizing the end product that I've produced. I busted my butt. I put my own energy and my own money and my own time and my own effort into it, and nobody cares at the end.

And then no recompense. That's the big one. And if you're at all familiar with the University of Alaska, we've had a few budgetary issues over this past year. So, again, not a whole lot that I can do with that, but what is it that we can do? How can we attempt to address faculty motivation of removing all those barriers within those big three-- time, recognition, and

recompense?

So what we can do. I can't pay you a whole heck of a lot, but we are a QM organization, and so we have kind of tied in accessibility with Quality Matters. If you're familiar with Quality Matters, their Sixth Edition rubric really kind of focuses on accessible content when you're dealing with their last standard.

So we have three different levels of mini-grants that we are offering to faculty. Level one is a \$500 stipend. Level two is a \$1,000 stipend. And level three is a \$1,500 stipend. And it's working through QM, and we have touchpoints along the way, but it's really QM geared more towards accessibility.

And we chose QM for a couple of reasons, because it is already accessible-focused. And then we talk about recognition. Quality Matters is something that our institution looks at and smiles on. So you know that the powers that be really want to see this QM certification on your class, so let's help you get there.

And then we're really trying to make it easy to create that accessible material. This is what I was referring to from kind of my instructional designer side, in terms of we're doing workshops, we're building and scaffolding within these workshops, we're adding in positive reinforcement, we're doing everything just right, Just-in-Time videos. We have accessibility cohorts, where it was over the summer, and people who were interested in making their course accessible, they all came together. And it was, I want to say, a three-day intensive. And then that particular group of faculty kind of formed a learning community and moved through the year and worked specifically with instructional designers to address accessibility.

Initiatives within their courses. We provide all of our faculty with accessible syllabus templates. We've kind of done all the work for them. Here's your template. Here's a set of instructions for how to use the template without breaking the accessibility.

We have something every year called a Tech Fellows. Faculty has to apply for that. This particular year we focused pretty heavily on open education resources. And we have a librarian who works specifically with OER and helps them identify content that's already accessible that they can then use in their classroom.

And the last one on here, I really can't highlight enough, is finding those faculty champions. We have a few early go-getters who really jumped on board and said, this is such an important

topic. This is so important to student success.

And they have gone above and beyond anything that we've asked them to do. In fact, they are the ones who I love to see running into my office, like, Jen, I found this new thing. You're going to love it. Everybody should have access to it. Having those faculty champions, I think, really sets the stage for getting more people involved. And

So as I mentioned, I'm not going to call these the end perspectives, because it is a constant journey. I don't know that we will ever actually get to the very end. But I do want to share some faculty perspectives with you over the course of the almost two years that we've been working specifically with motivating faculty.

"I feel I have received the training and have VERY knowledgeable and willing staff to support my implementation. This just takes time, tinkering and familiarization." "Yes, I believe I can do it and am close with the help of Anchorage captioning-- shout out to 3Play, woohoo-- my presentations to making all my classes accessible." "I feel like accessibility is something that should have been mainstream from the start because there are always people who can benefit from it even if they don't know or they don't want to say they need additional resources for understanding the material. I think people deserve to have equal access to education and material, so I appreciate what accessibility has to offer."

And I'm going to go ahead and open it up to questions. Thank you so much for sharing a part of your day with me, I will say morning for me. I do have a couple of emails up here, my personal email address. And then we have an accessibility email that goes for a number of people who could get back to you if you have specific accessibility questions. And with that, I will go ahead and turn the mic over.

JACLYN LEDUC: All right, thank you so much, Jen. That was a great presentation. We really, really appreciate you being here to share your experience and your knowledge.

So now we're going to get ready to do the Q&A, as you said. We do have some questions that we've taken throughout the presentation. So if you're ready, I have the first question for you.

JENNIFER Absolutely.

PEDERSEN:

JACLYN LEDUC: Great. So one of the questions was, should IT bear the burden of accessibility, or the disability office?

JENNIFER I would say personally, absolutely not. And I will tell you the reason why. It's pretty massive. So
PEDERSEN: unless your IT or DSS office has a very large pool of people and a very large pot of money, I don't think that it's going to be sustainable for very long.

I can tell you on my end, from the very beginning, my emphasis has been on faculty saying to me, it's not my job. OK, well you know what, it's not my job either. It's not my job to make your course successful. It's my job to help you figure out what you need to do and give you the support that you need to do it.

JACLYN LEDUC: Great. Thanks, Jen. So another question is, a lot of people are interested in this software to help with STEM accessibility, and they are wondering if you could just share the name of that once again?

JENNIFER Oh, yes, it's from a company called Texthelp, and that's all one word. The specific tool within
PEDERSEN: the Texthelp organization is EquatIO. And let me stop sharing, and I can write it in the chat for you. There you go.

So if you Google even EquatIO, E-Q-U-A-T-I-O, you'll come up with all kinds of hits. And I really can't say enough about them. I'm certainly not affiliated with them in any way, and I'm not a paid promoter, but I am a very firm believer in the value of their product, and we've seen just amazing results from faculty, as well as from students who use EquatIO.

JACLYN LEDUC: Great. Thanks for answering that, Jen. So the next question is, when you are starting to make your course accessible, what materials do you recommend starting with?

JENNIFER I recommend starting with a syllabus first. That's something that is going to get into the hands
PEDERSEN: of all students, and it's pretty immediate. So if you have to choose one single thing to start with, I would say make your syllabus accessible.

If I go back to that same silly quote, "biggest bang for your buck," that would be a big one right there. So you're going to get everything that students need in order to be successful in your classes typically contained in that syllabus. And if you get that in an accessible manner, you're going to be one step ahead of the ball game.

And syllabi usually have all kinds of really tricky content in them. Tables are sometimes a bear to make accessible. You typically have either multiple levels of headings or lists within lists within lists. So all of these elements that are tricky in terms of accessibility, you get to practice

it all in one document.

From there, I would say focus on the first two weeks of class. They're kind of the same reasons I said before. It kind of gives you a leg up in case you do have somebody who needs specific accommodations that's going to require you to make serious modifications to your material.

But beyond that, I am a firm believer in the concept of self-efficacy. I think Henry Ford said it best-- "Whether you believe you can or you believe you can't, you're right." So in terms of accessibility, it's pretty big, and I go back to, I'm not an accessibility expert. Well, quite frankly, I'm not either, but let's work towards both of us getting there and building your belief in your ability to do something. So I always try and encourage faculty to start with something, I'm going to say, maybe small or something that's a little bit easy.

Say, for example, this semester I'm going to take my Psychology 101 class, and I'm going to go through, and I'm going to make sure that there's alt text on every single object that I have. And you do that, and you're like, hey, that wasn't too bad. You're building that belief set. So I really kind of think that the best place to start probably depends on who you're working with and kind of what their main objective is. But those would be my quick answers off the top.

JACLYN LEDUC: Thanks, Jen. The next question is, should we get buy-in from the top down or bottom up?

JENNIFER PEDERSEN: I would say both. And I'll tell you why. I think that without both of those things working in tandem, you're going to find that there's a plateau.

So we have convocation every fall in August here at Kenai Peninsula College, and the year I got here, our campus director really kind of put the push out and said, hey, Jen's offering this workshop. It's going to be next week. I really encourage everybody to be there. And we had a huge number.

And then the next month, the numbers dropped significantly because there wasn't that push from above, and we kind of saw the numbers drop pretty drastically until January at the spring convocation. And it was the same thing, like, hey listen, this is really important. I'm going to need you to take this seriously, and you're going to need to put in the time and the effort, and we watched those numbers go up.

And then from the bottom down, I see a question here, do faculty champions mentor other

faculty? And I would say, yes, absolutely, because it's something that they become passionate about, and they want to get other people on board, and so it really kind of extends my reach a little bit. I only have so many staff, and so many staff can only do so many things. So if I have those faculty champions out there that are working with their colleagues and getting them on board and saying, oh, my gosh, look at this, I figured it out, I really kind of think you have to have both.

JACLYN LEDUC: Thank you so much, Jen. The next question is, how do you handle copyright issues with materials that faculty shares?

JENNIFER PEDERSEN: Oh, so that's a really fun one. I actually just this week had another brainstorm session with our librarian, really trying to combine forces with that and really kind of trying to get faculty to think about the copyright and make better choices.

So for me personally, when I talk about working with my staff and getting them to ask better questions, if they come across something that they know is like, oh, this is a pretty big red flag, maybe we should address this, it's-- what is the end result? What are you trying to do with this? Is this to supplement your text? Like, let me show you some options that maybe you can consider and really kind of directing faculty to things that we know that are already accessible.

I would definitely say work with your librarians, though. They are a wealth of knowledge and information. And I have never yet met a librarian who isn't willing to jump on board, especially if it comes time to research something and find something. That's really kind of their purview, and they get excited about it. So involve your librarians.

JACLYN LEDUC: Great, thank you. The next question is, how do you go about putting together an accessibility workshop series?

JENNIFER PEDERSEN: So that's a constant thing, right? We're just in the process of rolling out our spring accessibility workshop series. In fact, I firmed up all the dates only yesterday.

So I think for me what I tend to do is come at it from two different perspectives. I'm looking at, what's my end goal? Like, what is it that I want to accomplish this particular semester? And then I also look at it from, what are my big pain points that I'm hearing from faculty, and how can both of those two things marry together?

So I have a little bit more flexibility and freedom this year because we're not operating under that OCR complaint. So I would say that initially part of our resolution was, we have to train

everybody, faculty and staff alike, on the creation of accessible content. So that really kind of guided where I went with it.

So, what's, again, the biggest bang? Most people use some type of document, whether it's Microsoft Word or Google Docs. So I really kind of tried to start at the beginning and work my way up.

I'm also a pretty big fan of scaffolding. So if you're going to need to have a certain skill set before you move on to something bigger, like PDFs, well, you definitely started with source document before we ever attached or attached PDF. So I look at it in terms of a great many things. But I would say that the overall goal, what we want to get accomplished, and then kind of take a scaffolding approach to that.

So I'll give you an example. As I mentioned, we had to deal with document, the creation and distribution of accessible content within that OCR, and so that's what we focused on pretty heavily for the '18-'19 school year. So for the '19-'20 school year, we're looking at, OK, we've told you how to create and distribute accessible material, so now we're going to tackle how to deal with that mountain, how to prioritize what's there. Well, first of all, how to identify what's there and what's the problem, and then how to prioritize that.

JACLYN LEDUC: Thanks, Jen. The next question is, do you go beyond the automated accessibility tool that's integrated in Blackboard Ally to make sure that the content is truly accessible, or do you just solely rely on that tool?

JENNIFER PEDERSEN: So that's a really interesting question, because that indicates that somebody is out there looking for compliance, and currently we do not have anyone nor anybody-- not it-- in place to go in and check for accessible content. So we are focusing more on showing faculty how to utilize Ally and what a benefit that it can be.

One of the things I really love about Ally is, not only does it identify problem areas, but it provides links to resources that faculty can look up on their own and read through to figure out how to go about and make the changes that they need to in order to get their indicator to go from red or yellow up to green, where most people really want it. So we currently are not required, as I said, to ensure compliance, so we're really kind of letting faculty be the ones to work with Ally. I'm not sure if that makes sense or not, but--

JACLYN LEDUC: Great. Thank you, Jen. So we have time for maybe two more questions. We have one here

that's, how do you respond to negative reactions from faculty when suggesting to make their course materials accessible?

**JENNIFER
PEDERSEN:**

Be a duck. That's really it. I feel like a lot of times across the board when anybody is frustrated by something or feeling overwhelmed by something, it really comes off as defensive. And I typically take the approach of-- most of the time, all anybody really wants is somebody to listen, somebody to listen to them, and somebody to acknowledge the fact that this is a stressful situation, or this is an overwhelming situation. So that's kind of the approach that I've personally taken.

And if they're not happy with what I'm suggesting, I kind of take a step back, and how can I reframe the question? I'm all about-- and anybody who works for me could tell you this-- I'm all about asking better questions. So that would be a prime example for me to say, OK, this isn't going to work for you, but what is it that you want out of it? And let's go back to the drawing board.

JACLYN LEDUC: OK, thank you. And then, we'll do one more question. We have a couple more minutes. The question is, can you discuss how you created the templates that you use? Someone is currently in the process of doing what you're doing.

**JENNIFER
PEDERSEN:**

Yes, so we have-- I'll use our syllabus template, for example. We have specific items that are mandated to be in every syllabus. So we typically start there, and say everybody has to have this information in here, and it has to be in this specific wording. So don't even mess with this part.

So we'll just go through and make that accessible on our own, working through normal accessibility issues that pop up in terms of document creation. Making sure that you're utilizing the built-in functionality and you're not trying to tab, and you're not using Enter excessively. You're using headings. And really just kind of try and think about everything that a faculty member could want to put in their syllabus and giving them a template for that.

So, of course, the course schedule is another really big one. A lot of times we have really crazy tables, and if you work with accessibility at all, you know that the crazier a table that has merged and skipped cells and-- uh, it just gets insane. So we try and give them a short, sweet, simple, to-the-point, easy-peasy, one level of heading, here's how you can do it in an accessible manner, and all you have to do is just plug and play.

JACLYN LEDUC: OK. Thank you so much, Jen, for the Q&A, and thank you everyone for joining us today. We hope that you enjoyed this webinar. And thanks again, Jen, for such a great presentation.

JENNIFER It was my pleasure. Thanks for the opportunity.

PEDERSEN:

JACLYN LEDUC: Of course.