

Martha Bradley Evans Center for Teaching Excellence Workshop:  
September 13, 2022

Teaching for All: Accommodating Learners with Disability and Chronic  
Medical Conditions: Transcript

**ANGELA**

So, welcome, everyone. My name is Angela Smith, and I am an Associate Professor of English and Gender Studies, as well as director of Disability Studies program at the U. I'm very excited to be here to facilitate this workshop on the very important topic of accessibility and accommodations in our teaching practices.

Today we have with us ASL interpreters from the Center for Disability and Access, and I'd like to thank them for their work this afternoon. You may find, if you have speaker view turned on, that the two interpreters are the ones that you're seeing, because they've been pinned to ensure visibility. So, if you want to also see the speaker, you may need to toggle to Gallery view.

We have also enabled captions and live transcript, so you can click CC on the bottom of your screen to access those captions. A brief visual description:

I am a white woman with long, straight brown hair against a virtual background, which shows green foliage in front of the Gardener Commons building on the university's campus. I'm going to start with just a couple of thank you's.

I would like to thank the College of Social and Behavioral Science for sponsoring this event, and particularly Dr. Rebecca Utz, who helped organize the workshop, but who is traveling today and can't join us.

I'd also like to thank the Center for Teaching Excellence for hosting this workshop, especially Pam Hardin and Cindy Hanson for their patience and support in setting up today's event.

This workshop is also part of this week's Disability and Chronic Medical Conditions Awareness week, organized by student group Chronically Us. Chronically Us is represented here today by our two student presenters, Hannah and Sequoya. And I'd like to thank them both for participating and especially thank Hannah for imagining and helping to organize this workshop.

During the event I'll be putting some U of U accessibility and disability resources into the chat along with information about other events for the Awareness Week.

I will introduce each of our speakers directly before each one presents. After all four speakers have presented, we will hopefully have time for questions. You can ask questions in the chat during or after the presentations and when the time comes I'll read those out so that our presenters can respond. You'll also have the chance to raise your virtual hand during Q and A to ask a question.

Please note that this event is being recorded, and the recording will be posted on the Center for Teaching Excellence site.

There will also be a package of materials related to today's presentations that will be made available on the website. This will include the links and resources that I post into the chat during the presentations.

Our first speaker today will be Dr. Scott McAward. Scott is the director of the university's Center for Disability and Access, the office that works with all students, with disabilities. He is a licensed psychologist and adjunct in the department of Education, Leadership and Policy, teaching in the Student Affairs Masters' program. Prior to his work in CDA, he worked in the University counseling center for five years. Scott works closely with many campus entities around accessibility, and he is the co-chair, along with myself, of the university's Universal Design and Access committee. Over to you, Scott.

## SCOTT

Thank you, Angela. Again, my name is Scott McAward. I use "he, him, and his," and I'm the director of Center for Disability and Access. It's wonderful to see some very familiar faces, as well as some new faces and new names that I'm not familiar with.

I'm gonna go ahead and share my screen and... Give me just one second here.

Okay, so, and I apologize for those that that may be a little bit more familiar with kind of what I'm going to kind of spend some time talking about today. But my hope is to give an overview of our office, and how our office kind of interfaces around disability and accessibility.

And I understand, Angela, you're going to be monitoring the chat. So, if there's any questions you can put them in at any time, but Angela will have us address those at the end.

I'd like to start off with a little bit about how our office operates, as well as kind of our mission statement in the work that we do in our office.

When we think about our approach to what we do, our mission statement, I think it encapsulates it pretty well. We support student well-being and success through ensuring equal access, providing the opportunity for success, and working towards an inclusive and equitable

campus environment. Equal access is achieved by providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations and university programs and courses. Removing barriers allows students the opportunity to be successful in pursuing their goals, and supporting civil rights, and promoting equity and awareness of disability, fosters a climate of support and collaboration on campus.

That's a lot of, a lot of words to kind of talk about how we operate, and one of the things that we look at, the work we do, is we really hope the work we do on campus is able to allow students to be successful. But the bedrock of the work we do is about equal access, and giving a students and individuals the same opportunities as others to achieve that success.

So often times, we're working through three different lenses in the work that we do. We do consider ourselves advocates for students with disabilities, and advocates around making sure that the campus is a more inclusive, accessible experience for all. We also have a responsibility to make sure the University is, is really meeting their legal obligations under under the ADA, under Section 504, and we also have a responsibility to the academic mission and support of the faculty, and the research that's occurring on campus.

So, you can imagine that sometimes those three are difficult to navigate, and often times we need to kind of shift in terms of being able to be 100% advocates for students, versus tending to kind of our legal obligations, and supporting the academic mission.

I think this is important, because I think one of the nice things about a seminar like this is really talking about how creating an inclusive, accessible environment is really a shared responsibility. It cannot be one office as responsibility. And how do we work together to design some more universally designed environment for all?

Sorry, I was having a little trouble advancing my slides. Okay, I like to talk about kind of the profile the students that we, we work with. So you get a sense of what that looks like on our campus. Now, in higher ed, students are, are really the ones that are required to identify themselves to our office. We don't go and try to identify students with disabilities.

So, all of the information I'm sharing with you is based on students that have come to us. The academic year we just finished, we served 2,385 students with disabilities, which is approximately just under 7% of the student population. We work with students from all levels and disciplines.

We track across 13 different categories. We saw over 1200 new students last year, and I put that in because I think that what we've been seeing over the past, well, even before the pandemic, but since the pandemic, is really an increase in the number of students seeking support from our offices. So that 1,200 new students, meaning students that came to us for the first time, is a 29% increase from the year before, which was also a 20% increase from the year before. Last year we had just under 1,000 new students.

So, we're seeing an increase in students accessing our services. Here's kind of the broad categories that we work with. These are number of students, although it doesn't add up to the 2,300, because some students are being seen or being supported around multiple disabilities.

I think it's much more useful to think about this in the percentage of the breakdown of students we work with, and you can see that the largest group of students that we work with fall into the category of a psychological condition or psychological disability. So that could be anxiety, could be depression, PTSD, bipolar, pretty much across the gamut.

Our second largest is ADHD, which has been usually our 2 or 3, and then following, medical and learning disability. Now, there's a few things that I think have stuck out. One is the group of medical or chronic disabilities moved into our number three spot about two years ago. That trend, I think, is continuing.

I think that we certainly saw that before the pandemic, and during the pandemic that has certainly increased. We've begun to work with some students that are experiencing long Covid. We anticipate that's going to kind of continue to happen. I think, when you look at our top four categories, what might stick out for you is the fact that many of them are considered non-apparent disabilities or disabilities that may not always be apparent. And I think that's true for psychological and chronic medical, learning disabilities, and ADHD. I think it's a very different experience to be within the learning environment and campus with a non-apparent disability versus an apparent disability.

We support students with a wide variety of accommodations, most of you are familiar with that. Exams being our number one. But one of the things that we have been, that's maybe not been as visible, is often times the standard accommodations, while they're helpful, we're needing to do much more kind of individualization. And, really, the complexity of what students are navigating has gone up. And so a lot of the times accommodations may be happening outside of the classroom, or in kind of non-standard ways, more and more. Kind of from a policy perspective, so, it's a little bit about our process piece, the ADA and Section 504 requires our reasonable accommodations.

Now, we don't have a standard set of accommodations. So, we don't operate where, if you have this sort of disability, Here's your accommodations. It's very individually determined. Every student that's with our office has an advisor that works with them.

And again, the goal is really to give a student the opportunity to demonstrate abilities and equal access to the learning environment. So how do we level that playing field? We don't design accommodations to give an advantage. They can't alter a fundamental aspect of a course, and they can't weaken academic rigor.

But again, how do we kind of make sure that a student has equal, or the same, or similar access to the learning environment? And when I say a learning environment, we also provide services

for other areas on campus as well. Our process that we go through, if you're not familiar with it, we use documentation standards based on the type of disability.

The ADA defines an individual with a disability as a condition that rises to the level that it substantially limits one or major life activities. Major life activities are very broadly defined. They could include things that are more traditionally thought of -- seeing, hearing, thinking, walking -- but it also could include our immune system or digestive system or cognition, or executive functioning. Really any condition that impacts the major life activity.

Test taking is not a major life activity. But often times students see that their disability or their anxiety is impacting the testing environment. And so, we do work with that. We require documentation when, it's really based on the accommodation asked for.

So, if a student that uses a wheelchair needs an accessible table or accessible classroom, we're not going to need medical documentation that proves the student uses a wheelchair. Those sort of pieces are, you know, we're going to put in place, with the documentation around other conditions that are not as obvious.

The process is starting off with an intake appointment, submitting documentation, we work on a case management review process, and really we want students to engage with their advisor and go through their time with us. We see it as a collaborative process.

You know, we work with the students. We work with faculty and staff. We will sometimes be working directly with the student or directly with the faculty/staff, and oftentimes we're collaborating in the middle of the process.

So, what can faculty do in terms of when they have a student? And how to make a referral. First, to make sure the required ADA statement is on the syllabus. If the student approaches you about an accommodation related to disability and outside of your class policies, that is a good indication that a referral to our office will be helpful.

Students don't have to use a magic word, and, you know, if it's an accommodation related to a disability, we really want to be involved, and have that student referred to our office.

We often get questions about, what if I think a student has a disability but they have not disclosed? We always say, first of all, don't ask directly or state that a disability exists. Instead, you know, meeting with the student to discuss academic performance, focus on what you're seeing. You know, an example might be, I notice you're struggling in this class. You know, you seem to be doing good on the homework, but poor on the exam. With the idea to give an opportunity to a student to kind of share and explain from their perspective.

And we talk about letting the student know that there's a number of resources available to them, and one of them may include our office, or might include Tutoring Center, the Writing Center, Learning Center, the Counseling Center.

But when providing this, you're not assuming a disability exists, you're (1) giving resources, and (2) you're really allowing the student the choice to disclose or not. In our system here in higher education, forced disclosure is a part of the model that we have to navigate around when it comes to accommodations.

We are always available to consult. Anyone can call me. Happy to step through you know, some consulting about a student, and whether or not they could benefit from our services.

We encourage faculty to be as proactive as possible. I think the today's topic, Universal Design for Learning, I know my colleague that's going to go next, is going to talk about that. Please, you know, you can become familiar with our guidelines.

And again, if you have any concerns about accommodation, please contact us.

And I'll close here to say it's important that we really want to respect students' privacy and autonomy. So, you know, policy prohibits faculty from asking what disability a student has. So, even not from policy, you know in terms of privacy, we don't want to ask what disability student may have. Students have the choice to disclose, if they would like to. The only thing they need to disclose necessarily is the accommodations that are with our office. With that, I'm going to stop, because I know there's many more important things to talk about today.

And I'm going to stop my share and turn it back over to Dr. Smith.

## **ANGELA**

Thank you, Scott. And again, if you have any questions for Scott, please write those into the chat during the subsequent presentations, or during the Q. and A. Or wait until the Q. and A. and raise your virtual hand, and you can ask a question verbally.

Our second speaker will be Danna Duncan. Danna is an instructional designer. She works on the Digital Learning Experiences team within University Connected Learning, UCL, which some of us may know under its former title, Teaching and Learning Technologies. Danna also serves on our Universal Design and Access Committee, and she's passionate about education accessibility and leveling disparity among underrepresented populations. Over to you, Danna.

## **DANNA**

Sorry about that. I'm excited and honored to meet with you today, so that I can share some of the things about Cast, the Center for Applied Special Technology, and its role in supporting Universal Design for Learning or UDL. Ten minutes is only enough time for me to present a brief overview of UDL, but I hope that this teaser will encourage you to learn more.

I have some ideas that we can implement today and tomorrow, and improve Universal Design for Learning at the University of Utah. Please use this opportunity to reflect on these ideas and how you might include at least one of them in your teaching practices, or share them with somebody today or tomorrow.

I'm gonna have a hard time getting my... There we go. Here on your screen are three groups of images. One has some flowers that are peeking out between a large rock wall. The second has the University of Utah class of 2022 in a Block U formation as freshman and as a group of students at graduation. The third shows an image of a student with a happy smile, talking to their friend in a coffee shop.

The title of this slide is "Why UDL?" When we think about the ways of implementing universal design for learning, we often think about how UDL and accessibility can improve teaching and learning environments, making them inclusive, safe, effective and respectful. That's enough of a reason, for most of us here today.

But UDL also has some other more strategic goals that might interest those of us, and those that we work with in leadership positions, who make decisions about how to budget the resources necessary for making changes within our institution.

CAST, the Center for Applied Technology, or Applied Special Technology, provides over 30 years of data experience, to support [the fact] that when students have voice, choices, agency, safety, and a clear path to follow, they will stay engaged and keep trying through difficult and rigorous curriculum, which is persistence. Be there on day one, and still be there to graduate at the end - they'll, they will keep coming back, which is retention. And report that they're getting good value and recommend the university, which is satisfaction.

These three words summarize the goals that interest our leaders, because they make it possible to support our students and pay our salaries. When more students feel like they belong, that they are part of our institution, our classrooms, and the services we provide, we will be assisting the strategic money-making strategies of the university, in addition to the obvious pedagogical goals in our individual courses.

This time, your screen shows a ramp with a gradual slope leading up to the seating in an auditorium. The ramp has handrails on both sides, but there are no stairs next to the ramp. Instead, the rest of the floor area follows the same gentle slope as the ramp. The sloped flooring was probably not added later as an accommodation but was built into the design of this building from the beginning.

The title of this slide is "What is UDL?" One definition of UDL is access, no matter the reason. Sam Johnston from CAST says it best: "We want a situation that is good for everybody." Part of it is thinking about what has to happen at the level of design that makes accommodation less necessary. Think about how the design in this physical space, which is Universal Design, or UD,

and how it benefits everyone. And then how designing our courses and services, using Universal Design for Learning, or UDL, can help all learners as well.

This slide has an image of seven doors lined up on a stage, and three of the doors are labeled with question marks. This is the second slide titled "What is UDL?" UDL is a framework for talking about how people learn; it is how learning takes place. It's based on neuroscience. UDL is making learning stick and encoding it in the long-term memory, and it helps lower entry barriers that continue or that contribute to dropout rates among college students.

UDL is more than one way: multiple means of engagement, representation and action or expression. But before your eyes glaze over and roll back in your head. and before you send a text to a colleague, saying, "Here we go again," the multiple means part of UDL does not require us to go crazy trying to make every different possibility for our students.

Instead, we can use the "plus one" approach that was made famous by UDL and CAST. UDL at its simplest form is "plus one" thinking. "Plus one" thinking in the ways we engage our students. "Plus one" thinking in how information is represented, and students acquire information. And "plus one" thinking in how students can express proof of their learning.

UDL is providing multiple means. It is interaction design, and it means framing learning in the three areas of the brain where learning takes place. Provide learners with multiple means of engagement. This is the "why" part of learning. Engagement is giving students reasons to stick with it. This is where they learn to care and prioritize their learning. So, frame content and assignments with the "why." If there's already a framework to explain the "why" happening now, make one more way.

Provide learners with multiple means of representation. This is the "what" part of learning. Representation means making content accessible and recognizable. Provide "plus one" opportunities to interact with content, each other, the instructor, and communities. If there's one way for your students to interact with content and materials, make one more way.

If there's one way for students to interact with each other and the instructor and community, give them one more way to do that. Make sure that the content of the materials is comparable. Don't make them consume everything on a longer list; that's not what this means. It means giving them choices from a list. Provide learners with multiple means of expression. This is the "how" part of learning. Expression is where students can take action or perform what they know, apply concepts, and where you can assess what they have learned.

Give students "plus one" opportunities to show what they know in a way that is effective for them, so that they can demonstrate their skills and competencies to organize, plan, study, test their skills and strategies. If you already have multiple means of expression, add one more way, and use the same rubric or evaluation tool. Don't just add multiple assignments, but do give them choices from multiple assignments.



Your screen shows multiple images again. The first image is a script. The next image is an old ad for Burger King, when their slogan was, "Have it your way." And there's an image of someone holding a steering wheel with their hands at the 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock position. You can tell I'm old. Next, there are some colorful spices, and the last image shows a student sleeping on a pile of open books in a library.

This slide is titled "How to UDL?" There are four "use today and tomorrow" strategies. First, start with the text. We usually already have a script from multimedia versions of our content. Provide that to the students.

Second, let them do it their way. Make some alternative ways for students to consume content. Provide accessible PDFs, Word and text formats, audio versions, recordings, and image descriptions.

The third strategy is chunk up lectures and activities in ten minutes for lecture and two minutes for reflection.

And number four strategy is set content free, set content free from the clock. This could be recording your lectures and making those lectures available, so that when students have time to study, they can review those lectures. Set content free from format requirements. Make sure students can view on mobile devices, and make sure they don't need special and/or expensive software to see your materials.

This screen shows the word "reflect" under a magnifying glass. I would like to take a few minutes to reflect on what has been presented so far. This isn't the right time for questions, because our facilitator has set time aside for that at the end. But instead, I want you to think about what you can take away from this presentation today.

What is something you know about Universal Design for Learning, and how it can be connected and implemented into what you already do?

Tell us something that you can commit to sharing with someone or implementing today and tomorrow. Respond in the chat, or, if there's time, I don't think there will be time, you could respond by raising your hand and unmuting when the reflection time ends.

I'm going to put some music on. You'll hear music for one minute, but you can mute your audio and not hear music if you want. I'll also mention in the chat when the music has ended. Just put in one thing that you will implement or share with someone about Universal Design for Learning.

Alright, that was one minute, and we've got a couple of great responses in our chat. Since we don't have a lot, is there anybody who wants to give voice or, you know, come on that mic and say something on the microphone?

Alright, I'm going to give voice to some of the things in chat. Thank you for participating. Angela Smith said, "Multiple means of representation: PowerPoints, but also lecture outlines, provided online."

Jim Tabery said, "Being more mindful of lecture, discussion, reflection, time, and duration in the classroom."

Linda said, "'What has to happen at the level of design that makes accommodation less necessary?' was a new way for me to think about it." Me, too. I love that.

Brenda said, "I will agree to record lectures. I've resisted since transitioning back to in-person classes." That's great. So very helpful, and I think that's one takeaway that maybe was a good thing from Covid.

Sarah says: "Seems to me that technology is essential to UDL. We have means available to us that weren't around when, say, Gen Xers started teaching." That is so true, and I don't know what generation I am, but it certainly wasn't around then.

Alison says, "Making sure that the 'why' is clear on, especially, smaller weekly assignments or discussions. Provide lectures online."

Our final slide shows an image of the student and a University of Utah classroom, listening, taking notes, and engaging with learning in the learning environment. And there's an image of someone passing a baton in a race with an outstretched hand.

The title is "Applying UDL." Now that you have some ideas or strategies and goals that you can put into practice today or tomorrow, how can you ensure that our students at the University of Utah will be persistent, retained, and satisfied?

And I suggest that you can apply what you've learned today by modeling UDL best practices in workshops and presentations. Tell everyone, not just faculty. Remember, we are all teaching at this university. Spread the word and pass it on. And that's all I have today.

I will put some links in the chat so that you can learn more about CAST and Universal Design for Learning. Thank you for your dedication to improving teaching and learning at the University of Utah.

## **ANGELA**

Thank you so much, Danna. We're going to move along to our third speaker, who will be Hannah Munding. Hannah is a disabled and chronically ill fourth-year undergraduate student at the University of Utah, majoring in Psychology and Health, Society, and Policy. She is the co-founder and president of Chronically Us, a student organization dedicated to creating a safe

space and community for those with disabilities and chronic, mental or physical medical conditions. She hopes to pursue a doctoral degree investigating the social and structural mechanisms that augment or hinder science communication in the context of genomics and disability. She has received accommodations for her disabilities since high school. So over to you, Hannah, and I am going to share your PowerPoint.

## HANNAH

Perfect. Thank you, thank you for that introduction. So, I am a white woman with long brown hair, and I am sitting on a pink chair against a beige wall. And today, I'll be speaking about navigating university as a disabled and chronically ill student. So, if you go to the next slide. Thanks.

So, the image on this screen contains two lines of block text on a white background for the small portion of the text, highlighted and dark blue, and I'd like to start off with a brief question which, I know, participation can be difficult in the Zoom format. So perhaps you can engage in the chat.

And my question is this: How many of you can read this sentence, including the highlighted text? So, this is actually a screenshot, an excerpt of text from one of my first readings of the semester. And the professor for this course highlighted the most critical passages of text in our readings.

So, I have a rare brain disease that impacts my vision, and I cannot read the highlighted text, which means that I cannot understand the most critical or salient components of the course material.

So, not only is this format, the highlighted text, a barrier for me, but it creates additional barriers, and the first barrier created was in the form of time.

So, if you can click twice. Yeah. Okay. So, I spent several hours trying to decipher the highlighted text. And I tried a variety of methods to try or to attempt to make the text legible for me. However, it still remained illegible. So, this necessitated spending additional time trying to figure out how to remove the highlighted text, which I was eventually able to do.

However, this time spent was a direct result of inaccessibility. And the amount of time that I, as a student, spent trying to make the course accessible resulted in uncertainty -- and if you could click twice, thank you -- about whether I was able to complete my work on time.

So, in this instance, I experienced uncertainty related to time, but I also experience uncertainty at the commencement of every semester related to my accommodations. I am never sure if my accommodations will be sufficient for me to participate within university.

And at this point I think some of you might have the question of, why didn't I immediately email the professor and disclose that the text was inaccessible? -- and if you could click twice, thanks - - and my response is primarily this: because I do not have accommodations that mandate for assigned text to be highly contrasted or legible. I'm in my senior year, and I've never had a professor highlight text before, and I would never expect a professor to do so.

I only have accommodations for barriers that I can anticipate. And because I do not have a accommodations for this particular barrier, I would need to disclose sensitive health information to someone who might use that information against me. And I recognize that this example is, illustrates a very recent and specific event. However, the themes identified within this example are relevant to the general process of navigating university as a disabled and chronically ill student.

If you could go to the next slide. Thank you. So, I believe that there is recognition that many structural aspects of university are exclusionary. However, in my experience this recognition is relegated to things such as course content or building access. *Time* is rarely identified or discussed. How time is normatively structured in the classroom and at university often does not match how time is structured and experienced by disabled and chronically ill students. So, the structural mismatch of time is often referred to as *crip time*.

And if you have time — I said that intentionally — I would encourage everyone to read the essay cited on this slide, and I think it will also be dropped in the chat. And so, this mismatch exists on a spectrum at university, and it can result in students needing additional time to complete a test or additional time to complete university.

If you can click once. Thank you. So, this is a timeline on the bottom of the screen containing seven years, and this represents my time at university as an undergraduate student.

And if you can go to the next slide. Thank you. So, in my example, uncertainty was discussed in the context of structural barriers related to course content and accommodations. And uncertainty is experienced across many domains within college. However, for me individually, as a chronically ill student, I experience uncertainty most acutely in relation to my health. So, I don't know when I will be hospitalized, I don't know when I'll have a flare, I don't know when I'll be too exhausted to even open my laptop.

And fortunately, I have accommodations that grant me extended time to complete assignments. And I will say that the Center for Disability and Access has been excellent, and I'm very fortunate that I have had such a good experience with them. And so, I do have these accommodations, which mitigates the impact of some of the uncertainty and variability that I must contend with.

Unfortunately, to receive these accommodations, I must disclose that I am disabled. Maybe you can go to the next slide. Thank you. So, I would like to emphasize that many students view disclosure, not as a process in which they receive services that will put them on parity for

access and success, with their able-bodied peers, but as a forced outing as a person with a highly stigmatized identity.

And to manage stigmatization and discrimination that comes with disability, some students will only disclose that they have accommodations part-way through the semester. And I was once one of these students, and this was the semester before I went on medical leave.

But I notified my professor about halfway through the semester, that I was disabled and had accommodations, and I'll never forget the response. They said, "I would have never guessed you were disabled. Your work has been excellent so far." And for me, at that point, as a 19-year-old, this indicated that excellence is not an adjective typically ascribed to disabled students, and that disability is stigmatized, and that there is risk in identifying as disabled.

And I would like to note that the statement was not an overt act of discrimination, or anything close to that. Nor do I think it was intentional. However, the disclosure process opens the door to overt discrimination.

In speaking with my disabled peers, stigmatization or discrimination, whether intentional or not, is often identified as one of the primary barriers of attending university as a disabled student. Maybe you can go to the next slide. Thank you. So, on my final slide, we once again see black text on a white background highlighted in blue.

And I would like to conclude by saying three things. And the first is that barriers aren't always apparent, but hopefully becoming more aware of these barriers will help us pre-emptively remove them. And if you can click. So, now, now the highlighted text or the blue box has disappeared, and the screen reads "Barriers aren't always apparent."

And the second is a small piece of advice, and that is to ask your students if they experience any barriers in your course, because accommodations don't cover everything or everyone. And the third is that inclusion extends beyond accommodations and accessibility. So, accessibility is only the first step to inclusion. Thank you.

## **ANGELA**

Thank you so much, Hannah. So much to think about there. I really appreciate your contribution here.

So, our final speaker will be Sequoya Fail. Sequoya is a junior at the U, majoring in Strategic Communications. She is the president of the Black Student Union and a member of Chronically Us. She has an undiagnosed auto-immune disorder and a chronic illness that causes blood clots in her brain. Her interests include reading, writing, and skiing. Over to you, Sequoya.

## SEQUOYA

Thank you, Angela, for that introduction. Basically, I'll just share my story really quick. And, so, for the past four years I've lived with an undiagnosed autoimmune disorder that affects my physical health daily, as well as my chronic medical condition which causes blood clots in my brain, and that is known as anti-phospholipid syndrome.

And so, my first blood clot was in high school, my junior year of high school, in 2018. And I had awful headaches that month, for months, that affected my ability to do well in my classes. And it also affected my ability to complete the ACT exam.

And I was eventually hospitalized for a week, once I found out I had my blood clot. And after I was released, I was still dealing with a lot of chronic pain, discomfort, random waves of exhaustion.

So, I ended up getting formal disability accommodations while in high school, for the rest of my high-school career. And these were super helpful when it came to things like taking the ACT exam, or long periods and finals and stuff like that. But on a day-to-day basis, it wasn't much help.

So, going into college, as my health concerns kind of evened out, and, you know, wasn't as serious, I did not go through the process of getting formal accommodations here at the University of Utah. But March of this year, my awful headaches returned, and this time I kind of noticed it quicker. It was more familiar. And so, I went to see to my doctor again, and they ended up finding another blood clot in my brain.

And this time I was admitted to the hospital for two weeks. And luckily during my prolonged stay at the hospital, my professors were very understanding. Most of my lectures were pre-recorded, and homework was already put on Canvas due to Covid concerns, and the major I'm in, Communications, often times it can be done through virtual work, which is super super important. And one professor even remembered to wish me a happy birthday while I was in the hospital. So that was super nice.

But the only reason I think this was the case for me is because I made an effort to build a relationship with my professors. And I make sure to do that every semester, just in case things like this pop up, especially since I do not have formal accommodations. During these times of duress such as chronic daily pain and unexpected hospital visits, I think it's super important that students have that support and flexibility from the professors, especially if they don't have accommodations, like me.

So, I really emphasize the importance of forming a relationship, you know, professional relationship where there's open communication between student and professor to navigate these issues.

And so, personally for me, I think the reason I have not gone through the process of getting formal accommodations is simply because I am living with some undiagnosed disorders, and it can be very time-consuming and demanding to get all the paperwork and all the doctors' notes, you know. Especially when factoring in my identity and my other responsibilities, as well as cost, extracurriculars, mental health, and everything else that students have to deal with.

I just thought it was maybe a little bit preemptive of me when I could just easily form relationships with my professors, and luckily, they've been understanding and they've noticed my effort to get to know them, communicate with them, and always ask for help when needed.

But, yes, dealing with chronic illness and various medical conditions is definitely a daily battle. And what helps me the most is just understanding professors and faculty, who are willing to work with me in any way they can. And also, when they provide alternative options within reason, such as exams, assignments, just, you know, being a listening ear is super helpful for me, and probably a lot of other students who are like me, and do not have formal accommodations either.

But that is pretty much it for me. I appreciate you all listening to my story, and I'm glad to be here.

## **ANGELA**

Thank you so much, Sequoya. Thank you for sharing. That wraps up our presentations. I wanted to give Hannah a moment more, to promote and explain Chronically Us, the disability and chronic illness student group, of which she is president. And I am again going to share my screen and open up for you to do that, Hannah.

## **HANNAH**

Perfect. Thank you so much. So, in 2020, I co-founded Chronically Us, which was the first student organization at the U specifically dedicated for students with chronic mental or physical medical conditions and disabilities. And at Chronically Us, we really just hope to create a safe space and community for disabled and chronically ill students, where our culture, experience and identities are celebrated. And attending university as a disabled or chronically ill student can be quite isolating. So, I just wanted to say, if you know of any students that might benefit from our group, we would kind of encourage you to let them know about us. So, thank you.

## **ANGELA**

Alright, thank you. And if you click on that web link -- I don't know if it will work for you on the PowerPoint, but I will drop it into chat -- it will take you to a page that gives more information

about Chronically Us. As you can see there's a lot of text on the screen right now, but this is the same text that is on that web page and explains the objectives of Chronically Us and gives you Hannah's contact information. So, I will remember to drop that in the chat.

But at this point, I would like to open up for questions, comments, feedback from our wonderful attendees, who have been very patient. So again, if you have any questions, or comments that you would like shared by me, you can go ahead and put those into the chat. And if you have any questions that you prefer to voice, go ahead and put up your virtual hand and I will call on you to ask your question.

While people are maybe thinking, I would love to just kind of identify some of the themes that I heard coming through. And that is, that we should as faculty appreciate the difficulty of getting accommodations, and that that route is not always available to students who may nonetheless need flexibility and understanding. And that building in that flexibility and our courses from the beginning, the expectation that some students will need that flexibility, and making that flexibility available to all of our students is one way to make our courses more accessible.

Lisa, I'm going to call on you.

## **LISA**

Thank you. My question is, do you know what the university's plans might be for broader education of faculty, staff, and graduate instructors about both students who have formal accommodations and students who have chronic health situations? I think there's... similar to what Hannah suggested, I don't think it's active intentional discrimination. I think it's invisibility and ignorance. And I would like to know if you're aware of more systemic efforts. So, this is a start. There's, it's nice to see such a good turnout, but there are several thousand more people who need to be here.

## **ANGELA**

Scott, do you want to speak to that first?

## **SCOTT**

I can, certainly. Thank you so much for that. I, yes, we would love to be able to do more outreach and more presentations. I think one of the pieces of the Universal Design and Access committee that we've talked about from the very beginning was, how do we kind of build in training more into the onboarding experience on campus? Those of us that have been on this campus -- that is very challenging.



And it's something, you know, the Universal Design and Access Committee, that Angela really played a role in developing, the faculty guide for students with disabilities or faculty working — I can't recall the exact title, but I know she dropped it in the chat — is a step in that. We would love to partner and come out to departments to really do more of this sort of focus.

I don't think that it's necessarily bad intentions that are occurring on campus. I think it's a lack of awareness and understanding for that. We would love to see this be a mandatory training for certain.

## **LISA**

Yeah, just as a quick follow up, I would really encourage you to reach out to faculty and staff with disabilities in this effort, as well as graduate students and postdocs. So, it's a much broader community. You know, I'll go on the record as saying, I'd be happy to assist. People have no idea about any of this, and that it affects the people teaching you as well.

## **SCOTT**

I know certainly our time is limited... There is a big difference between how students with disabilities are supported on this campus, and how faculty and staff are. I mean, there is not necessarily an equivalent office like CDA for faculty and staff. And so again, you know, trying to get that off the ground, but I think you're right. It's difficult to support when it's hard to even identify those that could need the support. Well, thank you.

## **ANGELA**

Yeah, and I would add I mean, we're, the Universal Design and Access Committee is just a bunch of folks who already have full-time jobs and deeply care about this issue, and ARE trying to figure out ways forward, ways to raise visibility, and get these kinds of ideas out there.

The accessibility website and the document that Scott mentioned are one beginning. Jim mentioned in the chat that this kind of presentation would be great if it were more widely available. A recording of this will be placed on the CTE website and I'm really hoping that can be something I can point people to, so that its effects will go beyond just the people present here today.

Brenda has a raised hand.

## **BRENDA**

Oh, I just wanted to say thank you to everyone for this workshop. It's been really informative. In particular, thanks to Sequoya and Hannah for sharing your stories as students. It's really powerful to hear that. And this is a topic I'm passionate about.

I'm a professor in Geology that's been traditionally a very field-based physically active program. And I think there's some important things we still need to do to make it more inviting and easily accessible for all in that space, and I've been thinking about that. But also, particularly, I've heard a lot from students about their experiences with different learning abilities in the time of being online with Covid. And really the new barriers that were introduced in sort of forcing learning into an online space.

And I'm wondering sort of what we know about that, and if there are special resources or services or conversations to be had about our expectations for online learning platforms, even as we're back in person. I think, everybody's relationship with Canvas changed over Covid, right? And everybody's Zoom habits, and I mean, we didn't even Zoom before that, right?

So, everything's a little bit different now, and I'm wondering what resources there are to help us particularly think about accessibility for different types of learning in this digital expectation.

## **ANGELA**

Yeah, I wonder if Hannah or Sequoya want to speak at all to their experience, either as it changed during Covid or as it's changing now with a push to go back to normal, and kind of what you're facing in relation to being able to access courses, remotely or not?

## **HANNAH**

I could speak really briefly to this. I will say that for me, I'm very grateful that there is online options and online learning. I'm at very high risk for Covid. So, I can't actually attend university right now. So, the online learning environment actually increased my access. But I recognize that for many students, it, as you said, it did form a barrier.

But for me, and I think for other students as well, it it has been more of a positive experience. But again, to your point, it also has created barriers, and I think probably Scott or Danna could speak more about resources related to online learning.

## **SCOTT**

Danna, I think you're muted.

## **DANNA**

I know, I have a problem with that. There are resources available to learn how to make your courses better, and to make them accessible. There are resources to help you to make even your in-person classes, the things that you put into Canvas, more accessible. Just putting things in there like how much time it's going to require and putting in you know, the to-do lists, and making sure that students can view the information that they need. All of those are tips and tricks that you can use.

There are so many, though, that it would take a long time to talk about all of them. I did put those resources in the chat. And I, you know, recommend that you look at those. There are even some things that you can just, there's like checklists, that you can do for your courses when you put them in Canvas, and things that you can do for your online courses, as well.

I think online learning is helping us to be better teachers, even if we're not teaching online. We are using the resources online, to supplement what we're doing in class. So, I'm not sure that answered your questions. But yes, there are resources available. Just need to get them out there and know what you're looking for. And I can help you find what you need.

## **SCOTT**

Yeah, you know, and I want to follow it up, and I, because I think here's where some of the creativity from faculty can come in, to how to design something more inclusive around this way. Because, I think, Brenda, you know you're absolutely right, you know, the pandemic forced us into not-ideal conditions. But there's some lessons there that I hope we don't let go of.

This semester, I worked with a faculty member in the physics department. Because the faculty member really wanted to say, like, I realized that many of my students could benefit from a hybrid experience. But my course is not hybrid. And so, what the professor has piloted this semester, with the support of the chair, is to take her class of 200 in-person seats, open 15 of them as a hybrid option, that is actually available to any student that approached the faculty member for extenuating circumstances.

And so what she has been able to build in is for some students that might need hybrid, because they have childcare, or they have other things, that are not just a disability. So, she kind of designed her course to experiment that this semester, where she knows, "I can support 10. I can support 10 seats as that." And I worked with a faculty member to come up with how we interface on that.

So, I think some of those pieces of creativity could be something that that could really, if that could expand, to see how that could work in a more universally designed way.

## **ANGELA**

And I want to respect everyone's time by finishing up. But I think these questions, and the one that Erin just put into the chat, about making materials accessible signal a need for much more support of instructors as they try to be more flexible. We need a lot of technological support, in the kind of thing that Scott was just talking about too, running things in hybrid modes that weren't designed that way.

So, you know, I'm hoping that we can build out the section on course accessibility on our site and I'm really happy to receive emails, as I'm sure Scott is, with ideas and thoughts about what to do, what kinds of resources are most useful, what are our gaps in terms of technological support, as we try to make our courses more accessible. Because I think we can't take this all on ourselves as individuals.

We're already stretched to the limit, and stressed, and I think that there's a need to work collectively to share ideas and resources to support each other, and to ask for more structural support from the university as a whole. So, I really hope that's the direction in which we're going.

So again, this recording will be posted on the CTE website, once we have the captions and transcript all up and running. We will provide a set of materials alongside of it that will reflect the resources dropped in the chat. I really would like to thank our presenters today, both staff and students for offering us their expertise and knowledge.

The work of the interpreters is key to the accessibility of this session as well.

Yes, as Danna says in the chat, start with one thing you can do in your courses to make things a little more accessible, and that can make a huge difference for someone.

Thank you all very much for your input, and Scott is offering to assist with the issue of accessible PDFs. It is a problem I constantly encounter myself. So again, I'm hoping we can build out our resources, at Danna's office, and also generally on campus, to guide us in those areas.

Thank you all so much. Thank you to CTE for putting on this panel, for everyone who worked to make it happen. I look forward to engaging with all of you on accessibility issues in the near future.