

“Training Your Campus to Create Accessible and Inclusive Virtual Offerings”

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February 16, 2021

Why are we here today?

What we will discuss today

1. Maximizing opportunity during the pandemic
1. Understanding the needs of your campus community
1. Practical and effective tools for engaging with our faculty and staff

Engaging with the speaker

Kristian Carden will moderate the chat.

- Break for 1-2 questions after each section
- Additional questions at the end (time permitting)
- Remember your questions and email me
(ibkunkes@vcu.edu)

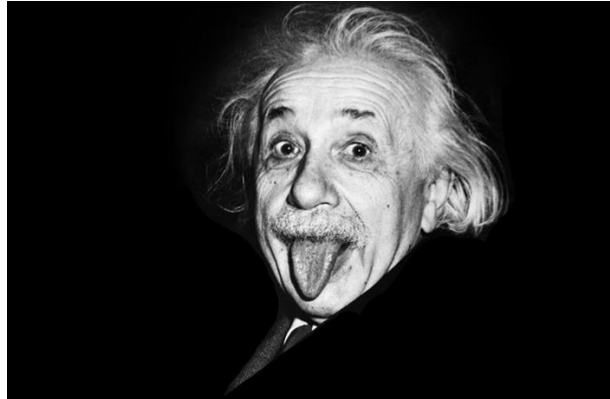
Section 1:

Maximizing Opportunity

Quote

“In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity”

~Albert Einstein



ADA Definition of Disability

“... physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity...”

Accessibility takes its rightful seat at the table

As disability and accessibility professionals, we were uniquely ready for this moment

- Planning Committees
- Advisory Groups
- Consulting
 - Campus and classrooms re-opening
 - Residential Life and Housing
 - Academic Affairs
 - Student Affairs
 - Student programming

Rethink Your Mission and Approach

Evolve from a STUDENT support office

- No more “Accommodation Factory”

Become a CAMPUS or COMMUNITY support office

- Faculty/staff in-house consulting agency
- Providing community workshops and training
- Greater connections with our academic peers

And don't forget to share this information as widely as
you can!

Rethink Your Mission and Approach

Updated Mission for 2021

Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (SAEO) champions holistic student development and success by creating a campus culture that strives to ensure equal access and inclusion.

SAEO is committed to:

- Academic Access - Identifying and removing barriers to success and engagement for students with disabilities and other impairments.
- Student Success - Providing educational support for students seeking to develop academic and learning skills.
- Community Enrichment - Educating VCU faculty, staff, and our greater community on principles of accessibility to creating more equitable learning environments.
- Campus Support - Fostering a campus culture supportive of access, diversity, inclusion, and student advocacy.

So, how exactly does changing our mission help me to work with faculty to create inclusive and accessible virtual classrooms?

Step 1) Expand your mission

Step 2) Live up to your mission

Step 3) Increase your scope of influence on your campus community

Questions?

Section 2:

Understanding the needs of your campus
community

Understanding the needs of your campus

“Nothing about us, without us.”

The biggest mistake you can make is to assume you know the needs of your community.

Understanding the needs of your campus

Students

- Internal focus: Sharing feedback and trends within our team
- Outreach: Conducting formal and informal student Interviews
- Outreach: The SAEO COVID-19 Student Survey (CSS)

Faculty/Staff

- Internal focus: Discussing feedback and trends within our team
- Outreach: Attending and presenting at committees, departmental meetings, advisory groups, etc.
- Outreach: Holding faculty and administrator focus groups

Understanding the needs of your campus: Students

The SAEO COVID-19 Student Survey
(CSS)

The SAEO COVID-19 Student Survey

Changing Accommodation Needs

- 41% - Respondents who felt their needs for accommodations had changed due to the shift online.

Faculty Support

- 22% - Respondents who felt faculty were unresponsive to their needs

Benefits of Virtual/Remote Learning

- 52% - Respondents who indicated the transition to a virtual environment had unexpected benefits to their learning

Understanding the needs of your campus: Faculty/Staff

1. Mental Health and Campus Resources

- Faculty as counselors
 - i. “I feel like I am being asked to be a therapist for my students on a regular basis. I teach chemistry. I don’t know what to say to a student who tells me he couldn’t come to lab because he was at home contemplating suicide.”

1. Digital Accessibility

- Faculty unfamiliar with basics of LMS (Canvas, Blackboard), let alone accessible documents
- Setting up captioning/ASL on Zoom
- Proctoring virtual exams

Understanding the needs of your campus: Faculty/Staff

3. Managing Accommodations

- Balancing student accommodation needs with increased faculty responsibilities
- Implementing “in-person” accommodations in a virtual space
 - i. “What do you mean the Testing Center is closed? This isn’t my responsibility!”

3. How can I be proactive to better address the needs of all my students

- Creating the Dynamic Syllabus
- Dispelling long-held preferences/styles (i.e., no recording!!!)
- UDL is key
 - i. “I hope this is ok. I am offer grace periods past the deadlines for each of my assignments to all of my students because I know how much they are all dealing with. Is it unfair to a student who is approved for flexibility on deadlines through your office or does this approach cover that, too?”

Questions?

Section 3:

Practical and effective tools for engaging with
our faculty and staff

Host Workshops and Webinars

“Creating an Accessible and Inclusive Virtual Classroom”

“Managing Student Accommodations in a Pandemic”

"Accidental UDL: How COVID was the Impetus for UDL Adoption"

“Accessibility over Accommodations: How the approach to supporting disabled students prepared us to support all students”

“Creating an Accessible and Inclusive Virtual Classroom”

Presented in partnership with:
Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (SAEO)
Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE)

Speaker: Ian B. Kunkes (Director, SAEO)

Virginia Commonwealth University



Focus on Syllabus/Course Design

Traditional Approach

The syllabus guides the semester

Include as much material as possible and cut back, as needed

Syllabus serves as a contract to which students and instructor are beholden

Disability statement as a resource

Concrete assignment dates and guidelines are laid out

Focus on Syllabus/Course Design

Dynamic Approach

Flexibility is key

- Assignments
- Exams

Take a “less is more” approach

Involving student as active participants in managing changes

Proactive engagement with students before the semester to discuss accommodations

Create Resource Guides

Captioning

- Turning on auto-captioning in Zoom or other platforms
- Hosting professional captioning services
- Checking and editing captions in homemade videos
- Assessing captioning quality in Youtube or other video hosting platforms.

Setting up interpretive services in virtual classrooms

Creating/Selecting Accessible Content

- Asynchronous Lectures or Videos
- Word Documents
- .pdfs

Closing Thought

Disability resource offices have historically been under resourced, staffed, valued, and recognized on college campuses. One of the many things the entire field of Higher Ed has learned since the start of the pandemic is that we are all capable of far more than we ever thought possible. We are not beholden to the traditional educational mentality where expectations are set and requirements unwavering. We, our campus' disability and accessibility professionals, have known this for years. In fact, exploring alternative and effective approaches is at the very core of the work we do every day. Because of the pandemic, we now have an opportunity and, I would argue, an obligation to be leaders in what this next chapter for Higher Ed looks like. It is our responsibility to help pave the path forward with access, inclusion, and universal design as the foundation of the new Institution.

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