

**Disability History Association Podcast**  
July 2020  
Interview with Carolyn Speer and Jay Price

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**Caroline Lieffers:** Hello, welcome to another episode of the Disability History Association Podcast. It's my pleasure today to be talking to Carolyn Speer and Jay Price from Wichita State University. I first heard about Carolyn and Jay from some members of the disability community in Wichita, and I wanted to learn more about what they were up to in terms of making history accessible. Thank you both very much for joining me today.

**Carolyn Speer:** Thank you.

**Jay Price:** Thank you.

**Caroline:** I'm wondering if you can start by telling me just a little bit about yourselves.

**Jay:** Sure. I am with the Local and Community History program at Wichita State University, so I've been involved in a number of projects that look at museums and helping the community tell its own story in a variety of ways.

**Caroline:** Fascinating. What about you, Carolyn?

**Carolyn:** I'm the Manager of Instructional Design and Access at Wichita State University. We are one of three offices that work with general issues of accessibility and accommodations on our campus, and I'm also a graduate of Dr. Price's program. So that's good too. So I do have a history background, but I also have an accessibility and access background.

**Caroline:** Well, one of the projects that I know you've been involved with is called Solving for X, and I would love for you two to tell our audience just a little bit more about Solving for X. What is it? Tell me all about it.

**Jay:** Yeah, Solving for X was an initiative on the part of the Ulrich Art Museum on campus. We have several museums on campus. The Ulrich Art Museum is interested in developing programs that highlight the work of students and faculty and staff and the community that address specific issues. And they can be a range of topics, but it's also suggesting that community activities are part of the conversation of an art museum, and how do those two fit together.

**Carolyn:** So, the particular Solving for X exhibit that I think that you're asking about falls into that larger category. We, last fall -- everything before COVID happened at the same time for me, I don't know, before COVID, I think it was last fall [laughs] -- we had an exhibit that had some pieces that came out of our vault at Wichita State in the Ulrich Gallery's collection, and those were made accessible, the accessibility of them was improved through a couple of different things: a beacon system that had an auditory version and explanation of the artwork, and also then some tactile graphics that were created with the Print in a Flash [Picture in a Flash] technology. The tactile graphics were large, almost the same size as the original, not quite, they were smaller, but they were quite large. They were also mounted on the wall next to the originals, and we also then created a gallery book with the Print in a Flash [Picture in a Flash] technology that had high-contrast images, tactile images, Braille and large print, so that two people sitting down with different visual ability could interact with the art at the same time and discuss it in real time as they both had their initial experience with it.

**Caroline:** That's a very interesting. And I'm just curious about how you actually came to

develop this exhibit, right? I mean, did you consult with community members, were there partnerships involved, did you consult with an accessibility expert? Were you the accessibility expert? How did you actually bring this to life?

**Carolyn:** Well, so that was the work of our office and in partnership with the Ulrich. Backing up a little bit, Wichita State University has an agreement with the National Federation of the Blind that we entered into in 2016 with regard to the accessibility of content, particularly with regard to the accessibility for students who are blind, for people who are blind in general, going beyond students, but it dealt with all of our content at the university. That included, which was unusual at the time, content that was delivered in a face-to-face context. It's not that the standards themselves were unusual, but the ways in which they were being applied was, at the time, less so now. So we needed an office that would be able to work with faculty and curriculum. So my office got involved at that time because we are on the academic affairs side of the house. That's, that's significant in its way: the different offices are in different parts of the university and typically serve different constituencies, and my office serves an academic purpose, and so we got involved at that time.

So even though your question is specific to this one event, it wasn't like we walked into it just without any background at all. We had at the time of this event, a student who worked in our office who is blind, who is a screen reader and a Braille reader – uses screen readers and is a Braille reader, has a fluent and well-trained tactile hand, hands. So this student was able to do a lot of the assistance that we needed in order to sort of support this effort. I also have a working artist in my office, so the, my artist was able to work with the pieces of art as art, as visual art, and create pieces that then were, that we worked with our student who is blind, to ensure that the communication was coming across, wasn't too busy or it wasn't, you know. It's easier in some ways with things that are content-bearing because you can strip away everything else and leave just the content, but with this, this was art-bearing, this was, had an affective component that we were really working with in trying to communicate. So that relationship they had back and forth was really good, and they're, then the relationship with the Ulrich as well, as they talked about the kinds of things that they wanted from the point of view of their exhibit, right, it's not just something - these weren't separate pieces. This was a unified exhibit, and so then we needed to work with the Ulrich for that.

So it was a big process. Yeah, I'm a certified professional, I have a CPACC certification, and did at the time, and so I was functioning as the accessibility expert, but we had an art expert, and we had, of course, the Ulrich as well.

**Caroline:** That's fascinating. So you worked really to make sure that the kind of curatorial idea was really cohesive and all carried out as one kind of project, eh?

**Carolyn:** Yeah, it was challenging because the ideas, of course, because these kinds of exhibits, particularly at the level that this was done, this wasn't a one-off. Many times we, I have been paying attention to this in museums for the last several years - every time I go to a museum, I ask for the materials that they have for patrons who are blind, and so I, I knew that what we were doing was a far broader effort than most universities or most museums tend to do, so, so we didn't really know what we were doing. I mean, you know, we were kind of making up some things as we went along, but we were trying to incorporate all of these different voices and points of view as we did it.

**Caroline:** Jay, what was your role in the project? Tell me about this from your perspective.

**Jay:** Well, this particular project is a little bit different from what I've been working on. I've had the pleasure of working with Carolyn over the years. In fact, we've worked on a couple of projects looking at the Obama Kansas heritage, for example, and a number of other local community projects over the years, so I knew the capability of Carolyn in handling something like this.

The way maybe to think about this though, is, well, is that when we entered into the agreement with the Federation for the Blind, it wasn't just instruction. I think universities tend to think of this as, Oh, okay, how do we make things accessible in the classroom? And it's not just accommodating, it's also full-on accessibility from the get-go. But the impetus isn't just classroom instruction. It's everything we offer. And so if we say everything, this means including museum exhibits, this means visitors to campus, this isn't just a classroom conversation, it's a campus-wide conversation, and that awareness is still a work in progress for a lot of folks, because we're not used to thinking in those terms.

**Carolyn:** I, I want to add in on that. It is striking. Dr. Price is absolutely right, that the word everything means everything, and yeah, it feels like many times people say, I mean, yeah, right, everything, I get that, but not like everything, right? Yeah, everything. And I do think we've turned the corner now and people understand that, and it's just a question of working on everything, you know. And a lot of those things, we don't have patterns, we don't have mentors that we can follow, because we're just blazing some trails on our own. So we try to make sure we're open and all of the, you know, different voices as we go.

**Jay:** And when we've been thinking about this even from prior to the agreement, when Alida Boorn was a student of mine in a class, and it just was an entirely different experience. It wasn't just delivering the content, it was an experientially different practice, which was really insightful. I mean we, I remember one time we did a field trip to the north end of Wichita, and so we stood there and I asked, what does it sound like? What do you hear? And the students got to experience, oh, wait a minute, there's a whole level of information I'm not getting, and that type of awareness is something that takes a lot of cultivation.

**Caroline:** We're going to talk more about accessibility a little bit later, cause there's so much more that I want to ask you two about. But to circle back just to Solving for X, now, you've already mentioned that there was this sort of first exhibit that included items from the vaults, if you will. But I understand that there's actually going to be a series of different topics that are going to be featured. Is that right?

**Jay:** Sure. Solving for X rotates through. It's not a one-off topic, and so there are gonna be different themes over the different semesters. So, water and environment is one. I actually participated in a Pecha Kucha talk that was related to, I think, entrepreneurship and some of the recent scholarship we've been doing. So it's not that accessibility is the topic, it's one of a rotating set of topics, but it's also about forcing folks to be more creative about what they're talking about right from the outset.

**Caroline:** And so what has worked well with this kind of curatorial approach so far, and what do you think is going to require more refinement, if you will?

**Carolyn:** I can say right out of the box, one of the things we realized as soon as the first night opened - it looked really cool to have these original pieces of art, these visual art pieces, juxtaposed with their corresponding tactile piece. That looked really neat, and in and of itself, there wasn't anything bad or difficult about that, but we didn't have sufficient signage or enough tactile, sort of, guidance so that people knew, people who were blind, who were interacting with these, these pieces, knew, where, what to touch, what to touch, what not to touch. Because of course, in the gallery setting, touching isn't a thing, right? And we thought we had enough, we certainly planned for it, but we just didn't. And so that's something that as they incorporate tactile pieces going forward, which is the intent of the gallery to do, they're gonna, there's just gonna be some work that's gonna need to be done there. And those gallery, the gallery book that we put together, helped to really address that because it provided an in-gallery simultaneous experience, but one that was bounded, literally, literally bounded, so people knew what they could touch. So that's the one thing that I would definitely say we needed to work on.

**Caroline:** It's always important, you know, to get that kind of ongoing feedback, right?

**Carolyn:** Yeah.

**Caroline:** Speaking of feedback, tell more about how different audiences who come to the gallery have been reacting to this, right? Different communities, different visitors. What do they take from it? Or do they comment on whether accessibility, the accessibility is working for them, and that sort of thing?

**Carolyn:** I have to say that I was actually a little bit uncomfortable, a little bit, with how Solving for X went because it made, in some ways, the experience of people who are blind or low vision something that was partially on display, because of the ways in which we had these pieces of art on display. So they were right there touching and interacting with them in real time, right there next to these other pieces. Again, in and of itself, not a bad thing; in and of itself, something that was visually quite attractive and made a bold and important statement about the, the equity of experience. And, and it provided an opportunity for people to stand back and watch these people interact with this art, which itself is interesting and feels important and also just felt to me, and I was made uncomfortable by that. I'm not sure that that's necessarily something that people who, I didn't ask the people who were interacting with the art, if that was their experience. It was my experience. But I think one that we're gonna want to think about in the future to ensure that we aren't creating a situation where people feel like that they are on display.

Otherwise, I mean, you know, reactions were super positive, and everybody wanted to touch it. It wasn't just like, you know, it wasn't like people who were sighted said, Oh, let me look at this Warhol, oh look, there's this tactile thing over here, isn't that interesting, you know. No, no, no. They wanted to touch that, so I think that that's important, itself important data about how to reach people with art. To me that was, that was important.

**Caroline:** Yeah, really interesting, and I love what you're saying about the need for kind of more conversations going forward. So I, this is a great opportunity actually to bridge into the larger, kind of, slate of accessibility projects that it seems like you all are working on across campus. Correct me if I'm wrong, but it sounds like Wichita State is really going to be kind of a leader in this field.

**Jay:** Yeah, I think we see this in a number of cases where we'll address an issue, and okay, well, how do we deal with this? When we bridge this conversation, it's like, well, who else is out there? Well, there kind of isn't one, or they're very, very, very specialized, and so it doesn't quite fit what we're doing. And so I think that's where that conversation's coming in.

**Caroline:** So you mentioned these accessibility initiatives are not just about what goes on in the classroom -- although of course, that's really important too, and I should ask about that in a moment -- but is this going to include, or does it already include, things like sporting events, the built environment around campus, recreational activities, talk me through some of this?

**Carolyn:** Absolutely. So sporting, sports is a little bit different, and I'm actually not the right person to ask about that. It's just the way the structure of the university is that's, that's not us. Which isn't to say that they aren't doing things, they are, it's just not us. And the built environment, although there is a sub-committee associated with the accessibility committee that is looking specifically into the built environment, a lot of issues about the built environment deal with specifically ADA requirements and also then KBOR -- Kansas Board of Regents requirements for all, all schools, and so we have a lot of people looking at that as well. But the student experience -- one example that I can give you about the student experience that I think is unusual, but kind of gets at what you're talking about, is we have flat screen TVs all over the place that have digital signage on them, and digital signage is a cool way to sort of

build a sense of community and to get information out. We, a couple of years ago now, through an initiative with the Media Resources Center, which is my organization that my office is a part of, started a podcast of our digital signage. And so once a week, you can download the podcast for digital signage, and you can listen to the digital signage, and that serves students who can't see the, literally can't see the digital signage, people who can't process the information on the digital signage in a way that's timed to the change in the slides, people who don't physically come to the campus, I mean, just lots of people can download the podcast. And so it's a kind of a universal design response to this particular issue, and it's directly related to the student experience and to the experience of all of the members of our community.

**Caroline:** Has Universal Design for Learning also been something that professors are incorporating in their classroom spaces?

**Carolyn:** I teach a class on this -- Universal Design versus Universal Design for Learning. So I don't want to steal your thunder, Dr. Price, if you have ...

**Jay:** I think part of it is an awareness of what this all entails from the user's perspective. A principle that Carolyn introduced me to very early on was, not for us without us, and the sense of needing to know what that feels like is really important. I'll be, again, had Alida not been in my class, I probably would not have had even this kind of framework to think about what the question is. And so we're dealing with the idea of how do you deal with different learning approaches and different forms of getting into a classroom, now we're dealing with that a lot with remote learning and so forth. But I think that that's something that instructors have a varying degree of familiarity with. There are instructors who absolutely get what this is about. There are those who understand it - but. And, you know, I think there's just that kind of building that in and, okay, I think that a lot of instructors are frightened of it, because it seems very, very daunting, and so that is probably part of the, kind of - it's okay, we're gonna, we'll do it, is fine, is probably an attitude that just has to be developed.

**Carolyn:** So, Dr. Price's answer illustrates really well, our training message. Thank you very much, I'm very pleased to hear it. We are less a Universal Design for Learning School, which from my perspective, my background, I have, I have a PhD in adult education, and so I come from a world where UDL fits in very neatly. But from my perspective, UDL tends to, the language associated with that particular school of thought feels to faculty to be restrictive, to be unnecessarily sort of well, bossy, kind of bossy. So we really avoid using the language of Universal Design for Learning. We are certainly, we attempt to stay consistent with the goals of Universal Design for Learning, particularly the multiple means of expression and multiple means of communication, but we do it within a framework, a universal design framework rather than a Universal Design for Learning framework. I don't like it when people get fussy about jargony vocabulary that way, but it is different. A universal design perspective is, because it comes out of the built environment, because it comes out of a different history is just much more choice-based than a Universal Design for Learning perspective. So, so our training message is more Universal Design, and we try to meet each one of our faculty members and our instructors, we actually work with instructors from graduate teaching assistants all the way through to across the entire spectrum of rank, we work on that, on the goals rather than on the specific method.

**Caroline:** Interesting. Can you actually elaborate a little bit more on some of those differences between Universal Design as you apply it in classrooms versus the more specific, sort of, framework of Universal Design for Learning?

**Carolyn:** Sure, so Universal Design for Learning focuses very heavily - it comes out of, and there's nothing wrong with it, but it's different. From our history, it comes out of a K-12 relationship with education. The distinction between a K-12 relationship with education and a higher education relationship with education comes from, the core of it comes from motivation. Why is the person there, right? A student in a K-12 environment is there because they are

being, there are many external factors which put them there, right? And keep them there. In a higher education environment, they are there from an internal, a set of internal motivators. And so because of that, and because instructors in a higher education environment are, are rooted very heavily in their content field, almost always, not always, I wouldn't want to imply always, but almost always would, I believe, rank their content field higher than their, maybe their tie to education, specifically. You know, like, their content comes first and then everything flows from that. So because of that, we needed a model which allowed people to put their content first. Universal Design for Learning does put the idea of learning and teaching first. It says that it is your goal, your responsibility in the class to make whatever modifications are necessary in the means that you have and interacting with people to be heard. And in a higher education environment, there is a little bit more of, you are here as a student because you're motivated internally to be here, and also you need to come to me, you need to come toward the content, you need to come toward this understanding. That, that requires you to have a kind of effort that in a K-12 environment, students aren't actually asked to have, and I would argue it's because of their motivation. So, so that's a lot of theory, and I'm sorry, don't ever let people who, in our environment don't ever ask them about something they're interested in. [Laughs]

**Caroline:** I'm afraid that's the whole point of the podcast. [Both laugh]

**Carolyn:** So Universal Design for Learning has these really rigorous things that it sets, you know, that you need to try to meet all these different metrics. A universal design perspective instead says we have this thing, again, imagine a built environment thing, a building, anything that you're coming at, we have, we need to not put barriers between you and that experience, but ultimately you are the one as the student or as the person who's interacting with it, you're responsible for participating in the building of that experience as well. So because of that, we don't have, we don't ask of our faculty to provide as much scaffolding as we would in a less advanced educational place. It doesn't mean that it's okay to not have an equitable, set of equitable opportunities. It doesn't mean that we, that barriers are okay, necessarily, particularly if they are more of a barrier for certain groups than others. Like I said, mine is the access office. Disability isn't the only barrier we work with. We also work with finances, race-ethnicity issues, first generation issues, so we do access as a larger piece. We think about disability on its own and also as an intersectionality with other categories of life and being. So, but you can't, so we can't have barriers that, that discriminate, but sometimes we do have barriers, because it isn't in the clearing of those barriers in our environment, in our educational environment, where you can transcend where you are and you can have a fundamental change in who you are. So barriers are part of how we do education, I would argue. Dr Price, does that seem fair? Because it is that construction of that experience that makes you better.

**Jay:** Well, you know, and I think to build on, so a couple of things that really kind of resonate here. One, is that we come also at the principle of academic freedom, so that professors and instructors choose their textbooks, we don't have, and that's a difference between the K through 12 model, where things are chosen for the instructor in a lot of ways, and that just isn't gonna fly for academics. There's also a, a sense that, it depends on the field. Some fields are a lot more open to this. Coming from a public history field where I deal with museums and preservation, okay, this is a conversation that other parts of the world professionally are dealing with it. But some fields are very, are much more linked in abstract research, and so different forms of accessibility, to start part of that conversation. I think there's sometimes a sense that instructors, professors assume that technology has already solved all this, and so if there's a problem of accessibility or how you interact with something, that's your issue, that's up to you, the student, to address that. And then I think a final component that really has emerged in some areas is that, yeah, our first tie is off into the field, to the discipline, to the profession, but that means that the professions aren't up to speed either. And so if there is a classic textbook or a particular data set or if there's something that is used that's expected in the field, and if that's not accessible, if that is not available in a variety of formats, the publisher doesn't really care. And you can't put, you can't adjust that if the publisher or the

resource says, you know, that's not our thing anyway, you figure it out. And so sometimes professors, instructors can get caught between the deep, legitimate desire to reach out to different audiences and a professional set of tools that just hasn't gotten there yet.

**Carolyn:** And that's where my office comes in. That's our job. Our job cannot ever be, not in a higher education environment, not in a place like Wichita State that does value academic freedom extremely highly. We cannot be in a position where we tell Dr. Price or anybody else what to do. But we can say, here are our goals as to where to get to, right? I'm not gonna tell you how to get here, and I'm not gonna tell you, I'm not gonna tell a music theory professor that they can't have some, you know, score from, some medieval score or something that, you know, only exists in this one way, I'm not gonna tell them that. So we're gonna say, okay, given what you want, given what we have to do from a legal perspective, what we want to do from an ethical perspective, and given that we will serve our students, what do we need to do? And it's in the solving of that problem that all of this innovation happens, right? So our model needs to allow for that, it needs to allow for the impetus to be coming from the faculty member, from the field that they represent, from the student. And we are there to help them figure out how to get there.

And when we have to, when we have to, we will accommodate, we still of course, accommodate that. Our speed to accommodation is so much faster because our underlying accessibility is really getting good, and so it gets better, that gap is smaller, and so, and we have fewer of them. Fewer gaps, smaller gaps, and so then we can be faster that bridging them when we do need to accommodate.

**Caroline:** That's really interesting. I mean, I think, Jay, you mentioned this or sort of alluded to it earlier, that sometimes professors can be a little bit resistant when it comes to – the sort of, it's really a new approach for many of them, a new way of thinking about their relationship with their students and with their material. And I'm wondering if you ever find that maybe it's kind of the other way around, where faculty discover benefits that they hadn't actually anticipated when they start using a more, kind of, accessible approach in the classroom.

**Jay:** It prompts rethinking of how things work. I think that that is definitely a part of it. A slightly different conversation, but one that I think works here. I was able to take an online class, in a, a Spanish class, and the fact that I was able to see what it looked like from the student's perspective helped enormously in designing. So it's, oh, that's what that looks like. And so I think once you realize that it's a set of opportunities, and hey, this is a different way of looking at it, that could be really useful, but getting over that hump of knowing, okay, here's what the technology actually sort of looks like, I think it is part of that. And just, it's gonna be getting used to that. And the more that instructors have people of different accessibility models in their classroom, the more they're gonna say, oh, this isn't just that person over there. Oh, this is Ben. And I like Ben as a student. Oh well, I wanna help Ben, you know. And that's, I think the model we need to be thinking about.

**Carolyn:** And that's a place for our office to come in, too - to say, okay, well, remember Ben, remember when we did this thing for Ben and remember how you thought these through from, this this idea through from a different perspective for Ben? That seems to me like then those changes that you made, you didn't see those as fundamental changes, you didn't see those as - then we start to get at some of the legal things, right? So, so how can we expand on that way of thinking so that we can serve students who don't necessarily self-identify? Because we know that that's an issue. How do we help students who have temporary issues and may not want, they may be self-identifying, but aren't being served in the way that necessarily they need to be, only because it's such a short period of time? How do we, how do we do better? And I, and I think that's what I hope, at least, that we don't, that my office doesn't burn bridges of people by saying, you have to do it this way, but instead saying, well, we have an issue we need to solve. Is there, what do you need from us in order so that you can solve it? Because really the best solutions come, always the best solutions come from that interaction

between the instructor and the student. And then we can benefit from them, we can iterate them, we can amplify them, we can make them larger, we can re-apply them in new situations, that's the role of my office. But that initial conversation, that really needs to happen with the student participating in their own education, with the instructor representing their own content field and their expertise as a teacher.

**Caroline:** So, actually, on that note, how have students been responding to this sort of re-orientation that's going on at Wichita State University, where there's much more of a focus on accessibility? Have you noticed, you know, an uptick in students with disabilities choosing to come to your university or feeling more comfortable disclosing disabilities?

**Carolyn:** That's an office really, I mean, that's a question for Isabel Medina Kaiser, really, 'cause I mentioned we have three offices on campus that deal with these issues, and the disability services office specifically works with students receiving services. I will say though, two things: we had one student who came to the university, a student who uses a screen reader and tactile graphics and reads Braille, came from a background where they require those as accommodations in a K-12 environment, and has said more than one time, Oh my gosh, the quality of the materials that we get, that I get here at Wichita State is just phenomenal. And that has created, all of that's created in-house in a cooperative give and take between an expert, a tactile graphic and Braille expert, and the instructors of the classes. This is not done separate from the academic experience, but as part of the academic experience, and so I think that does just create extremely high-quality materials, and we've heard that. And every time you hear it you think, yeah, our stuff is really good 'cause, you know, we do it here. It's done by, it's done by somebody whose job it is to call up Dr. Price and say, hey, we, you know, have this thing. And we also had a student who came between the semesters at the end of the fall semester, enrolled in an online program, a student who does use, use a screenreader, and this person just walked in and the courses needed almost nothing. They're already ready. And they, we weren't expecting that student. So within just a couple of days we were up and running, ready to go. So that speed, like I said, that speed to accommodation, in this case, we've had very little need for accommodation, even, because the accessibility has been so good. So that's gonna get a reputation, right?

**Jay:** Well, and I think the more we can bring strong students into the classroom this way, and that by having accessibility, you get to see, hey, there's this really great student who's doing this publishing, who's going to this conference, who is doing some incredible cutting edge work, and is just a really all-around cool student, makes for a different experience, and so, oh, okay, yeah, we want to encourage a student like that. And the more we can see really positive examples, I think that's certainly part of it. And maybe what Carolyn is talking about here is the sense that the ultimate success is when nobody notices.

**Carolyn:** Yeah, right, yeah, I think that's absolutely the case.

**Caroline:** Speaking of this, is accessibility part of that public history curriculum at Wichita State that you specialize in?

**Jay:** It's not specific, as in that I have a unit for it, but it's something that I know more and more students are becoming aware of through a couple of different projects and so forth. If nothing else, maybe it's making sure my students are aware of the conversation, that the conversation is out there, and to be thoughtful about how you might be thinking about this as a professional down the road in museums or preservation or what not.

**Caroline:** Yeah, I've, I've heard people say that it's very difficult, in fact, to sort of distill it all down to just a simple unit, it has to be almost like a whole different mindset and an ongoing conversation with communities, right? You can't just do the, you know, accessibility module and then move on.



**Carolyn:** One of the things that we have, because of our agreement with the National Federation of the Blind, we have a very interesting definition of instructor for the class. It is the broadest possible definition you can imagine. Anybody providing content to a Wichita State student is considered an instructor. So that means if I have a class, cause I also teach, I teach in the Criminal Justice Department, and if I have a class and I were to ask you as a student to present this chapter, that means that you are functioning as the instructor and - even though you're not instructor of record - and that the content that you provide has to be accessible. So to that end, we did, Wichita State created an organization called The Kansas Accessibility Resources Network, which can be found online at [ksarn.org](http://ksarn.org), and it has all of this training that is this atomized, sort of, as needed training about accessibility that Dr. Price could use his class if he wanted to, that, then it could get used by people in Student Affairs before they have people on campus for orientation, so it's like for everybody. And it's, those are just free online little modules on all these different ways to ensure that your materials are accessible, particularly digital materials, but we also have information about face-to-face presentation, going to conferences and presenting in an accessible way. So we do try to underpin the students' knowledge of that sort of as needed, rather than the standalone, as you were saying, a standalone little unit, instead incorporating it into everything that they're doing.

**Jay:** There's a sense too, that, and I think accessibility like diversity can be very much a check off the box, they did this training module, and now we've done our official, you know, we checked off the box, roll credits, move on, and that's not what this is about.

**Carolyn:** And that issue of intersectionality, again, points out the fact that none of these things, none of these ways of talking about difference can be taken just a moment in themselves by itself, or even thought of separately from all of the other ways that we think of the, just the complexity and the diversity of the human experience.

**Caroline:** Yeah, absolutely. Now, I can't let you go without asking about the Pizza Hut Museum. So I understand that the Pizza Hut Museum, which is on campus, is that correct - yeah, OK - includes some accessible design and curation choices. So tell me all about this.

**Jay:** Well, the Pizza Hut story begins in Wichita - it was founded literally as a little hut in Wichita, Kansas in 1958 by alums of Wichita State University, so there's a personal connection there. Then in 1984, they relocated the building onto campus and it had gotten kind of moribund. So they decided to move it again, put it at the heart of the Innovation Campus, the extension to the east of the main campus you know, on the grounds, and now it's in the middle of campus in some ways, and make it a museum, really help tell the story of entrepreneurship. So I was part of a committee of individuals that included figures from business and museum studies and communications to talk about this as a museum, to talk about entrepreneurship. This is not a shrine to the founders of Pizza Hut, they don't want that. And so it was already beginning as a different type of institution. But we worked with the exhibit designers, Flint Hills Design. And then in the middle of our conversation, this commitment to accessibility emerges, becomes a lot more visible. And everything means everything, and our committee, sort of working with the designers, saying what if we could design a museum from the outset to be a lot more accessible, because this is a, you know, a lot of museums get retrofitted for accessibility and that's always gonna be a challenge. What would it look like if you did this from the outset? And Flint Hills Design has a real strong social justice commitment, just because of who they are, and so this was right in their wheelhouse. And so they started looking at it and they started looking at, well, how do you make more accessible museums. And if you look at accessible museums, a lot of it is about wheelchair accessibility, it's about physical mobility. How do you interact in different ways of visual processing is a whole different conversation, and there are a few museums, but there aren't a whole lot of them, about this. And so they had to do a lot of inventing, but what they found, and this is where that universal design conversation comes in, that we used 3D printed items, cause we have a 3D printing capacity on campus, and so we had little Pizza Petes, and we had the tennis shoe, and we had, let's see, the rolling pin and a pizza pan and things like that, that

you could handle. And we learned that that was a great way to get at tactile learning. And people with a variety of experiences on the spectrum interacted with this as well, to say nothing of the fact that individuals who, I, just like to touch things, can interact with it as well. So that was a real opportunity. We made sure that things were in Braille and things were in a format that you press the button and here you go. But there's still a learning process with that. When we've had some folks come in who have been blind or have had different levels of sightedness, and it works, sort of. It's a prototype. The one that really got me was somebody who goes in and we're used to putting text on a wall, which is vertical, and this one commenter said, I don't, you don't read like this, you read like this. So do I. And it was like, you're right. You know, it's like, oh wow. So we full-on admit it's prototype, but it's, there's been a lot of interest with it just to see what it even looks like.

**Carolyn:** I think that's the coolest thing about the attitude that we have on our campus. It really is just this innovation attitude of, hey, let's try this. Who, you know, who can we get in the room? We try to get as many people in the room and part of the conversation as possible. Let's try a couple of things. This worked, this didn't work. This worked, but we need to do this, so let's move on. We don't get so mired down in the, oh my gosh, everything just has to be perfect from the beginning, that we can't move on. And at the same time, we're not so married to any one decision that we just ignore that we might have some problems with it that we need to fix. One of the things that came out of that Pizza Hut project that we use just everywhere now are those QR codes.

**Caroline:** Those codes that you can scan with your phone and then they'll take you to the website? Yeah.

**Carolyn:** We just use QR codes to, to improve the accessibility of our stuff all over our campus, and that helps people who are blind, but that helps people who, everyone, you know, just everyone, you can hear it or you can take that information away and interact with it later, all kinds of ways that that's supportive of people's experience. So that definitely, and it's just cool, it's a fun place to go, it's a, it's neat. They did a great job. I wasn't involved in that project, but Dr. Price and the folks he worked with just did a great job.

And just, let me just say from a cost perspective, cause I can hear the people listening to this going, oh well, that's great if you have enough money. I mean, you don't have enough money not to do. Put it this way, this is the cheapest possible way to do it. To start from the beginning, to build it in from the beginning is the least expensive, the richest, the most interesting, the best outcomes. Like, everything is the best if you can do it from the beginning. Not everybody can, lots of things have to be retrofitted, lots of remediation in the space, but when it's possible to do it from the beginning, that's the coolest. And to hear those different voices and different perspectives, that's just gonna make your exhibit so much better, your museum so much more relevant. And so.

**Jay:** It was fun when we presented at the Mountain Plains Museums Association on this last year, and we had to, we played to a very large room; you know, it was a well-attended session. And somebody came up to our group later on and she said, I deal with interpretation. She's used to first-person interpretation, that was her, her background. She said my daughter works in museum things, but she's a technology person, and almost never do we go to a session that addresses both of our interests. We could do that this time, because there is that intersection of interpretation in technology and design that you don't often see even in the professions.

**Caroline:** Very interesting. I'm glad to hear that you're doing some publicity around this, right? Going to conferences, doing this podcast by the way, thank you, because it sounds like there's really a lot that other museums and universities can learn from all that you're doing. It's very exciting.

**Carolyn:** And I hope that they hear that it really, there are inexpensive ways to move forward. It is, it is, you know, the whole eating an elephant thing, but there is always from where you're standing, one thing you can afford to do, one thing that you can do right now, you know. And we make, basically everything we know, we make available for free to the community - we talk, present on a number of this topic and related topics pretty regularly - back when we used to be able to, to go places and talk about these things. And it was fun, fun while it lasted, remember, remember those days? But yeah, but there's always something you can do. There's always a person you could invite to your meeting, get that voice, you know, that untapped resource into your project.

**Jay:** And I think this also goes back to the idea of design and cost because, and this is where the universal design conversation comes in, because rather than design something for five different constituencies, which can be clunky and cumbersome, if you have a little bit more of a universal design, you might only have to design it once.

**Carolyn:** I mentioned that we have three, we have three offices that do these things. I know that I mentioned a little bit about the skill of our, our office that we call Triple A, Academic Accommodations and Accessibility. But we are creating all of that stuff in-house, and that does, that is a great model, and I think universities and institutions probably look at that and think, wow, there's no way that I can afford it, but I think it's ultimately a less expensive model and it allows for this level of the specialization that's just amazing. The work that they're doing, you know, you just think, they, all these different kinds of Braille, I don't know, it's all these different kinds of Braille, and they're Brailling and creating tactile graphics for, for math classes, calculus classes up through Calc 3, for discrete algebra, I think, I don't actually, this is the edge of where I know what kind of math it is, for physics classes, for music classes, for Biology and Chemistry, and you know, all of the stuff that they are developing that knowledge in-house, and I think that's a really cool reflection of the idea of being in a university environment where we value learning and we value having that knowledge ourselves. We don't, it's not that we're exclusionary and we're trying to keep, we will share whatever we have, always. But yeah, they're amazing, the work that they're doing is incredible, using the Print in a Flash [Picture in a Flash] and also embossers and other kinds of technologies.

**Caroline:** Wow, it sounds really neat.

**Carolyn:** They're pretty cool.

**Jay:** Kind of, two things maybe that do come out of that, what you're saying, Carolyn, that makes a lot of sense with what we're talking about here. One is a realization that it's not just one thing you have to do, and so it's not just, let's put it in Braille, we're done, and move on. It's an awareness that not everybody uses Braille or they use it in a different way, or there are different approaches. It's not just you use this one technology. Flint Hills Design learned that older technology was actually better than some of the newer programs that can still be a little buggy, so that's a lessons learned coming out of this. And I think finally, the idea of relationship is important. It's not just having the office that you go to and you download the PowerPoint and now we move on. It's, I don't know how to do this - Carolyn, help!

**Carolyn:** [Laughs] Yeah.

**Jay:** There are a whole host of other folks or you say, okay, Flint Hills Design, help, what do you do with this? Or you get on the phone and you call somebody, you send an email, and it really is almost at that individual person-to-person level to figure something out.

**Carolyn:** And then to share that information out, capture it. We're always telling instructors, you know, if that worked, can you please write that up, just, just write that up. We don't want lose it, we don't want it to just be ours, we want to share it.

**Caroline:** Yeah, that willingness to be flexible seems really important, 'cause of course, I'm sure you've heard the critique that universal design is kind of a mirage, right? You never really quite achieve it. It's a really lovely idea, but there are very few things that are truly universal, and so that willingness to flex, to listen, to talk to your communities, seems like a really important one. As we sign off, or before we sign off, I want to ask what's next for each of you. It sounds like you're working on a lot of different things, but are there any particular projects you want to highlight or share with our audience?

**Carolyn:** Well, I will just say that right now, we are responding to the situation on the ground, so we're taking, we have almost a thousand instructors, if we add all of our full-time instructors, part-time adjuncts and GTAs together, offering thousands of classes, and all of those classes are going to have a digital component for fall. So our focus right now isn't so much a new project as it is, testing and stress testing the scalability of the decisions that we've made so far to see that we are able to meet the needs of our, of all of our students academically this fall. And we will be able to do that, but we are scrambling to ensure that all of those needs are met. We are doing things like adding templates to classes so that we have good organization so that that addresses cognitive issues, processing issues, visual issues, all of those are addressed really neatly in a digital world through just clear organization, so lots of decisions of that nature. So rather than a new project, for me, it's really a question of scaling previous decisions and trying to improve them on the fly, as needed. So the, yeah, so that people can go to school and learn and persist, you know, toward their degrees like any other semester, just in a different way.

**Caroline:** Sounds like it'll be a busy summer, that's for sure.

**Carolyn:** [Laughs] Yeah!

**Jay:** And on this end, we're working still to promote some of the lessons learned from the Pizza Hut experience and kind of work with some of the students who've been working with the Pizza Hut museum and Flint Hills Design, and continuing that conversation. That's certainly part of it. And folding in some of the lessons learned into some of our other different projects and products.

**Caroline:** Excellent. Well, we'll look forward to more of that. Well, thank you both so much for your time. For joining me today day. It's really been a pleasure.

**Carolyn:** Thank you, thank you for having us.

**Jay:** Thank you. This has been a lot of fun. I've really enjoyed it.

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**Caroline:** Thanks to everyone out there for listening or reading the transcript. Please join us again next time. Bye bye!