



KENT STATE  
UNIVERSITY



# Infusing Inclusion across an Evolving Ecosystem

Presented by

Michael A. Kavulic, Ph.D.

Director, Research Strategic Initiatives

Amanda L. F. Weyant, M. Ed.

Director, Student Accessibility Services



# Objectives

- Discover ways to tailor your communication style to align with competing priorities.
- Identify avenues for considering accessibility in data gathering, analysis, and dissemination processes to prompt institutional change.
- Contextualize the lessons learned from Kent State's experiences to develop relationships with key stakeholders in accessibility work at your own campuses.

# Bottom-Up Political Actions

(Bolman and Deal, 2003)

- **Interdependent Networks**
  - An ecosystem is made of interdependent relationships based on the need to leverage resources controlled by others.
  - Other actors may have divergent interests and agendas.
  - All of these conditions create rules of engagement that we must understand in order to play in the arena, advance our interests, and achieve our goals.
- **Significant Disruption as an Impetus for Change**
- **Change Unfreezing old patterns and intensifying dissatisfaction**

# Evolving Approach to a University-wide Accessibility Committee

- **Americans with Disabilities Act Committee**
  - Created in late '90s by President Cartwright
  - Operated from a compliance mindset, focused on ADA
- **ADA Committee, Recommissioned**
  - Fell dormant until 2011 when it was recommissioned by three Vice-Presidents
    - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
    - Enrollment Management & Student Affairs
    - Finance and Administration
  - Charged to “provide the moral conscious to the university”
- **Accessibility Committee**
  - Name changed in 2012/13 to reflect the evolving scope of work of the committee
  - Designed to cross multiple functional areas and involves faculty, staff, and students
  - Structure: Co-chairs and subcommittees

# Building Intentional Networks & Fostering Sustainable Relationships

- Leadership Transitions
- University Climate Survey
- Institutional and National Trends

# Leadership Transitions

- President
- Vice-Presidents
  - Turn-over
  - Addition
  - Approach to relationship
- Natural co-chairs transitions
- New SAS director
- Various other transitions across institutional partners
  - HR, Architects, etc.

# University Climate Survey

- **Results directly related to the experiences of persons with disabilities**
- **Connection with Accessibility Committee**
- **Leveraging data**



# Emerging Institutional and National Trends

- **Kent State of Wellness**
- **JED**
- **Electronic and Information Technology Emphasis**
- **Assistance animals**
- **Global Education**
- **Universal restrooms**

# Current State of University Accessibility Committee

- **Change in Co-chair**
- **Subcommittee structure into workgroups**
- **Annual Event: Kent State of Accessibility**
- **Physical plant audit**
- **Relationship with Information Services**
- **Clearer support from VPs**
  - Annual report meeting with VPs

# Lessons Learned

- **Within committee**

- Adapt structures as needed
- Stay mindful of representation and voices

- **Between committee and others**

- Look for opportunities to educate people at all levels
- Stay diligent in identifying potential disruptions
- Identify future collaborations and work toward building relationships long-term
- Pay attention to the interdependent relationships, rules of engagement, and opportunities found in disruption

- **Between individuals**

- Get to know other players and their backgrounds
- Tell stories to build empathy

# Application to Your Institution

- **What opportunities for disruption can you identify in the near future?**
- **Are there organizations or individuals with whom you can build relationships to maximize disruption?**
- **How can you proactively foster those relationships to prepare for potential disruption?**



**Thank You.**

[www.kent.edu](http://www.kent.edu)