From the Ground Up Handout

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Intros - Slide 1

- Kate DeForest, Web/Digital Content Coordinator for SUNY Oswego. Member of the IT Accessibility Steering Committee and Workgroup on Accessibility Practices. Former chair of the Workgroup and the Remediation team.
- Luz Espanola, Accessibility Specialist with an Instructional Design background. Member of the Accessible Technology Initiative and Digital Accessibility Policy Committee. Membership coordinator for ATHEN.
- We met at AHG 2021. As we got talking, we realized we have a lot of parallels between us, our responsibilities, and our universities.

Strategies - Slide 2

Steps each university has taken to:
- Create partnerships across multiple departments
- Broaden the understanding of the terms "accessible" and "accessibility" in relation to equality and inclusion
- Shift the narrative to encourage and empower others to remove barriers and push the momentum forward

Background - Slide 3

Very brief description of how each university started our accessibility efforts

Oswego:

- OCR complaint in 2017 for inaccessible web pages
- Corrected issues, became very proactive to avoid being in that position again
- In 2019, the State University system mandated all SUNY campuses name EIT officer and create a digital accessibility plan

CSU Monterey Bay:

- University leadership wanted to uphold our mission statement (equal and inclusive access to education).
- Push from CSU Chancellor's office to complete Assistive Technology Initiative (ATI) reporting for all 23 campuses.
- Need to hire and create new positions for campus efforts with digital accessibility and ATI reporting.

Create partnerships - Slide 4

How we create and maintain partnerships and allies across departments and continue to grow the people involved with the accessibility initiative
- **Form committees and groups**
- **Network with professionals**

Oswego:

- Workgroup on Accessibility Practices
  - Troubleshoots accessibility issues, helps educate campus community, brainstorms new ideas of how to spread initiative
- Actively recruit for Accessibility Faculty Fellows
  - Volunteer group, advocates for accessibility and liaisons for their departments
  - They incorporate accessibility into course materials and teach it in classes
  - Receive course reduction or stipend for meeting program requirements
- Provide professional development opportunities whenever possible
  - Take advantage of knowledge hierarchy

CSU Monterey Bay:

- Assistive Technology Initiative (ATI) Committee
  - Business office managers
  - Information Technology Chief Officer
  - Web folk
  - Information Technology Security
  - Instructional academic support
- Collaboration between IT marketing team, Student Disability Resources, Instructional Designers, Accessibility Specialist
- Present at every opportunity
- Network outside of the university community

Broaden the Understanding - Slide 5

How do we help people understand the inclusive definition of the terms "accessible" and "accessibility"

- **Be intentional**
- **Adapt your message**
- **Be an advocate**

Oswego:

- Make accessibility an automatic part of conversation
    - People generally don't realize or understand that they need this information
    - Include in course developments, regular department meetings, and web editor training
- Be very specific when talking about digital accessibility
- Provide resources on how to make content accessible
    - Tutorials
    - Checklists
    - LinkedIn
    - Deque University

CSU Monterey Bay:

- Be intentional with your verbiage and adapt the message to your audience
    - Provide a glossary of terms for accessibility if necessary
    - The concept is universal but can have a different lens from a faculty to a student perspective
- Don't be afraid to be the squeaky wheel
    - 99% of the time it is welcomed
    - Don't want to wait until a complaint or lawsuit comes, be proactive
- Get as involved as you can with accessibility efforts on your campus.
    - Opportunities will make themselves available as you take on this effort

Shift the Narrative - Slide 6

Encourage people to join, rather than forcing them
- **Create a positive experience**
- **Words and phrasing matter**
- **Meet audience where they are**

Oswego:

- Make the content creators the Good Guy
    - Use positive language around digital accessibility
    - Rather than stating "You need to make your materials more accessible," tell people they are creating a positive experience for others by making materials more inclusive.
- Explain the benefits digital accessibility has to a wide audience
    - Design for outlying circumstances, and more people will benefit

- Break it down
  - Focus on one or two aspects at a time, not the whole mountain

CSU Monterey Bay:

- Make it an "Us" thing - Community
  - Build an awareness. By creating for the web, we are all responsible for accessible content.
  - For example, having faculty realize they are content creators and have responsibility to provide accessible course content
- Create digestible training, awareness campaigns: easy to use and learn from
- Demystify accessibility every chance you get!
  - One on one opportunities
  - Group workshops
  - Campus marketing

Get Started with Small Steps- Slide 7

Small, "easy" ways to start incorporating digital accessibility for the audience
- **Start where you are**
- **Don't make assumptions**
- **Ask for help**

Oswego:

- Use opportunities that are already available to introduce and talk about accessibility.
  - Slip it into meetings. Plant the seed. Make it an automatic part of the conversation.
- Use real-world examples to demonstrate that accessibility helps everyone, not just those with disabilities
  - Automatic doors
  - Hands-free GPS
  - Captions
- Network, connect with, and learn from others, both within and outside of your organization

CSU Monterey Bay:

- Start with platforms you have access to.
  - Faculty and staff training, one on one consultations, procurement opportunities, web training, web design, instructional design courses
- Know your audience and be intentional in how accessibility is relatable to what they do
- It is ok to start with low stakes opportunities, Word of Mouth will get around!