DISABILITY JUSTICE AND ABLEISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
How We Got Here and Where We Go From Here

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Professor Arlene S. Kanter
Director, Disability Law and Policy Program
Director, International Programs
Syracuse University College of Law
kantera@law.syr.edu
Outline

• Introduction: Disability and Diversity
• Why is disability invisible?
• What can and should we do about the invisibility of disability?
• Conclusion: A Call for Action

NOTE: The pictures used on these slides are included to provide the speakers with an opportunity to model how to describe pictures to achieve universal design in learning.
Introduction
Why is Disability Invisible?

1. Ignorance about what disability is and is not;
2. Unsubstantiated concerns about costs;
3. Fear and stigma about disability; and
4. It may take away focus from ????
What can and should be done about the invisibility of disability?

1. Good for all: New Students

2. Good for all: Universal Design

**Universal Design is:**

**Equitable:** *Usable by people with diverse abilities*

**Flexible:** *Accommodates wide range of abilities*

**Simple and Intuitive:** *Easy to understand for all*

**Discernible:** *Communicates effectively regardless of users’ sensory abilities*
Here is a picture of a school building with steps covered with snow. A man is shoveling the steps while students are waiting at the bottom of the steps, waiting to enter. A student in a wheelchair is at the bottom of a ramp, next to the steps, which is also covered with snow.
Universal Design?

EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY

In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.

In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.

In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.
What can and should we do about it, cont’d:

3. Good for all: Faculty and staff trainings

4. Good for all: Curriculum innovations

5. Good for all: It is the Right Thing to Do - and the proper role for higher education
Why commit to full inclusion for all?

Photo of Professor Kanter’s Fall 2018 International and Comparative Disability Law Class at Syracuse University College of Law. It shows 23 students in three rows, with 7 seated students in the front row, two of whom are sitting in wheelchairs, 4 students and Prof. Kanter standing in the middle row, and 12 students standing in the back row, against a wall. These students represent such countries as Ukraine, Montenegro, Brazil, Pakistan, Kenya, China, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, Ethiopia, and the US.
Thank you!

Professor Arlene S. Kanter
Syracuse University
kantera@law.syr.edu