# When Form Meets Function: Accessibility Can be Engaging, Useful, and Beautiful

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## Hello :)

## How many of you have heard...

[Form to input experiences anonymously](https://bit.ly/AHEADForm)

https://bit.ly/AHEADForm

## Same.

That’s why we get signs like “accessible entrance at the rear”…and that’s if we’re lucky

## My chosen problem to solve:

My beautiful, but difficult to navigate, campus. We hate grids, and we. Love. Roundabouts. With. No. Landmarks.

## Make it work

Channel you inner Tim Gunn!

## My Inspiration

My local art museum that has the most beautiful, seamless pathway to get up the steep back hill to the fountain deck

## So what made this work?

* Someone cared and was knowledgeable
* It was incorporated into a project that was already happening/as it happened
* It involved creative thinking and problem solving
* It involved collaboration between multiple persons with different areas of expertise
* It resulted in a product that was beautiful and useful

## So...back to our poll

* Was/is this…
* Too hard?
* Too expensive?
* Too time consuming?
* Ugly?
* Boring?

## Know your audience

### What does \*your\* institution value?

* Mission: “educate in an academically challenging, intellectually vibrant, and collaborative community dedicated to...the production of...creative work.”
* Vision: “a leader in higher education...to produce knowledge that solves the world’s problems...modeling the way…”
* Beautiful campus
* Diversity, equity, and inclusion
* Student-driven critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving
* Being in the spotlight

### So how was I going to make this work?

* \*Tap into University values\* and blend them with...
* Finding someone who cares and is knowledgeable
* Incorporating solution into a project as it is happening
* Finding people with different areas of expertise
* Involving others in the creative thinking and problem solving
* Creating a product that is beautiful and useful (particularly as it related to the University’s values)

## And then The Wind Chime Project was born

### My AHA! Moment

Thanks to my jungle of a back deck complete with bird nerd bird feeders and a windchime, I was tapped by the creativity gods one evening, while minding my own business being a lazy bum on my couch when my windchime was doing its thing

### Market Testing/Proof of Concept

First Things First: Input and Planning

Ran the idea by my partner

Ran the idea by a DS colleague

Ran the idea by a student

Ran the idea by my supervisor, who ran it up the food chain

Updated by supervisor and discussed finances with a basic budget for review

Reached out to facilities

### Market Testing/Proof of Concept

Second: Installation

Worked with student and local O&M specialist to identify a target location

Planned for a very simple installation

Ordered the simplest supplies since it was a pilot

Partnered with facilities for installation (post, chimes, and laminated sign)

Collaborated with student and O&M once installed for updated navigation training

## What happened next?

A simple laminated sign ended up being the best thing we did.

### Why?

* It made people curious
* It was approachable
* It was super visible
* It helped people make a connection to a broader concept of what accessibility can mean and look like

### The curiosity door was opened

I love a good meme. I cuoldn’t think of a better one than Mr. Clarke from Stranger Things producing his magic words of “As I tell my students, once you open up the curiosity door, anything is possible."

And of course Dustin takes this concept and runs with his curiosity paddles.

## My Paddles

\*Tap into University values\* and blend them with...

* Finding someone who cares and is knowledgeable
* People found \*me\*
* Incorporating solution into a project as it is happening
* Q: What kinds of projects are happening on campus?
* A: Projects in classes. \*Lots\* of projects classes. Leadership think tanks. Startups.
* Finding people with different areas of expertise
* Music department, sculpture department
* Involving others in the creative thinking and problem solving
* Students, faculty, staff, local organizations
* Creating a product that is beautiful and useful (particularly related to the University’s values)
* Windchimes blended seamlessly or even enhanced our campus

## What will it ultimately end up looking like?

Curriculum Incorporation

* Music department “soundscape class” to design chimes
* Sculpture department sculpture 101 to design bases
* Both consult with external O&M org for real world experience

Campus Education

* “Gallery opening” with accessibility talk and discussion
* Self guided tours with signage and QR codes for info behind each sculpture

## Takeaways

* My suggested approach to finding a form-meets-function accessibility solution on your campus
* Identify a \*single\* problem for which you want to find a solution
* Know your institution and what it values
* Tap into partners on campus that you think will care and who may have knowledge related to the problem you are solving
* Collaborate with student
* Find a way to allow the community to be curious and/or approach the concept in a way they interpret as safe

Pauli Murray helps us to reframe this with an amazing quote: “When my brothers try to draw a circle to exclude me, I shall draw a larger circle to include them.”

## Don’t be afraid to be curious and experiment

Dustin is a great reminder of this—don’t keep the curiosity door closed!

## Thank You :)