

Is the Grass Greener? From Higher Ed to Accessibility Consulting and Back Again

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Welcome

**We ask you to join us in creating a culture that
reflects...**

**Access and Inclusion
and**

Civility and Respect

...this week and in all aspects of our organization.



Agenda

- Big questions and career background
- Consulting as an Accessibility Specialist
- Transferable skills for the transition out of higher ed
- **SELF REFLECTION**
- Day in the life as a contractor
- Lessons learned



Questions Many of Us Have Asked

- Should I stay in higher education?
- What opportunities exist outside academia?
- How transferable are my skills?



My Career Journey at a Glance

- Higher Ed: Admissions and Financial Aid (Master's)
- Secondary Ed: Middle and High School Counselor
- Higher Ed: Academic Advisor, Disability Services

2021 = BURNOUT

- Accessibility Consulting (Private and Federal Sector)
- Higher Ed: Disability Services and Consulting



My Departure

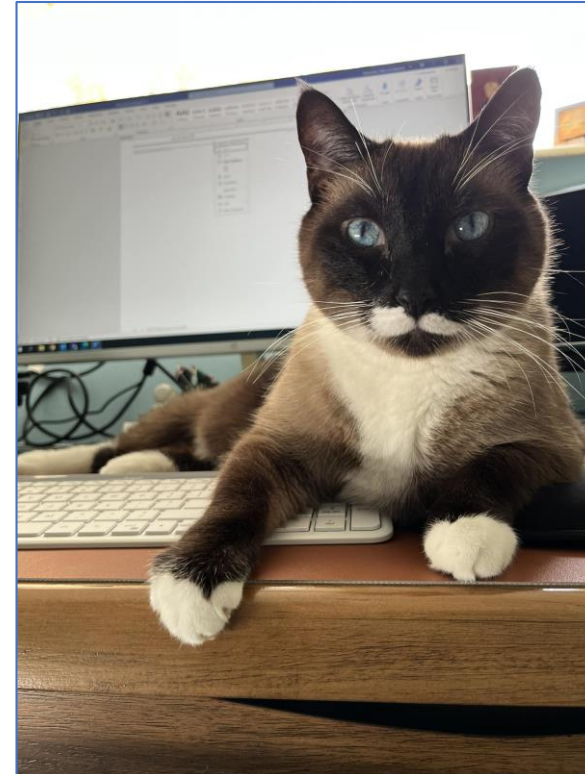
- Desired new and different challenges
- Compensation if possible
- Looking at accessibility through a new lens
- Curiosity about industry



What Accessibility Consulting Actually Looks Like

Common assumptions

- Flexible work
- Greater autonomy
- Specialized expertise



Consulting

Reality

- Client management
- Business pressures
- Deliverables and deadlines
- Contract length



Transferable Disability Skills

- Accommodation expertise
- Stakeholder management
- Policy interpretation
- Training and presentations
- Conflict resolution
- Project management
- Navigating complex systems
- AND ADA!



Considering a Transition to Consulting

- Reflect and complete a skills inventory
- Seek legal advice for finances regarding structure
- Revise resume/CV
- Create your brand (website/email) and update LinkedIn/Indeed/any sites
- Network!
- Connect with someone in consulting
- Explore accessibility consulting opportunities



Let's Take a Moment to Reflect

5 minutes to complete and then let's share

Is the Grass Greener? Career Reflection & Transition
Toolkit



Understanding Contracting

What Accessibility Professionals Should Know

- How contracting differs from higher education
- Importance of compliance and documentation
- Working with government clients
- Opportunities and challenges



Biggest Culture Shifts I Experienced

Higher Ed (HE) versus Contracting (C)

- HE: Mission driven, C: Client driven
- HE: Long timelines, C: Shorter timelines
- HE: Stable(ish), C: Contracts can be limited
- HE: Excellent benefits, C: Good pay



What Consulting Taught Me About Accessibility

- Risk management and compliance
- Enterprise-scale accessibility
- Limited awareness of best practices for accessibility
- Varying levels of priority
- **AND how much more we all know!**



Returning to Higher Education

Guess who's back?

- What I missed (2022-2025)
- What looks different
- How consulting changed my approach



How My Work Changed

Lessons Brought Back to Campus

- Stronger strategic thinking
- Better stakeholder communication
- Improved project management
- Broader understanding of accessibility ecosystems



Is the Grass Greener?

- The grass is not necessarily greener.
- The grass is: Different
- Challenging in new ways
- Full of learning opportunities



Four Things to Remember

- Your skills are highly transferable.
- You know more about accessibility than most.
- Career moves provide valuable perspective—even if you return.
- Consulting, federal contracting, and higher education each offer unique opportunities and challenges.



Questions and Contact

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Session Evaluation

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Thank you for attending!

Your feedback helps shape future programming. RAWR!

