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I want to start today by talking about academic ableism. I am going to make the case that the university sorts the population by a medicalized and legalistic definition of "ability" as effectively now as it ever has. Universities continue to function to keep certain groups of individuals out of the work force and away from status positions, and away from knowledge and dialogue and power, and not just through admissions (though I know Dr. Jacobs will be talking about this as well). This is by design, and we have to understand this design as aligning with a history of eugenics and ableism.

Twenty four percent of first-year university students self-declare as having a disability, most commonly related to mental health (14%) (Canadian University Survey Consortium, 2019). That 24% is in stark contrast to the 6-9% of students who get help. We have a generation of students who are much more likely to experience higher education as disabling, and much less likely to seek help (NCHA 2018).

Twenty-seven percent of Canadians have university degrees. But only 17.6 percent of

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grade converted to CR rather than a numerical grade, asking for an extended deadline, getting extra time on a research grant or a tenure deadline, all of a sudden anyone who wanted these things could have them. Disabled people can hardly count the number of times they were denied these things and stigmatized for even asking about them. That said, if expanded access is being called for, let's ride that momentum.

Of course, most of the ableist demands of academia will likely slide right back into place, while others may be gone for good. The advocacy of actual disabled people – unfortunately, based on the patterns we have seen – is unlikely to be what determines this future, if we don't advocate now.

For example, as we were forced to pivot online, we learned how to caption video maybe, or how to provide transcripts, or how to share these things so that students could access them any time. Well, in a recent study of engineering students with disabilities at the University of Illinois, results from 303 responses from 49 different courses showed that students with disabilities have always, well before the pandemic, been asking for recorded lectures as videos, transcripts for these videos and for lectures, as well as course textbook and instructor notes/slides that they could engage with offline (Amos et. Al.) These are all things we began to offer quite broadly during COVID. Let's keep doing this, even when

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anything like these barriers in the environment outside of school, where high stakes testing-like experiences are extremely rare. Nobody walks into an Engineering firm and says: "put your pencils down, whatever bridge you have drawn up is the one we are building." So why would we train engineers, or anyone else, to think under these constraints? There will be other barriers for our students when they reach the world of work. But nothing like the barrier imposed by a timed test. Likewise, the accommodations that these students will need in a professional capacity are unlikely to look anything like the accommodations they get in testing-heavy classrooms. And that is a huge problem, and a huge wasted opportunity. I understand that many in STEM fields believe that there are no easy alternatives to timed testing. But I will also remind those folks just how few disabled students choose their fields, as I mentioned earlier in the talk. That's a third, big point: We need to connect the dots if we want to correct that huge loss of student potential in STEM.

We know that there are accommodations that can really help students in the classroom, including help with note-taking and record-keeping, and technological solutions around communication and memory. And I also want to suggest that if we planned for more disabled students in our classrooms, we could really change the shape of higher education. This is an innocuous but a revolutionary question: what if we allocated all of the energy we spend on adapting to an old educational regime based on timing and testing into building a new one, one in which disabled students don't always need to ask for accommodations but instead their needs are expected? We did it for one term, but if your university talks about things like Universal Design for learning and isn't also willing to talk about seriously cutting back on timed assessments, or reconfiguring attendance and participation policies, or taking a long, hard look at workload, there is a problem.

Finally, for the last decade, I've been working on creating a long, long list of Universal Design ideas. These have been created collaboratively through