Embodied Experiences and Analysis of Denison University
Accessibility

Zoe Loitz

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Date: _________05/05/2021_____________________

Zoe Lutz
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Abstract

Feminist, disability, and design theory literatures serve to ground this activist project in scholarly thought. I interviewed 17 current students, alumni, faculty, and staff with disabilities at Denison University in order to explore needed disability inclusivity and accessibility changes on campus. Concepts and conversations in disability studies, design theory, and feminist thought informed my approach to this project. Through a critical reading of existing literature, I establish what feminist inclusive design encompasses. In addition to exploring how disability studies frames concepts of disability, inclusion, and accessibility, I was interested in listening to the Denison disabled community’s perspectives of these terms. Definitions, campus experiences, and desired changes of disability inclusion and accessibility are focal points of this project. Findings from these interviews informed my writing of a proposal to be given to various university offices and administration. This proposal includes recommendations for ways Denison University can work towards meeting the needs of students, faculty, and staff with disabilities.
Positionality Statement

This project is incredibly relevant to my future career path, occupational therapy. As a future healthcare worker, it is essential that I have an understanding of disability studies and its implications on the field of occupational therapy. The healthcare and medical field has been and continues to be abusive to the disabled population, in addition to Black and Indigenous people of color. The medical industrial complex prioritizes profit over client wellbeing. I feel that healthcare workers often lack an advocacy and activism component to the care they give. As a future occupational therapist, I want to ensure I utilize my privilege as a nondisabled healthcare worker to advocate for all of my clients. Advocating for the disabled community will be a focal point of my life prior to and throughout my career.

As a nondisabled researcher studying disabled experiences, I had a great amount of research I needed to perform before attempting to create ideas of my own. My review of existing literature was necessary for me to establish a background of disability studies and design theory. As a Women’s and Gender Studies and Psychology major, my classes often did not discuss disability or design theories. In addition, I based my project on open-ended interviews. I do not have the lived experience of disability to decide on my own what accessibility changes need to be made at Denison University. Before the project, I only knew of accessibility and disability inclusion concerns from conversations I had with various students with disabilities. Because of my positionality as nondisabled, this project would be ultimately impossible without the input I received from the interview participants. I am incredibly grateful for their openness to share their knowledge and experiences with me.

The Women’s and Gender Studies activism senior project stood out to me as a great opportunity to make a positive impact on the Denison community. I have experienced
considerable privilege on Denison’s campus, especially as a white, nondisabled, cishet, middle class student. I felt it was important for me to utilize the time and energy I fortunately had to identify the experiences of a silenced community on campus. The dominant discourse at Denison leaves out the disabled identity and experiences, even of those within the Denison population. Unfortunately, nondisabled people at Denison are very unaware of the concerns disabled students, faculty, and staff have about our campus. Disabled people at Denison are lacking a space to share these concerns, leading to little institutional change.

**Literature Review**

Feminist, disability, and design theory literatures serve to ground this activist project in scholarly thought. My activist project consisted of interviews with current students, alumni, faculty, and staff with disabilities at Denison University to investigate needed disability inclusivity and accessibility changes on campus. Concepts and conversations in disability studies, design theory, and feminist thought informed my approach to this project. By deeply engaging with existing literature, I establish what feminist inclusive design encompasses. I was interested in learning about how both disability studies and the Denison disability community frames concepts of disability, inclusion, and accessibility. This literature review will be organized by theme. First, I will discuss disability studies literature, followed by scholarship in feminist, queer, and Black disability studies. Following, I will address the implications of design theory and finally build an argument for feminist inclusive design.

**Disability Studies**

As a nondisabled researcher, listening and learning about experiences of disabled people is necessary to my understanding of disability studies. Christine Miserandino tells a story about a
particular dinner with her best friend. At random, Miserandino’s friend asked what it was like to have Lupus, what it felt like to be sick. To help with her explanation, Miserandino picked up 12 spoons from the tables around her. In her metaphor, each spoon represented a unit of energy. Miserandino asked her friend to go over her day from the very moment she woke up. Each activity her friend listed off, Miserandino would take away a spoon and explain how that activity would be a different experience for someone who is sick; an experience where every little activity needs to be tackled. Her day is limited to the number of spoons she has, which is fully dependent on that night’s sleep and the previous day’s spoon count. Since the writing of the spoon theory, many people have resonated with the metaphor of spoons and utilize it to explain their experiences to both disabled and nondisabled people.

Disability studies discuss various models of disability, such as the social model of disability. The social model distinguishes between the concepts of impairment and disability. Impairment concerns a condition of the body or mind, whereas disability is contingent on social barriers people with impairments face. The rights model of disability argues for social inclusion and legal protections. In this model, disability is not viewed as a means of social barriers. Both of these models are known to center the physically disabled and uphold white supremacy, as they lack an intersectional gaze. The medical model of disability is contingent on the ideology of cure. The medical industrial complex attempts to fix disabilities and impairments in order to make profit. Disabled people and people of color are deemed defective and in need of a cure.

Rather than the individual themselves having the most knowledge about their bodies, health professionals are assumed to be the most knowledgeable.

Transformational approaches, particularly radical disability politics and the disability justice model, have arisen in disability studies with a focus on intersecting identities of oppression and anti-capitalist ideologies. There is also a push for community-based accessibility that includes financial access and creating safe spaces. The social construction of disability is stressed as well; this is the idea that disability is produced alongside many power imbalances in society. The definition of disabled within a transformative approach encompasses a wide variety of experiences related to the mind and/or body, such as deaf, mad, and psychiatric conditions as examples. Disability justice is paving a way for the future of disability studies through its ten commandments of “intersectionality,” “leadership of those most impacted,” “anti-capitalist politic,” “cross-movement solidarity,” “recognizing wholeness,” “sustainability,” “commitment to cross-disability solidarity,” “interdependence,” “collective access,” and “collective liberation.” The focus on intersections of oppression allows for a more dimensional approach to understanding ableism. Disability justice centers the experiences of those most impacted and encompasses a transnational framework that rejects capitalism. Lastly, collective access navigates outside the confounds of able bodied normativity to meet the needs of the community in order to reach liberation for all.

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha refers to these ten commandments of disability studies in her own disability justice work. They utilize disability justice and its focus on

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QTBIPOC (queer and trans Black, Indigenous, and people of color) to center their own experiences. Piepzna-Samarasinha speaks about the history of colonization denying access to disabled Black and Brown communities and how institutionalization continues to occur within the prison industrial complex and residential schools. The disability justice framework gives room for conversation about the intersection of the femme and disabled identity. The view of femininity as weak within a capitalist society can be compared to the similar experience of the perception of disabled people not serving the desires of capitalism. Piepzna-Samarasinha strongly advocates for care webs within the disability community. Care webs are support systems situated within the disability community, dismantling power dynamics within care work. As a femme, Piepzna-Samarasinha has experienced the assumed caretaking role that is often expected of feminine and femme people. Disabled femmes must have the choice to pursue a caregiving position rather than being expected to based on their gender identity or expression.

The identity of disability can be experienced in a multitude of ways depending on other intersecting identities. Generally speaking, disability identity can have positive ramifications on the individual, such as empowerment, acceptance, pride, interdependence, and an awareness of ableism. A disability identity can also allow people to have a better understanding of their accessibility and advocacy needs. Within the identity of disability, people may resonate more with being descriptively disabled or politically disabled. Descriptively disabled refers to the actual lived experience of disability, whereas politically disabled includes an understanding of disability within a political context. Higher education can hinder or help foster the disability identity. To foster this, universities must decrease the importance of diagnosis, name the ableist

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7 Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work*, 41.
structures on campus, educate the university community about ableism, highlight disability culture, establish clubs centered on the disability identity, and recruit and support disabled students, faculty, and staff. Ableism, referring to the discrimination of disabled people, is prevalent in academic institutions. Ability is valued in neoliberal academia, as is productivity and competition. The constant production of knowledge is not an attainable goal. As a result, disabled students may attempt to blend in with this value system in fear of being the ‘other.’ Academia must foster disability identity to confront the ableist tendencies of neoliberal universities. This is work for both disabled and nondisabled participants in academia to care for ourselves and others.

Feminist, Queer, and Black Disability Studies

Based on the intersectional teachings of disability justice, I have developed an understanding of feminist, queer, and Black disability studies. Karen Michelle Barad provides a wonderful account of the relationship between our bodies and the environment. Particular apparatuses and their given meanings are presented. There is an expectation that our bodily boundary ends at our skin, but what about when we consider prosthetic devices or assistive technology? Wheelchairs, for example, are not merely objects that wait for a time when they can serve a purpose; rather, they are a physical extension of the body that holds particular meaning. Theorizing about gender, ultrasound technology holds meaning that reduces the woman’s body to an environment for a fetus. A woman is then held solely responsible for the wellbeing of that fetus. However, other factors, such as environmental racism, can have detrimental impacts on

both the health of the child and mother. Ultrasound technology can also feed into the eugenics movement, providing knowledge of a child’s gender or ability leading to selective abortions.¹¹

Like Barad, feminist disability studies recognizes the interactions between bodies and the environment.¹² Disability is viewed as a cultural understanding of human difference rather than inferiority. Power dynamics and stigma associated with disability is also addressed in feminist disability studies. Theorizing about disability and gender both encompass identity, intersectionality, and embodiment. Involving disability in the conversation is integral to the intersectional goals of feminist studies. Feminist disability sitpoint theory critiques and collaborates with feminist standpoint theory by emphasizing the social location of wheelchair users in the production of knowledge. Disability studies can offer insight into feminist studies and vice versa.¹³ Both the disabled and woman identity are interpreted as deviating from societal norms. Illness is also perceived as a feminine characteristic, coinciding with the assumptions of both women and people with disabilities as weak and vulnerable.

Feminist disability studies has also interacted with queer theory, recognizing how both the queer and disabled community are expected to ‘come out’ as a non-normative identity.¹⁴ Andrew Gurza, a member of the queer disabled community, found coming out as both disabled and queer to be much more difficult than coming out as only queer.¹⁵ The assumption that disabled people are not sexual greatly impacts the coming out experience. Sexuality is a part of the human identity and should not be questioned for people with disabilities. The assumption that

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¹⁴ Ibid, 21-22.
¹⁵ Jari Osborne, Picture This, (2018).
disabled people are asexual arises from people infantilizing the disabled community.\textsuperscript{16} The history of sterilization of disabled people is also contingent on the infantilizing of people with disabilities, along with the desire to control the future of the disabled population. The medical community has made many permanent decisions on behalf of queer, disabled, and people of color, such as sterilization. Eli Clare also discusses the authority doctors have to identify babies’ gender and abilities, particularly for intersex children.\textsuperscript{17} Doctors will sometimes perform medically unnecessary surgery on intersex children to classify their gender within the binary. The practices of the medical-industrial complex abuse queer and disabled people for profit.\textsuperscript{18}

Like feminist and queer studies, Black studies serves an important role in disability theory. Based on critical race theory that views racism as a natural occurrence in America, internalized oppression relates to not only people of color but also people with disabilities.\textsuperscript{19} Unearned advantages for people of European descent within a racist system leads to privilege and feelings of superiority, whereas internalized racism for people of color leads to self-hatred and limited sense of self. Internalized ableism functions by disabled people striving towards ableist normativity and the distancing of disabled people from one another. Social Role Valorization Theory argues that a lack of disabled community is caused by the socially unacceptable notion of calling attention towards disability. Broadly speaking, critical race feminist theory pays little analytical attention to disability, coinciding with this lack of calling

\textsuperscript{18} Clare, \textit{Brilliant Imperfection}, 71.
attention towards the disability identity. Instead, an intercategorical framework focuses on those interesting identities that are often overlooked, such as disability and race.

Disability was used as a justification for slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. Black disabled people were viewed as less intelligent and weak compared to white people. ‘Drapetomania’ was a faux disability that was assumed to cause enslaved people to run away. ‘Dysaesthesia Aethiopis’ was believed to be lesions accompanied with causing mischief and avoiding work, more common of freed enslaved people. These constructed disabilities were used to continue the abuse of slavery against Black Americans. Labeled disabilities of people of color lead to the fear that these disabilities could be passed down genetically. Forced sterilization, institutionalization, segregation, and genocide have all been tactics to control disabled people of color in the United States. These abuses rely on capitalism, as capitalism justifies unequal opportunities by reinforcing the idea that biology creates hierarchy among humans. Segregation of disabled people of color in the school system produces hierarchies. Disabled students are segregated into separate classrooms in their secondary education and have a lack of resources to navigate higher education. Once in college, there remains a lack of integration between disability studies and Black studies. It is important that disability studies theory includes and centers the

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22 Erevelles and Minear, “Unspeakable Offenses,” 132-133.
experiences of disabled people of color. Disability is found in every identity, but disability
identity is not acknowledged as a part of every community.

Currently situated in a time of political unrest, it is essential to discuss the violence Black
disabled people endure from police. Media coverage often neglects to acknowledge intersecting
identities of police brutality victims. Black disabled victims are labeled as either Black or
disabled. Black Americans are 2.5 times more likely to be a victim of police brutality than white
Americans. In addition, a third to a half of people killed by police are disabled. The intersection
of the Black and disabled identity is necessary to consider, as Black Americans are more likely
to be disabled due to economic and health disparities. To combat police brutality, some favor a
reform approach to teach police how to interact with the disabled and Black community while
others prefer the abolition of police in America.

Design Theory

Design thinking allows for action and change, the ultimate goal of my senior project. Through design based research, both change and new knowledge is developed from an initial
inquiry. Decisions are made based on the particular context in which the inquiry was made.
Because of this, claims that are made in one particular context are not necessarily transferable to
other contexts. Participants in design based research are also viewed as co-contributors to the
project, as both the researchers and participants are increasing knowledge of a particular field.

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Critical design focuses on political and social issues.\textsuperscript{27} Rather than attempting to create a solution to the problems identified, raising awareness of the issue and its future implications is accomplished.

Design methods focus on user experience with an emphasis on the user rather than the product.\textsuperscript{28} Knowledge of the project is necessary for research planning. Various strategies are used to thoroughly understand the context, such as SWOT Analysis. This analysis develops information about intent, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a particular organization. Knowledge of people within this particular organization is relevant as well. Developing empathy, observing strategies, listening to experiences, and looking for problems is associated with knowing people and the context. Environmental factors affecting the experiences of people is also an important area of focus. In addition, storytelling is a way to express ideas and offer insights of a particular context.

User experience is an interdisciplinary field of study that combines user goals with business objectives.\textsuperscript{29} The incorporation of both primary and secondary research is used to develop well rounded understanding of the problem. User experience also highlights the inherent biases that researchers possess, as they are often not the user of a particular service or product being studied. Qualitative research and interviews allow for a deeper understanding of the user experience, as questions not previously asked can be thought of. Bias highlights the importance

\textsuperscript{27} Ejsing-Duun and Skovbjerg, “Design as a Mode of Inquiry in Design Pedagogy and Design Thinking,” 445-460.
of using primary and secondary research to create experiences that the user embraces, not accommodates.

Design theory particular to the disabled community is of course relevant to my activist project. Accessibility serves as a common point of discussion when theorizing about design for people with disabilities. *Accessible design* refers to design that everyone should be able to use.\(^{30}\) This idea is based on measurable and objective constructs, resulting in a design that is not necessarily embraced by all. *Inclusive design*, rather, considers if all people actually want to use the design. This requires empathy and active listening to the experience of various communities that utilize or attempt to utilize a particular design. Inclusive design requires the researcher to consider their own privileges and biases as they relate to their design study. The message being conveyed through design is also necessary to acknowledge. Who is included? Who is excluded?

Feminist Inclusive Design

Disability justice, (feminist, queer, Black) disability studies, and design theory serve as needed background for *feminist inclusive design*. By feminist inclusive design, I mean a mode to interpret design and its effects on disabled people. In addition, an understanding of the history of accessibility in America is necessary to develop feminist inclusive design. Accessible design has helped facilitate the normalization of disabled people into society, however, many barriers continue to exist.\(^{31}\) The history of rehabilitation has had detrimental effects on the disabled community. The individualistic view of disability places responsibility on the disabled community to accommodate to inaccessible environments. Conversely, to ‘crip’ design rejects

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\(^{30}\) Lee Young, “Understanding the Key Differences Between Accessible Design and Inclusive Design: Despite Being Part of the Same Family, These Two Siblings Have Some Very Real and Important Differences,” (August 28, 2019).

the assumption that disability is not normative. Crip design includes disabled people in the conversation and beautifully displays accessible spaces and assistive technology. To 'crip' design, cripiistemology is used to center disabled knowledge of the world, including how environments are built inaccessibly for the disabled population.

The *socio-spatial model of disability* views disability as a result of built environments.\(^\text{32}\) *Barrier-free design* uses the socio-spatial model of disability to design environments that are suitable for women, people of color, and people with disabilities. *Universal design* goes beyond barrier-free design to allow anyone to use the given environment without needing to adapt. Design conveys the meaning of who and who cannot enter a space, a philosophy of value-explicit design. *Agential cuts* create the divide between the people a space is and is not created for.\(^\text{33}\) Feminist standpoint theory contends that architects themselves present biases, as their knowledge of the world is contingent on their own social locators. Therefore, all design conveys meaning.

For access to be meaningful, the built environment must benefit oppressed identities.\(^\text{34}\) However, the task of creating meaningful access is often on the ownership of these oppressed identities themselves. Disabled people are expected to request accommodations, leading to the retrofitting of design. Retrofitting takes place after an environment has been built, signifying the delayed attention to accessibility. To request academic accommodations within higher education, students are often required to self-identify as disabled.\(^\text{35}\) In addition, faculty sometimes resist


\(^{33}\) Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 148.


\(^{35}\) Feilin Hsiao, Sheryl Burgstahler, Terri Johnson, Daniel Nuss, and Michael Doherty, “Promoting an Accessible Learning Environment for Students with Disabilities via Faculty
fulfilling granted accommodations. This leads to less students receiving accommodations in higher education than in primary and secondary school. Although a diagnosis or information about the student’s disability from external sources is not legally required, some universities abide by strict guidelines that a diagnosis is needed for accommodations.\(^{36}\) As proposed later, it is necessary that universities remain flexible in their process of accommodation requests. A student’s self-report and observation and interaction with the student can be sufficient to administer accommodations.

The social model of disability puts the ownership of making spaces accessible on society at large.\(^{37}\) However, Laura Davy rejects the notion that autonomy serves as the goal for inclusive and accessible design. Autonomy and independence is perceived to be the source of someone’s value, however, these characteristics are not attainable by all. The value placed on autonomy fails to recognize humans as social creatures. Rather, Davy argues for interdependence when building inclusive designs. As previously mentioned, many students experience lack of accessibility when requesting academic accommodations. Rather than placing the ownership on the student, faculty training about university disability resources, assistive technology, and inclusive teaching has enhanced professors' understanding of universal design.\(^{38}\)

In my own interviews of students, alumni, faculty, and staff with disabilities on Denison’s campus, I utilized accessibility toolkits based around universal design. In my written


\(^{38}\) Feilin Hsiao et al., “Promoting an Accessible Learning Environment for Students with Disabilities via Faculty Development,” 91-99.
communication with participants and in my recruitment poster, I ensured accessible text fonts, sizes, and grammar.\textsuperscript{39} Online meetings require particular accessibility features, which should be asked about in advance to the meeting.\textsuperscript{40} Some possible accommodations may be screen captioning, a sign language interpreter, or use of assistive technology. During the meeting, it is important that one speaks clearly, is facing a light, and to allow scheduled breaks.

I argue that feminist inclusive design can be encompassed by four principles: (1) influenced by interdisciplinary scholarship, (2) driven by lived experiences, (3) emphasizes collaboration, and (4) prioritizes inclusion. Feminist inclusive design is contingent on the teachings of disability justice, (feminist, queer, Black) disability studies, and design theory. Design carries meaning, impacting communities that use or attempt to use built environments. Feminist inclusive design recognizes the inherent meaning in space and utilizes personal experience and storytelling as a way to understand a particular design’s meaning. Designers’ social location affects the accessibility of a design as well. A feminist inclusive design process is a collaborative effort that centers the experiences of the disabled community within the design’s context. Design needs to be inclusive and accessible, allowing anyone to embrace their use of the environment.

**Methods**

I began this project by diving deeply into relevant scholarship, ultimately focusing on moments of conversation in disability studies between feminist, queer, and Black studies. I also

\textsuperscript{39} “Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service — A Universal Design Approach.” National Disability Authority; Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, n.d, 1-138.
\textsuperscript{40} “Online Meeting Accessibility.” National Disability Authority; Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, n.d, 1-7.
sought to explore how design theory could inform—and be informed by—feminist, queer, and Black) disability studies. My main understanding of disability studies prior to the beginning of senior research came from my own desire to learn more about the field. Disability studies has been incorporated into only a small number of my classes here at Denison. Therefore, the scholarship research process continued throughout the entire fall semester of my two-semester research, culminating in a literature review. Engaging with existing literature gave me the scholarly background needed in order to proceed with my investigation of accessibility and disability inclusion at Denison University.

In addition to a review of the literature my first semester, I met with the Red Frame Lab, an on-campus design thinking space. We discussed human-centered design and I was directed to design theory literature. Storytelling was also a prominent point of discussion, which I utilized later during interviews. We wondered about the disabled experiences of transitioning to a digital experience of learning during COVID-19, university communications, and accessibility guidelines. We also discussed my need for a working definition of disability. Later in the semester, I had a meeting with our Academic Resource Center to learn about the services that are available for students with disabilities at Denison University.

After the approval of my IRB in November of 2020, I was able to begin the recruitment process for my interviews. I was interested in interviewing any students, alumni, faculty, or staff with a personal experience of accessibility and disability inclusion at Denison University. I used a very broad definition of disability, meaning my participants did not need to have any particular or diagnosed disability. I sent out my recruitment poster (see Figure 1) to the emails of various Academic Administrative Assistants and university offices, which allowed my project to reach a large group of the Denison population. I also posted a digital image of my poster on my personal
Instagram and Notebowl classroom pages. Lastly, I printed out my recruitment posters and hung
them up all around academic quad.

Figure 1. The recruitment poster used to publicize the opportunity to participate in an interview.

I was lucky enough to find 17 interested participants, of which I interviewed throughout
winter break and the beginning of the second semester. These interviews are truly the backbone
of my project. I am incredibly grateful for the time and energy everyone spent to express their
definitions and experiences of disability, inclusion, and accessibility. Interviewees consisted of
one alum, one staff member, one faculty member, and 14 current students. I communicated with
participants via email to pick a date and share any access needs. Interviews were completed on
Zoom to limit COVID-19 exposure. I referred participants to the accessibility features that Zoom
offered at the time. This did not include automatic captioning; however, I was able to use Google
Slides to generate captions on Zoom if needed. I sent each participant the informed consent form,
which was completed and sent to my email prior to every interview. On the informed consent
form, participants chose if they wanted their transcript to be incorporated into my final written project accessible to the Denison community. If they chose to include their transcript, they then indicated if they wanted to conduct a check-in after their interview to review and edit their transcript before I included it in my written report. Interviews lasted between 21 minutes to one hour and 56 minutes. I found it helpful to both say the questions aloud in addition to typing them into the chat box. To view the interview questions, please see the appendix. I recorded the audio on a separate recording device without access to the cloud. After each interview, I sent the participants a debriefing form and my recruitment poster via their Denison email. This recruitment poster can be seen in Figure 1. I then transported the audio files onto my Denison Google Drive.

I used the transcription service, Trint, which uses artificial intelligence. I listened to and followed every transcription to edit any mistakes the AI made in the transcripts. After, I copied the transcription texts into separate Google Documents. For participants that chose to have a check-in, I shared their transcription Google Document in the suggestion mode for them to edit the text before being included in my final project. I then utilized the ATLAS.ti program to analyze my interview transcriptions using a grounded theory approach. I first read through each transcript and created a total of 109 codes to locate all of the nuanced themes throughout the texts. I then combined codes into 13 concepts, which were combined into three emerging themes: community support, disability identity, and proposed changes. Throughout this process, I wrote memos corresponding to particular codes, concepts, or themes that captured my thinking when analyzing my transcriptions. This coding technique guided the writing of my research findings and proposal.
To build my findings section, I read through each individual code and took detailed notes. My codes were already separated into categories and emerging themes, so I was easily able to organize my findings. The notes based on my coding served as an outline that I pieced together to finalize my findings section. As shown in Figure 2, my proposed changes theme is contingent on my proposal, in the form of a Google site (https://sites.google.com/denison.edu/du-accessibility). This website outlines all of the needed changes regarding disability inclusion and accessibility that the interview participants outlined.

Figure 2. A screenshot displaying the Google site homepage, titled “Embodied Experiences and Analysis of Denison University Accessibility: Proposal.”
Methodology

*Participatory action research* has greatly guided my research methodology. Cathy MacDonald describes action research as “concerned with an agenda for social change that embodies the belief of pooling knowledge to define a problem in order for it to be resolved.” The participatory component emphasizes the active role that participants have during the research process. This research method refers to a particular community voicing the problems and solutions regarding their specific experiences. Therefore, the participants directly benefit from the research project. My interviews serve as my qualitative analysis of the lived experience of people with disabilities on Denison’s campus. The interviews guide the writing of my proposal, bringing awareness to my participants’ experiences. The final proposal serves to guide direct action. Aside from the activist work already involved in this project, I aim for this project to bring about change and improve the lives of disabled people at Denison University.

*Situated knowledge* considers the topics of objectivity and positionality. Donna Haraway argues that the most subjugated knowledges are the most objective and least biased based on their worldview. Situated knowledge also asks the researcher to recognize their own social location in relation to the research, under the assumption that all knowledge comes from a particular positionality. I chose to focus my research on the embodied experiences of disabled people at Denison University to obtain an objective understanding of accessibility and disability inclusion on campus. As a nondisabled researcher, I did not have knowledge of the necessary

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changes until completing my interviews and analysis. I reflect on my own social location at
greater length in my positionality statement.

I have utilized feminist standpoint epistemology by centering the experiences of my
participants. The disabled population at Denison is often overlooked and my research allows for
a place to express their experiences and knowledge. Feminist standpoint epistemology
specifically focuses on women’s lived experiences to bring about social change. My interviews
address intersecting identities with disability, in which the discussion of gender and disability is
quite prevalent. Feminist standpoint epistemology has guided me to consider how society
functions. In my particular research project, I aim to learn more about people's experiences
with disability at Denison University and to raise awareness around these experiences. I also
propose the need for a prominent disability community at Denison University. Community
building is a considerable goal in feminist standpoint epistemology. In collaboration with
feminist standpoint theory, Garland-Thomson coins the term “feminist disability sitpoint
theory.” This rejects the assumption that the experiences being centered in research are from
those that can stand. We must consider those in wheelchairs, those with disabilities.

Lastly, I used a grounded theory approach to analyze and interpret interview transcripts.
Grounded theory is a method of qualitative analysis where the researcher uses coding as a way to
organize concepts and to later theorize about emergent themes. The first stage is open coding,
involving a close reading of the qualitative research and marking concepts throughout. Next,
related codes are grouped into categories. This can be done multiple times until overarching

44 Abigail Brooks, “Feminist Standpoint Epistemology” in Feminist Research Practice: A
46 Ibid, 75.
emergent themes are presented. Memos are written during every stage to take note of thought processes during coding.\textsuperscript{48} ATLAS.ti allowed me to create codes and categories directly and virtually on my transcripts. Memos were helpful in writing my findings based on the interviews. Grounded theory also highlights the participants’ perspectives and agency.\textsuperscript{49} My interviews capture the perspectives and lived experiences of those I interviewed. All participants also had the option to edit or omit any information from their transcripts if they decided to include it in the final project, ensuring they had agency over their own words and stories.

**Findings**

Based on my work with grounded theory, I have identified three emergent themes of my 17 interviews: disability identity, community support, and proposed changes. The proposed changes support my proposal, which is presented as a Google site (https://sites.google.com/denison.edu/du-accessibility). This section of my findings will give contextual support to the website itself. I arrived at these themes by broadening and grouping my original open codes. My conclusions are directly based on the words and knowledge of the interview participants. I am unable to incorporate every nuance of these interviews into my interpretation and findings. Therefore, I greatly encourage you to read the interviews included in this project.

Disability Identity

Participants defined *disability* as a deviation from socially constructed expectations and participation in these expectations can require assistance or help. Disability is an experience that can take on many forms, ranging from impairment, limitation, and lack of accessibility to community, and identity. The vast majority of participants preferred to use the term ‘disability’ throughout the interview, while others favored ‘differently abled’ and ‘person with disabilities,’ ‘conditions,’ or ‘needs.’ For some, the term ‘disability’ felt derogatory and focuses on what someone cannot do.

Participants commonly said an average conception of disability neglects an intersectional understanding of disabled identities and focuses on physical and visible disabilities. The common wheelchair symbol is often used in our society to represent all disabilities, such as their placement on accessible parking spaces. People sometimes interact with disabled people as if they are unintelligent or incapable of doing things for themselves. This is very evident with visible disabilities, as strangers make assumptions based on what they initially see. Those with invisible disabilities can pass as nondisabled in some situations, which can be a privilege. On the other hand, individuals with invisible disabilities have to go through a disclosing and coming out process regularly to receive accommodations.

Just over 70% of participants believed that disability is an identity. Disability can affect the everyday, in both negative and positive ways. It affects the perception of oneself. The way disability impacts one’s interactions with the world depends on the disability and other intersecting identities. Some disabilities are not noticeably visible, while others are more apparent. The perception and reaction of others can be contingent on the visibility of disability. For those participants that did not view disability as an identity, disability was not perceived as
defining a person. At times, disability receives a negative connotation, which can create a barrier
to presume identity in disability.

Although all participants reported experiencing disability in some form, roughly half of
participants identified as disabled themselves. The rhetoric of not being disabled enough
commonly surfaced for those that did not identify as disabled. Some empathized with this while
also recognizing disability as a self-defined identification,

So, as someone who doesn't have physical disability, that definitely shapes my own
perception of self and I think leads to a lot of questions about, oh well am I disabled
enough? And I think that it's important to decide for oneself what that means, but also to
not feel like you have to be enough of anything to identify as something, because
ultimately that's a self-defined category (Participant L).

Other participants felt they would feel disabled enough to identify as disabled if they had a
physical and visible disability.

The self-identification of disability does not necessarily correlate with the federal
governmental definition, stated as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one
or more major life activities of such individual.”50 This definition does not explain the socially
constructed expectations that can cause an experience of limitation. In fact, only some
participants referred to limitations when defining disability. A disability identity can grow and
change as people find acceptance in their disability. Others may never view themselves as
disabled. Disability can show up at any point in life. The symptoms of disability may appear in
only certain environments, while others experience their disability in all facets of their life.

Disability can be a part of one’s identity while simultaneously not identifying as disabled. Some
participants referenced disability being integral to their overall identity. However, the rhetoric of
not being disabled enough limited the number of participants from identifying as disabled.

Others possess a very strong disability identity. Ultimately, one identity of disability is not interchangeable with another.

The intersections between gender and disability was frequently discussed. Disability itself is gendered, associating disability with femininity. Participants mentioned similarities in experiences of inaccessibility as women and as disabled. Women on this campus experience a lack of accessibility and justice, specifically concerning sexual assault survivor support. For example, there are few confidential resources on campus. In addition, multiple participants referenced the gender disparity in diagnostic testing. Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity-Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnostic criteria are based on the symptoms that boys or men commonly display, causing girls and women to be underdiagnosed. This limits the support girls and women with these disabilities can receive.

The queer and disabled identity can overlap as well. Feelings of weakness, shame, invisibility, and acceptance were described in response to both identities. There is also an expectation that both queer and disabled individuals come out to those around them, as one participant illustrated,

> It's like nobody, everybody assumes you are abled until you are proved to them that you are disabled and although it's not quite that much about being gay, but still there is a sense that any person you meet is straight until they're proven to be gay. So, it's that who is the prototypical citizen here, and the prototypical citizen is straight. The prototypical citizen is abled (Participant B).

There are many situations where people feel pressured or forced to come out. Some participants have even experienced being outed as disabled by their professors in the classroom. Coming out as both disabled and queer is one’s own decision. Outing oneself can sometimes be necessary to find community and support.

Class and disability surfaced as a topic of conjecture, specifically how the cutting of Posse has decreased the accessibility of admissions into Denison for many low-income students.
The money one has for disability services can greatly impact experiences of disability. Affordable health insurance, access to diagnostic testing, getting to and from appointments, and academic opportunities are all affected by class and disability.

The experience of testimonial injustice is prevalent in many communities of color and other oppressed identities. The disabled community is often not listened to by medical professionals regarding their own bodies. Intersecting identities of oppression impact the relationship between the medical professional and patient, having effect on the type of care the patient receives. Lack of racial and ethnic representation in medical staff and professionals is a prevalent issue on Denison’s campus. A personal understanding of how race or ethnicity intersects with medical or mental conditions can create a more inclusive environment for the student patient.

**Community Support**

*Accessibility* was defined by participants in many original but equally moving ways. Accessibility is being able to engage and participate in space, education, resources, and support. It is unbiased and allows for the opportunity to succeed by eliminating societal expectations of what someone can and cannot do, “It's intersectional, like more people, it's inclusive, everybody is involved and everybody is valued for what they can do maybe instead of what they can't do. Accessibility is sort of like freedom in a way, it's more liberating” (Participant A). Accessibility allows for the opportunity to succeed, to be recognized, to be included. One participant discussed the social construction of disability in relation to accessibility, “…it's the society that creates disability through inaccessibility. So, like, if we lived in an accessible world, would there be

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disability?” (Participant C). If disability is the deviation of a societal norm, then disability might not exist if a different social norm was in place; a social norm of accessibility.

Participants described disability inclusivity as an intersectional and multifaceted understanding of disability. Inclusive practices do not abide by a hierarchy of disabilities. Disability representation is a value. Disabled voices are listened to and disabled lives are recognized and cared for. Others do not underestimate what disabled people are capable of but are still willing to make changes and adapt if need be. Disability inclusivity welcomes anyone into a space and facilitates a support system.

Advocacy was reported as being difficult with Denison’s lack of disability representation and the invisibility of disability. Nondisabled people are incredibly unaware of the issues facing the disabled population on campus. There is limited scholarship surrounding disability on Denison’s campus, which reduces advocacy for disabled students, faculty, and staff. Participants argued for an inclusive approach of advocacy, seeing disabled people as individuals first and resisting essentialism. There needs to be understanding that experiences of disability vary and are all equally valid. Advocacy looks like listening to disabled voices, educating others about injustices and areas of improvement, and demanding help for students, faculty, and staff with disabilities. Professors can advocate for their students by respecting accommodations and educating themselves about different learning styles.

Disability support is multifaceted, holistic, open-minded, and non-judgmental. Support involves accommodations, emotional support, and advocacy. The invisibility of disability limits the support disabled students, faculty, and staff are able to receive. Participants identified the bringing together of people as an aspect of support; however, disability community at Denison is hard to find. Many participants referenced a lack of opportunities to build this community. The
lack of disabled representation on campus limits the amount of conversations centering disability and the depth at which it is discussed. This contributes to the invisibility of disability, the lack of a disability community, and support. Support is generally not explicitly stated, and maneuvering this is a barrier to a support system for disabled students, faculty, and staff. To increase the effectiveness of disability support on campus, the Denison community needs to be educated about disability. Disability needs to be considered when evaluating academic and work performance,

...my disability affects what I am able to do and the pace at which I'm able to do that, that support to me would mean acknowledging that there's a context. There's a physical context to the work I am able to produce that is different now than it was before I developed this condition, but yet all of the materials and procedures are written to be blind to that context. And so just having my performance, my job performance be viewed through the lens of my disability is something that seems unattainable (Participant B).

The validation of people’s experiences is essential, including the context of disability in relation to academic and work performance. In comparison, participants found support in the validation of their good work, serving as motivation to continue working.

When asked where they turn to for support and advocacy, ARC (Academic Resource Center) was reported eight times by participants. They mentioned friends/peers, professors, and self-advocacy seven times each. Friends and peers seemed to be a very strong source of support, especially emotional support. The Wellness Center/Whisler and family were voiced three times. Once, participants reported administration, colleagues, supervisors, and MCSA (Multicultural Student Affairs). It is apparent that disabled people at Denison use a wide variety of offices and people for support and advocacy.

Self-advocacy was a common theme throughout the interviews. Self-advocacy is needed because of the lack of institutional advocacy and support. Participants felt as though they were unable to rely on others, unless they explicitly asked for help. It is not widely known what
resources to ask for and who to contact for this support. In addition, self-advocacy can be very emotionally draining and tiring. This is time that could otherwise be used to focus on work or self-care. There are many consequences for a system that relies on self-advocacy,

Like, I don't like to beg. I don't even like to ask. And we're always placed in these positions where we have to ask or else nothing will change. Nothing. Nobody's going to ask for us, and that's not empowering. And I think there’s an aspect of like you need to be your own, your own best advocate. That's not empowering. That's literally just exhausting (Participant C).

Consequences for having a disability are heightened if one does not self-advocate, “possibly leaving school, getting worse grades, mental health concerns, and just like not having the same experience that your your peers have” (Participant I). Having a diagnosis can make self-advocacy easier with a better understanding of one’s disability and needs. Self-advocacy is a skill that is important to have in such an inaccessible world. It is a shame that it is this way.

Opinions about communication varied. Some participants have had great experiences with communication to students, faculty, staff, or administrators, while others had concerns. Communicating can be difficult with a disability for a variety of reasons. Communication is often a form of self-advocacy, which takes time, energy, and practice. Electronic communication creates barriers if someone has difficulty being on computers for extended periods of time. During COVID-19 and online learning, a common form of communication has been pre-recorded videos and video meetings. This form of communication can present challenges for deaf or hard of hearing individuals if captions are not available and for light-sensitive folks. For in-person communication during COVID-19, masks make lip reading impossible.

Students stated that communication was easiest when they had close relationships with the professor or staff member they were talking with. However, disability can feel too personal to comfortably discuss in detail with professors or staff. Students stressed the importance of professors asking and listening to their students’ needs. It was reported that students enjoy when
their professors ask how their students are doing and how they can help. It is also important that students feel comfortable going to their professors at any point during the semester to discuss their accommodations or needs, rather than feeling pressurized to only at the start of the semester. Communication is integral to disability support.

There were many concerns about communication between various offices. For those with disabilities on Denison’s campus, there are an incredible number of offices to talk to regarding accommodations and support: professors, staff, ARC, The Wellness Center, Housing, and Human Resources. There appears to be a frequent experience of people attempting to find support from one location and being referred to multiple offices before finding help. It takes valuable time to communicate to so many different people, which can be especially frustrating when communication is difficult already. This shows a disconnect between various disability offices or support spaces and knowledge of the services they provide.

Some participants feel like their disability is genuinely cared about by Denison University, whereas others referred to disability as an afterthought. Unfortunately, disabled people do not always feel welcome at Denison. The limitations people with disabilities face on campus are often ignored. Rather than building an environment where disabled people feel welcomed into any space on campus, the disability identity is neglected from the very beginning. This is evident by the common rhetoric of disability invisibility at Denison University. Disabled community members do not necessarily feel like a part of the community because of the exclusivity they face. The high achieving environment at Denison rejects any deviation from this constantly producing expectation. Those with a disability may be unable to reach this expectation due to needed and deserved accommodations. Participants expressed feeling less alone and more
powerful when surrounded by a disabled community. The first step to building this community is imagining our campus with disability, eliminating the invisibility.

Proposed Changes

My proposal is organized into six sections: disability training/education, access to space, health/wellness, academics/accommodations, representation, and disability support hub. My proposal, in the form of a Google site, is an effective way to easily distribute proposed changes. This section provides the context to further understand why the particular changes are necessary.

There needs to be an active engagement with accessibility considerations throughout campus, beginning in admissions. There should be more students with disabilities accepted to our university. In the 2019-2020 school year, 0% of students registered with the Academic Resource Center had mobility impairments, 1% with hearing impairments, 1% with visual impairments, 2% with chronic illnesses, and 5% with medical conditions. There is obviously limited representation of disabilities at Denison. However, it is essential that Denison does not admit more disabled students without increasing disability support and accessibility. Disability representation can also be increased through an increase of disability scholarship at Denison University. Disability theory is relevant in every major, particularly for future healthcare and medical workers. Disability scholarship would allow for advocacy and community by educating Denison students and faculty and creating a space to discuss disability.

Within the classroom, students reported attendance and participation policies as ableist. These policies assume that participation and attendance signifies how much the students care about the class material or grades. In reality, some students are simply unable to make it to class or participate. If they push themselves to go, students stated they were not able to stay focused on the class material. Computer policies were also discussed as having the potential for outing
students as disabled. When computers are generally not allowed in the classroom and a student with a computer accommodation uses it in class, it is very evident they have a disability. It is more accessible and disability inclusive to allow any student to use their computers in class. Lastly, Zoom captions are often inaccurate. In fact, many virtual classes still do not utilize the automated captions function. Videos should also be captioned when shown in class or used as a homework assignment.

Students viewed accommodations at Denison University as more difficult to receive if one did not have a diagnosis and accommodation in high school. Once at Denison, accommodations that are accessible are not helpful in every class. Students are often given extra time on tests, but this accommodation does not apply to assignments or essays. Particularly in COVID-19, when exams have often been dropped from syllabi, some students have experienced none of their accommodations being useful. Students also expressed the desire to be able to discuss needed accommodations with their professors at any point in the semester, rather than only at the beginning.

The Wellness Center was seen as an advocate for many students. It offers a wide range of financially accessible therapeutic and alternative wellness options. However, students did report a need for more racially and ethnically diverse mental health and medical staff. They also stressed the importance of having counselors that speak multiple languages for more accessibility to our international students. In order to receive accessible accommodations, diagnoses should be offered at Denison. Receiving diagnoses takes time and money that some students simply do not have. Safe rides to medical appointments were highly appreciated, however, there needs to be more advertising to students about this service. Regarding safety, many students have experienced being late to a safe destination or class due to late safe rides, showing up 25 to 40
minutes after the student requests one. It is essential that students are able to receive their safe rides on time.

There appears to be a lack of support for disabled faculty and staff, only having one office to refer to. On the other hand, students have an overwhelming number of offices to receive support from. These concerns could both be handled by creating a disability support hub. There needs to be an additional office or position that focuses on supporting and advocating for disabled students, faculty, and staff at Denison. This office could communicate with and direct people to other offices on campus. A disability support hub could also host disability events to foster disability community and representation on campus.

Access to space and mobility was the most urgent concern reported by participants. Our campus’ location on a hill automatically excludes people with mobility limitations. Denison is not set up to support these disabilities, as explained by one participant, “So, mobility I'd say is awful on campus. I've had friends who have had serious injuries and they've managed to move, like they had to move. First of all, they had to move to an entirely different dorm, which I feel like shouldn't be the case” (Participant M). The lack of working elevators and ramps in dormitory buildings forces students to quite literally move their living space to another building. Automatic door buttons, door entrances, and lighting at Denison are all incredibly inaccessible.

Disability needs to be considered from the admissions process through career development. Not only do disabled faculty and staff deserve more support, but students desire career workshops on navigating the workplace with a disability. Before reaching a career, students must be able to graduate from Denison. Participants referred to Denison as a culture of busyness, striving towards perfection. This is a very unachievable goal for many, and particularly those with disabilities. The expectation to be perfect and constantly producing is unhealthy.
Denison expects all of their students to achieve their diploma in exactly four years. Students with missing credits are not allowed to walk with their graduating class at commencement, even if they plan on finishing their degree in the following summer. This institution requires more flexibility, allowing for community members to work at the pace they can.
Appendix

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Beginning of the Interview:
- How do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language/pronouns do you prefer to use for yourself?
- How would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? (i.e. student, faculty, or staff)

Definitions and Terms:
- How would you define “disability?”
- What term should be used when referring to disability?
- What do you think others think about when they hear the term “disability?”
- What do others think of when they hear the term disability?
- Do you see disability as an identity? Why?
- Do you perceive yourself as disabled? Why?
- What does accessibility mean to you?
- What does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Experiences:
- What has your experience been like having a disability on Denison’s campus?
- What limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility and/or inclusivity issues in your university-related experiences?
- What has been and/or is particularly accessible and disability inclusive at Denison University?
- How have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning...
  -Mobility?
  -Academic accommodations?
  -Communication between faculty, staff, administration, and students?
  -Medical/health appointments or procedures?
- What were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? Have these reactions changed over time? How so?
● What did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?
● What are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?
● What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?
● What other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Support:
● What does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?
● In what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a disabled student/faculty/staff?
● What does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?
● Where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Disability Inclusivity and Accessibility Changes:
● What do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students/faculty/staff with disabilities?
● What should be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility? What should remain unchanged?
● What is the most urgent accessibility/inclusivity concern you have?
Transcriptions

Interview A

Zoe [00:03:20] So first, how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant A [00:03:29] OK, I identify as a female and my pronouns are she/her/hers.

Zoe [00:03:37] Awesome. OK, how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, student, faculty or staff?

Participant A [00:03:44] I am a student. I'm a senior at Denison University.

Zoe [00:03:50] Perfect. OK, so now we're going to go to the definition and terms section of my questions. So, the first question is, how would you define disability?

Participant A [00:04:04] I would define, I would define disability as-- whether it's physical, I know it can take on many different forms. It is something that impairs your ability to function in the way that is normally expected in public spheres and in private spheres that impairs your ability of movement, to think. I mean, I'm using the word inhibit because it is a disability, being able not to do something. But I think that definition would depend on how well, what we are expected to do.

Zoe [00:05:01] Yeah, that's perfect. So, would you say there is a social aspect to disability?

Participant A [00:05:08] Yes.

Zoe [00:05:08] OK. OK, and how would you explain that social aspect?

Participant A [00:05:17] I would explain that social aspect because by saying that it is definitely socialized and that's what we are expected to be able to do with our bodies and minds, that has been decided historically through social and political structures have kind of made that definition of disability based on what is expected of people.

Zoe [00:05:48] Great. OK, so what term should be used when referring to disability? And this will also be the term that I will use throughout this interview.

Participant A [00:05:57] What terms?

Zoe [00:05:58] What term should I be using when referring to disability and disability can be that term that you would like me to use?

Zoe [00:06:10] Disability. OK, what do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant A [00:06:17] I will I'm going to assume that they might make something similarly to me and that I think a physical disability initially because I think when we hear the word disability, it only makes sense, I think, to think of someone who is handicapped or in a wheelchair because that logo has been adopted in so many public spheres, like just a physical identification. We see handicapped parking with a little wheelchair logo. And so, I don't know that logo and you see it everywhere and-- that I think that that's what comes to mind for me is initially the physically disabled.

Zoe [00:06:59] What do you think of when you-- when, wait. What do others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant A [00:07:08] I think they think of like physical disability, too.

Zoe [00:07:12] Do you see disability as an identity? Why?

Participant A [00:07:15] Yes, I see disability as an identity because being disabled influences all aspects of your life. Every single day. Every single moment, I think is-- your disability is a part of that and yeah.

Zoe [00:07:36] Do you perceive yourself as disabled, why?

Participant A [00:07:44] This is a very interesting question because for so long, I have not identified as disabled, but I think-- I would say, see, I think in my own words, I wouldn't say to someone, I'm disabled. I think I would say I have a learning disability, which I mean, that is practically the same thing in my learning disability, which is ADHD does, and then the more I learned the ways that it impacts all areas of my life. So, in that sense, yeah, that's why I said I do believe that being disabled is an identity. But I almost feel and maybe this is because a little bit of imposter syndrome or I don't feel disabled enough to, enough, to say I am a disabled person.

Zoe [00:08:39] What-- what is disabled enough to-- what would be disabled enough to you to describe yourself as disabled?

Participant A [00:08:49] Probably physically disabled, like I said, because that is the first thing I think of it, that's what is so easily seen by other people. When, for instance, I say if someone is walking with a cane or they are in a wheelchair, it's like an immediate physical identifier. Anybody can anybody that perceives them automatically perceives disabled. But for me, you wouldn't perceived me as disabled or possessing a learning disability unless it came up, but I definitely think that the way that I've been socialized has impacted how I define, which is unfortunate. And I guess I'm trying to expand my definition of disability, but also trying to honor those people whose lives are impacted by their disability, and I think, like I do believe that they that-- there are disabled people out there that, I don't know, I might be disserving or dishonoring by claiming that identity.
Zoe [00:10:07] Why would you be? Why do you say that?

Participant A [00:10:11] Because I know that I've been granted certain privileges. I think it might be because even without so, I guess my version of the wheelchair or cane would be medication. And even without my medication, I am able to do some of my day-to-day tasks. But I know that there are others out there who, without another human, without another party being involved, can't even get out of bed, eat, do basic human things. I can do basic human things for survival without my, without help. Some basic, you know, so. Yeah.

Zoe [00:10:57] Yeah, no, that's perfect. OK, the next question is, what does accessibility mean to you?

Participant A [00:11:09] Accessibility means to me is not assuming, hiding and eliminating those assumptions about what people can do and what people can't do, and I think that accessibility just makes it possible. It's intersectional, like more people, it's inclusive, everybody is involved and everybody is valued for what they can do maybe instead of what they can't do. Accessibility is sort of like freedom in a way, it's more liberating.

Zoe [00:11:51] OK, what does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant A [00:11:57] Ha! OK, so inclusively looks intersectional, and it identifies like a wide range of disabilities and probably doesn't discriminate against mental versus the mental and physical disabilities. That's what's probably inclusive. And I realize that when I say that I am not disabled, that's probably not the most inclusive thing I could say. So, the question was how do we make access or--

Zoe [00:12:38] What does disability inclusively mean to you?


Zoe [00:12:50] OK, so that's the end of our definitions and terms section. The next is experiences. So, the first question in this section is, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant A [00:13:07] My experience-- I mean, I think the times that I had asked for help and I have been open about my disability, I have been met with a lot of I have been met with a lot of like grace and understanding and others, not so much. I think what's especially hard about being in college is that you're constantly surrounded by people, it almost feels like you're never alone and it's all people your age or in the same phase of life that you are. At least as a student that feels like that. So, it gets really easy to compare yourself. It's you can't escape comparing yourself to other students, and that-- it feels really defeating because you expect yourself to be able to do things that because you're like I'm no different than any of the other students, but I am and I and I, I struggle to remind myself of that. And that's different isn't bad. It's not about different because I can do less. Like that doesn't feel fair, but it is fair in a way because I'm different. But I should take the negative connotation needs to be taken away, I think in honoring
those differences, like we all have to have the same abilities and yeah, like we can all be different and still be equal.

**Zoe** [00:14:48] So what limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability, accessibility and or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?

**Participant A** [00:15:02] I mean, my limitations, sometimes my limitations are myself. How much am I willing to communicate? Obviously, I spoke about how for a long time I didn't think I had a disability. I didn't think it was, I didn't identify as disabled so that, there are my own limitations there because I think that sometimes I limit my own-- I do limit the ways, like I can get help when I don't ask for it, and so sometimes I am my own limitation. And then of course, you know, I've had professors if I try to explain my situation, this has been not the majority of my experiences. But there was a time in which I tried to explain to the best of my ability what I had going on and the professor is just like, sorry, I can't help you. Yeah, but that's been very few.

**Zoe** [00:16:06] OK, so the next one is what has been and/or is particularly accessible and disability inclusive at Denison University?

**Participant A** [00:16:21] The Academic Resource Center has been a way to help me accommodate, receive accommodations, but that is also, actually there are more of the other things that from the previous question that are limiting, I would say something else that many people don't know that I wish people did know is that, so I have, I received accommodations in high school, and so that's same when I had my ADHD diagnosis and that diagnosis is used that I received when I was fifteen. I'm twenty-one now. That same paperwork, the same diagnosis results are still used, even though I feel like my disability has gotten worse in some ways and just looks completely different than it did in high school. So, and ARC has that paperwork and then uses that paperwork to determine what accommodations I receive so then they're limiting because that those accommodations reflect what my disability looks like in high school. But at least for me, I feel like that's changed. So also, being a humanities major. So, I had like accommodations testing in high school. Also like my academics look differently. So, when you have a learning disability, obviously all these things are going to be just related to academics. So, in high school, I was taking a lot more exams, like multiple choice exams or whatnot, and I would get extra time, time and a half, when I took those exams, and that was super helpful, and I did monumentally better after getting extra time, but coming to college, I'm a humanities major, most of my final projects, midterms are essays. And my accommodations don't really help for that. And in order to get new accommodations, I would have to get tested again. Obviously, that's time, money and yeah. And I and it's not a guarantee that my accommodations will be changed because I mean the test for ADHD is like it's a word association and weird things that aren't necessarily like a perfect diagnosis, a perfect reflection of what the actual problem is. Oh, but Denison. But I did, OK, so I took one statistics course, which is probably the most exams I've ever had at Denison that would've been required from course, kind of like exams in the traditional sense. So, when I had my accommodations for that class or the statistics class, it was super helpful. And I got my accommodations about halfway through, I went from I was failing my first exam, failing the quizzes to after I had extended time and I was able to complete them alone. I was getting like A's. So, in that way it was really helpful when I had to take tests like that, I did so much better.
**Zoe** [00:19:27] That's great. So, is there anything else outside of ARC that you particularly find accessible and disability inclusive here at Denison? And if not, that's OK too.

**Participant A** [00:19:47] Well, I guess I can only speak from my lens of disability, which is just like the learning.

**Zoe** [00:19:52] Of course.

**Participant A** [00:19:52] The academic context. So physically, I feel like I might not be able to identify, I mean, the ways in which I think-- honestly, though, like the professors, and I think Denison's professors might be on the way that helps make the environment more inclusive just because, like I said, for the most part, like they're so understanding. So, I feel like most of the professors on this campus are very warm and like understanding, so if anybody had an invisible disability like me, I, you know, would hope-- I feel like there are a lot of people like mentors here that would be good people to talk to.

**Zoe** [00:20:43] Mhm. OK, so have you experienced-- how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning and I have a list. So, mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, administration and students or medical health appointments or procedures. And you can speak on any or any of them. Or all of them.

**Participant A** [00:21:08] Yeah. So, like how they're good and how they're--?

**Zoe** [00:21:12] So just how have you experienced?

**Participant A** [00:21:13] How have I experienced? OK. Well, can it be something that I have observed that I maybe don't experience?

**Zoe** [00:21:23] Mhm.

**Participant A** [00:21:23] So in terms of physical like mobility, I mean, obviously the fact that this campus is on a hill just makes it that automatically excludes, I think, people that have physical disabilities. There are a few wheelchair ramps, but I mean, most of the buildings, like if you had a wheelchair, there would at least be three academic buildings that you could just not get into.

**Zoe** [00:21:50] And a lot of dorm buildings.

**Participant A** [00:21:53] Yeah. So, I don't know. Yeah. So, if you're in a wheelchair, you're going to have to choose and yeah in dorms. There are dorms that aren't, Beaver, Sawyer are not accessible at all because they're like 80 years old, built in a time where disabled people just had to sit at home and they just were not able to be included in any public setting. So, there are so many dorms that are inaccessible. So that just prevents. I mean, this is a residential campus. The point is to live here and students that have physical that have a physical disability or they're limited in their mobility just cannot be on this campus period. And OK so that would be the--
yeah, and just the stairs and there aren't a lot of elevators, elevators are slow, so physically yeah, it's tough to get around and there are some wheelchair ramps but like that's it. Teachers, I do feel that this more than-- I talk to people at other universities and they don't seem to have as many positive experiences with professors as I've had at Denison. I don't know if that's like the culture of our school, like the liberal arts education. I think I did a liberal arts education is definitely better when you have, for people maybe who have learning disabilities as opposed to bigger state universities. Maybe because you're not getting. I found that when you get that kind of one on one, in close relationships with your professors, it makes it a lot easier to communicate with them and have them help you. They have the time and the resources to help you that you may not get at other places. So, if you have academic challenges like like I think that is does a good job for that. Oh, at ARC like there was a woman one time I came to her and she is kind of I just came in on a whim and I kind of talk to her for a bit. And she gave me this, she gave me like a little schedule and she's like, OK, we're going to schedule your day. That was kind of helpful, but. Yeah, and how-- a critique, though, that is important, is for someone that has a mental disability. The access to psychiatry and mental health treatment on this campus, that is definitely, it's lacking. I mean it seems that Denison has made a recent push since, I think since 2019 to make like mental health resources more accessible and more prevalent. I've seen them trying, but I mean, over and over again, I hear students that have difficulties making appointments, seeing one of the counselors at Whistler just waiting weeks to see someone. Yeah, that being a very difficult and frustrating process. Oh, and another this is a big concern of mine. One of my most troubling experiences, I think, in at least at Denison in terms of my learning disability has been receiving medication and treatment. So, I would say my freshman year, most my sophomore year, I was seeing a Whistler staff member on campus that we had. But they were often very dismissive of the things I had to say when I explained my symptoms. They laughed at me and used a mocking tone. Let's see, they would constantly forget what medications I was on. So, if any students had who also had like learning disabilities like they would, it was no help at all. So and that was. Yeah, very detrimental, I think, to my mental health and in terms of yeah, that was really bad. There was another Whistler staff member and I had an instance with them in a meeting where they talked about their personal life and related my struggles to somebody in their personal life and how they told me how their life fell apart because they didn't do X the things I was doing, which was forgetting and being constantly late, forgetful. And they told me basically that if I keep it up, I'm going to be like this person they knew. And that really stuck with me. I still haven't forgotten that conversation. And it was really upsetting. And yet I was hearing this kind of like shameful rhetoric from them. And also, it was just kind of like probably inappropriate for them to talk about their, relate my struggles to their personal life. So, yeah, that's a big problem when we have people that are supposed to be that are given these degrees, given this authority to speak on, on the disability, at least like mental disabilities like this, and yeah, so that would be really problematic if Denison continued to employ people like that.

Zoe [00:28:15] Mhm, OK. What were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? And have these reactions changed over time? How so?

Participant A [00:28:27] Absolutely, they have definitely changed over time because I came in like not knowing anything about ADHD or I you know, I also have had history with anxiety and depression. And I did learn a lot and I did learn a lot because of Denison, because of that, the
woman that I mentioned previously did teach me a lot. I mean, however, then we have the unfortunate instance. But I was I think I was able to learn a lot through Denison, through that woman. But also, I mean, because of those people, I had to seek care elsewhere. But that anyway, because of the care I received, I've learned a lot more about how I what I know about my disability. So it's changed a lot because that was something I didn't really think about, because I when I came to Denison's campus, I had spent 18 years of my life, like not thinking I had a disability and or not thinking or thinking it only impacted me when I was doing homework. So when I first arrived, I didn't think much of it. I thought, oh, wow, I didn't even know, like I didn't even know what colleges had to offer and I didn't know what they could in terms of disability and accommodations. So, I was just really in the dark about, I think the potential of what like inclusively could look like or like accessibility could look like. And again, I had no concept of that. And as it changes, I can see more of what Denison can be doing and what they're kinda already doing.

**Zoe** [00:30:15] What did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

**Participant A** [00:30:23] I didn't and I think because I just didn't know, but I think that that is a testament probably to privilege, and I know that maybe when you're physically disabled, you're that's like the number one thing you're going to be thinking about. I think that goes back to maybe why I've been so hesitant, because I just didn't even think about that. And. Yeah, but I hope that now that I do see how important that is, I want to continue to kind of see the areas that gone and hopefully encourage them because yeah.

**Zoe** [00:31:00] Definitely. OK, what are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

**Participant A** [00:31:11] Well, the consequences, I mean can range. I mean I've seen the consequences in like, you know, I've done poorly in classes because of like my inability to focus and time manage. And I mean, it's a combination and the consequences can can really vary. I think there are mental consequences and obviously sometimes my inability to get things done definitely makes me feel more anxious. And then I'm also anxious to communicate with my professors. And usually that's not even I'm anxious to communicate with them because they don't make me feel comfortable. It's not even that. It's usually because I'm worried and I'm worried about what they think. And I feel shameful when I can't do what is expected of everybody else. So yeah, the consequences are mental, they are tangible in the sense that sometimes they don't do well in courses because I was afraid to ask for help, but I think it gets easier once, I mean, you learn more about your identity and maybe it got easier, maybe more as I-- the closer I get to accepting myself as disabled.

**Zoe** [00:32:39] Mhm. OK. What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?

**Participant A** [00:32:51] An ideal day, they build a vehicular-- a wheelchair ramp all the way up the hill. I don't even know what they would do to the dorms to make them accessible other than just tear them down and build new ones. I see. Because you see the modern style of a
building like Silverstein. Silverstein could be made into a it appears on the outside that that's a wheelchair ramp, but like the elevators. A wheelchair ramp. I mean, a vehicular going up the hill. I think maybe. If like at the beginning of every semester, every semester, I don't know, every professor takes a chance to talk to the students in their classes and like and get an idea of who they are before they start the semester and ask them like, yeah, and ask maybe if that was like some sort of inventory that professors could do for their classes before the semester started. And they maybe do like a quick like one on one individual meeting with all their students. I'm trying to-- education resources, too, there could be people, a lot of women go undiagnosed with ADHD and other disorders, some education would be great. Yeah.

Zoe [00:34:26] Yeah, OK. What other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant A [00:34:37] Maybe being a woman, not only at Denison, but elsewhere. Being a woman who has a what is it? It's neurological, yeah a neurological disorder. I don't know that. Like, I have a lot of the same symptoms. OK, backtrack. When people think of ADHD, they often think of like hyperactive, like little boys. It's a lot it's like a lot like masculine, like the way that it's described as like rambunctious. That kind of has a masculine connotation and therefore becomes the way that when men and women are socialized, women aren't going to exhibit those symptoms. So that I think that definitely impacted how long it took for me to get diagnosed and really see myself represented and see other people that had similar experiences to me. It kind of took some individual personal digging on my part online. Yeah. Like information that I had to look for myself that other people weren't going to tell me. So that's why I think in an ideal world, it's like you are told these things. You just like learn instead of taking that upon yourself to accommodate yourself, you know. Yeah, being a woman oh, and also something that people don't know about ADHD is like also that it is like similar to autism and like that's autism as underdiagnosed in girls, too. So, having something where I have similar symptoms to someone who's autistic, that's more inconceivable or incomprehensible for people. There like, there are really people out there that believe that women can't have autism, can't have these things. So, yeah, that's really frustrating.

Zoe [00:36:26] Mhm. OK, so now we're going to move on to the support part of our question. So, the first question is, what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant A [00:36:41] Disability support means to me. I think kind of multifaceted, it's a multifaceted approach, different kinds, whether it's education or private therapy. I know they did- - Denison does have a productivity circle, but I remember that was always something I'd like some kind of time conflict and I couldn't participate in. I know they had that. But I mean, of course they can always there can always be a better job of promoting things like that. And private therapy, that's the form of group therapy, education. Yeah, kind of inside the classroom and now maybe. Maybe more. I think professors also maybe the school could do a little education with the-- educate the professors a little bit on different kinds of disabilities and how they can support. The school can also support the professors in that way. I think if they maybe take on the role of educating some of the faculty.
Zoe [00:38:09] Yes. OK. In what ways do you feel, heard and not heard as a disabled student?

Participant A [00:38:20] I feel heard I feel heard by professors that listen to me and kind of and kind of be listening without judgment, it's kind of sometimes just being heard to me is, maybe not even. Yes, and it can be as simple as that. Like being heard to me is just like an open ear. And professors asking me how I'm doing. How can-- they ask me, how can they support me? I've had that a lot, and that's what being heard feels like, is then asking how they can support me. And yeah, it's like they don't necessarily have to take on that role, but I feel like they should and I've seen it happen, being heard is being seen as more than a student. More than just the work that I do work.

Zoe [00:39:32] OK. Next one is what does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

Participant A [00:39:42] Related to my experience at Denison. I like to think that participating in this study is a little bit of advocacy because, again, for so long I didn't see myself as being a part of this group. And now that I just know more, that's the power of education, just what knowledge does, because now I see what I could be doing, and I think I've-- so trying to do this interview is maybe my way of calling attention to these these issues of accessibility and inaccessibility, because yeah, I have seen-- I have seen the advocacy on behalf of disabled students. And like I've not seen it a lot, but I think it's because just our campus doesn't have a lot of disabled students or. Yeah, so I think it takes it becomes maybe the responsibility or not becomes a responsibility, but since we don't have that representation, it's like. Yeah, I feel like we're missing out a lot on that we're missing out and we could get more advocacy, I think, because what's unfortunate is that, like when you're when you have a campus, it's like mostly like nondisabled people that just don't know, like they're not going to be able to like-- if they don't know, they can't advocate. So.


Participant A [00:41:21] Yeah, OK.

Zoe [00:41:23] Where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Participant A [00:41:32] I think within my friends, I think I do I feel advocated for honesty in my friendships and sometimes like that's been such an important part of my Denison experience, obviously, for the people. That's what makes, that's the Denison difference is are our relationships. So I have seen my friend, my friends advocate for me, for the professors advocate, advocating for me for the most part. Maybe like the activism takes place in smaller and more subtle ways. But yeah, I look to people.

Zoe [00:42:20] OK, so the next section is going to be disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, the first question is, what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty and staff with disabilities at Denison?
**Participant A [00:42:45]** Well, I think it says to disabled people that they're just not welcomed here, that they or that they just don't exist. At least for physically disabled people, yeah feel like the physical set up of our campus says they don't exist.

**Zoe [00:43:02]** Mhm.

**Participant A [00:43:02]** I think the conversations are starting to be had our administration. I can't say that Denison hasn't tried because I feel like our administration has tried to acknowledge at least the prevalence of mental health issues on this campus. And so, I think that communicates that they're trying to acknowledge the problem, trying to combat that, but I don't ever hear the word disability though, coming from administration, and I think maybe that's what is part of the problem, is that we don't take that a step further, that, OK, we need to address mental health. But now how does mental health inhibit us from being productive members-- how does it make us disabled?

**Zoe [00:44:08]** Mhm. OK, what could be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

**Participant A [00:44:24]** I mean, the existence of ARC can remain unchanged, but do I think there are more things that ARC could do? Yes.

**Zoe [00:44:34]** What could they do?

**Participant A [00:44:35]** What was that?

**Zoe [00:44:36]** What could they do? What could ARC do?

**Participant A [00:44:39]** I think what could ARC do? I don't know if it would be you know, it wouldn't be possible to get. I don't think it would be possible to get the accommodations themselves. Well, I would be curious to know if there was I mean, I wish there were just more mental health professionals. I feel like maybe things like mental health professionals that could give diagnoses. You could if you needed, if you hadn't had-- if you're not coming to Denison with accommodations like I don't know if it would be possible to have diagnoses to be done at Whisler. And, um, because I feel like that might make it more accessible and then they can get some of that education from Whisler. And then if there is almost a pipeline, it was like Whisler, you know, you get your diagnosis and you go to Whisler for a diagnosis and maybe you need medication. You get your medication from Whisler. And then I think it's holistic. It's like maybe you get medication and then maybe you get the accommodations and maybe you. Yeah, then therapy, a multifaceted approach. And giving acknowledging and educating people more on the invisible disabilities that exist in people. I've also I have heard of people with physical disabilities who that have that aren't there physical, that they aren't necessarily visible, outwardly visible, and they've struggled even with the accommodations, even with communication with professors. Sometimes professors still dismiss the accommodations that they have in place. Yeah.
Zoe [00:46:39] Mhm. Earlier you talked about asking for help as being a hard thing, is there anything that Denison University could do to make that easier?

Participant A [00:47:03] I'm sure there are, and I just can't think of any.

Zoe [00:47:04] That's OK if you can't.

Participant A [00:47:12] Yeah, there are there are steps Denison can do, and then kind of these really just like generations of ideas and stigmas that exist in the students and faculty and staff that are here and all of us that are kind of like inescapable. But I think that, like education, which like. The education I have received here, though, does help combat that. Oh, and I definitely really appreciate that. So I feel like yeah, education.

Zoe [00:47:57] OK, what is the most urgent accessibility/inclusivity concern you have?

Participant A [00:48:10] Probably the most urgent-- the most urgent would be like more physically accessible spaces, like there's no reason why there just can't be more wheelchair ramps. I think. Like making buildings physically accessible. Oh, another thing that is a tangible step that also other disabilities have brought up is how attendance policies, that can be changed. OK, so certain rules in administration that's why I brought up attendance policy. Policies are also those are ableist. Those are ableist because I mean, I mentioned yeah, the student that I knew. So, she had she received an accommodation. So, attendance policies wouldn't apply to her because she had a terminal illness. She's no longer a student at Denison university, but she had a terminal illness that made her always tired. And so that's why she had that accommodation. But see, that's something that was an exception to the rule. Like she was the exception to the rule. So, the assumption is by not having-- having the attendance policies in place, it assumes that everybody can get up and just go to class. That is urgent. And I think that communicates-- keeping that in place communicates that like this is what's expected of you and if you can't do it, well, that's something wrong on your part. You don't want to go to class. You don't care enough. Yeah, that's a specific example I forgot to mention.

Zoe [00:49:54] So, what would an accessible and disability inclusive attendance policy look like? Or would it be getting rid of attendance policies altogether?

Participant A [00:50:08] I don't know. I think yeah, I think it would be honestly just getting rid of attendance policies altogether. Because because I think like even that, OK, so even if you're not requiring students come to class every day like professors still for participation grades, they will make a tangible assignment that counts as your participation. So even if you're not coming to class, you still get points that way. Yeah, I think if they just took away the attendance policy requirement, there would be other ways to participate and engage. It wouldn't make it easier necessarily. I don't think that makes it, oh wow now I just don't ever have to go to class, like, I don't think it would. It wouldn't be like that.

Zoe [00:50:59] OK, so I just have some concluding questions. Is there anything you would like to share regarding Denison accessibility or disability inclusivity that has not been prompted?
**Interview B**

_Zoe [00:00:30]_ So we'll just start out with the first one. So how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language/pronouns do you prefer to use for yourself?

**Participant B [00:00:48]_** Well, I prefer he/him/his pronouns and in terms of gender, I mean, I'm a scientist, so I don't really have all the complicated ideas of gender, but what I think about gender, as you know, as is a performance of an individual. I could say, well, I'm a man, that's true, but I'm not really the same as a straight man because I'm gay and I'm not really the same as a Black gay man either, so you see what I mean, it gets complicated very quickly because we don't just-- there's not just one, to me, there's not just one dimension to gender. There's so many dimensions, and so I guess the short form would be I, I would say I'm a gay white man briefly.

_Zoe [00:01:51]_ Definitely. Yeah, there are definitely a lot of intersections of identities that go along with that gender identity for sure. OK, so how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, students, faculty, staff, etc.?

**Participant B [00:02:02]_** I'm faculty.

_Zoe [00:02:03]_ Perfect. OK, I'm going to write that down. OK, so now we're going to go on to our definitions and term section of our interview questions. So, the first one is how would you define disability?

**Participant B [00:02:17]_** See, this is the one I thought was just incredibly difficult.

_Zoe [00:02:21]_ It is hard. I've been finding it hard in my research too.

**Participant B [00:02:24]_** Yeah, I mean it's just like everything I can think of doesn't work, you know? All right. So, I'm just going to give it a try here. So, I think it is that I'm also defining this from my own experience of disability. And so, I don't think it's a definition that works for all people with disability. But for me, it's more having severely limited access to space that is easily accessed by most individuals around me.

_Zoe [00:03:07]_ Definitely, definitely, yeah, that's perfect. OK, so what term should be used when referring to disability? And this is the term that I will use throughout the interview questions as well.

**Participant B [00:03:20]_** Right. I mean, I don't think-- I don't find the term disability or disabled to be pejorative in any way. But, well, I don't know, maybe it is, because I was trying to think of a-- I don't know the Latin roots of all this stuff, but I just feel like I'm just differently able, you know? Because to me, with any change in ability, you have a there's a chance to grow with that, too. It's not just about the things that I can't do. It's also about the things that I now do. Maybe because I can't do other things, but those new things that I do enrich my life. You know, and so. I don't know, disabled seems a little bit focused on what you can't do rather than just being able to do things differently. But can I think of a good term for that? No!
**Zoe** [00:04:44] For sure. Yeah, we are definitely limited with what terms we have in English. That's that's definite.

**Participant B** [00:04:49] I wonder if other languages have more apt descriptors.

**Zoe** [00:04:58] That is very interesting. That is something that I will do some research into because that would be incredibly interesting to find out.

**Participant B** [00:05:06] Because I have a niece who-- she's working on her PhD and she's over doing her research in Japan. And so, she's always telling me about these words the Japanese have that Americans don't have. You know, and it's this term for a feeling when you ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba, you know, but yet they have a term for it. And I know exactly what she's talking about, but we don't have that word in English. And I just wonder if there's another language that has come up with a really good descriptor for disability.

**Zoe** [00:05:44] Yeah, that's really interesting. Yeah. And that I'm definitely going to read up on that because I think that's that's definitely important for this research.

**Participant B** [00:05:52] Yeah, yeah.

**Zoe** [00:05:54] For sure. OK, so should I stick with disability then, throughout this interview?

**Participant B** [00:06:01] Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Perfect.

**Zoe** [00:06:04] OK, the next question is, what do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

**Participant B** [00:06:14] My experience is, is they think of someone who's blind or someone who's in a wheelchair.

**Zoe** [00:06:19] Mhm, yeah.

**Participant B** [00:06:22] They think of helplessness. And I have stories to go along with that, but. That that kind of answers what I think.

**Zoe** [00:06:37] Of course.

**Participant B** [00:06:37] Unless you want to hear the stories!

**Zoe** [00:06:39] That's-- it's completely up to you, how much you want to share. I am free for a while so yeah.

**Participant B** [00:06:43] I've had a couple experiences with this. One time, my mom and I were traveling in Australia and she's older. And so sometimes the just the long walk, hauling all the luggage to airports and stuff was just a little bit much for her. So, we finally learned we could just get her a wheelchair and then you could use there's a place to put luggage. And then I could
just push her through where we needed to go. And and it just worked better. And she's perfectly able to walk and everything. So, I remember one time we got into the airport and everything and I pushed her through and we were like, OK, we're finally at the gate, let's get some breakfast. And so, I had actually already eaten breakfast and it was just mom who needed to eat something. And so, I pushed her up to this counter. And it's not like there was a language barrier or anything because it was Australia. And, you know, I push her up there and, you know, and I'm just standing there staring off into space and just, you know, and then I look over at the the attendant and the attendant is looking straight at me. And saying, what would you like, hmm? As if my mother wasn't even there or able to understand or needed any service and I just said, I'm not ordering anything, please talk to my mother, you know, but it was just she became invisible. And I was just so shocked, you know. And that was my first real experience of understanding or having a glimpse of disability. And then later on it, so I had a head injury, that's why I'm sitting here in the dark, is I am incredibly sensitive to light now. And that limits what I can do pretty severely. But so, I had to fly out to Utah to go to my niece's wedding about a year and a half ago. And the only way I could figure to get through the airport, because they have fluorescent lights, was actually to go in a wheelchair and wear a blindfold basically to block out all light. And it was just such an incredible, incredibly interesting and in some ways a humiliating experience, because here I am, someone who is perfectly able to run up and down stairs and everything. But the way that people treated me and talked to me, not only because I was in a wheelchair, but also because I had this mask on. I would say that some of the airport personnel were fantastic, but some other people that I ran into during that flight and all that kind of stuff were just really, oh, my God, you know, it was just they really didn't treat me the same as they would treat me had I been able to walk on to that airplane without a mask on. It's just amazing and so I think abled people just have no idea. It's so hard to even comprehend, so I really appreciate you doing this research. I think this is incredibly unexplored.

Zoe [00:10:37] Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. I also feel like especially on Denison's campus, I feel like disability is not talked about a lot in my social justice circles. So, I really wanted to focus on that aspect of social justice and advocacy in my project.

Participant B [00:10:53] Yeah. And you and there's also what people think of is visible disability. And then there's the invisible disability. You know, and visible is if you have a cane or if you have a wheelchair or something like that, and if you don't have that, then you're not really legitimately disabled. You know, you just someone who's being difficult or something, I mean, it is just amazing, it's just the biases. And I think I, I'm sure I--had some of those or many of those same biases before my own experience. And I'm sure I have some of the same biases about people who have very different disabilities than I do. You know, it's been a very interesting intellectual journey as well as an emotional journey, but we'll get to that. But those are my two stories that I really like to tell, you know.

Zoe [00:11:58] Thank you so much for sharing. That's very informative. OK, next question is quite similar to the other one, but it can be interpreted a bit differently. So, what do others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant B [00:12:13] Well, again, I think it almost seems as incapacity. And that, that it's visible. Disability is visible. There aren't other dimensions to disability. I think that's what most
people think when they hear that term - like mobility. I think mobility is really tied into our concept of disability or mobility, so to speak. Yeah.

Zoe [00:12:51] Do you see disability as an identity? Why?

Participant B [00:12:54] Absolutely, yes. Because it has such a profound effect on the structure of your life. You know, I certainly think that being gay has had a profound impact on the structure of my life and who I am is shaped by that structure. And so, I now feel myself changing in the way that I view myself and certainly in the way that other people view me. And I think that inevitably leads to a modification of how we conceive of ourselves, and I see that as identity.

Zoe [00:14:01] Yeah. Great, great. Do you perceive yourself as disabled? Why?

Participant B [00:14:05] Yes, yes, I do. It took a while, and I think for me, part of that transition was when I when I had to face the fact that my my condition was not temporary, that this was-- not that it was maybe permanent, but that I was going to be in this physical dimension for an extended period of time, it may be the rest of my life, I don't know, but this was not going to be something that was going to change in the foreseeable future.

Zoe [00:14:53] Yeah yeah. What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant B [00:14:59] Oh, that's really complicated. OK, I came up with this one yesterday, and I can't come up with anything better now, I would say accessibility means that I can move into spaces safely and confidently without stigma or marginalization.

Zoe [00:15:31] That's wonderful. What does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant B [00:15:41] Well, I think the first part, the most fundamental part is that we exist. And that we matter, that our lives really matter, that we're not just stones along the highway of life that are stuck. That we're actually in life and we're just moving sometimes in different dimensions and different ways. And, and I think part of that inclusivity is maybe that I don't have to constantly ask for accommodation. You know, just over and over and over again with the same people, who just don't get it. Yeah, not not having to ask for accommodation every single day in every situation. Yeah, there's another dimension to that, but we'll get to that later. You know?

Zoe [00:17:01] OK, so that ties up our definitions in term sections, so we will go on to the experiences.

Participant B [00:17:08] OK.

Zoe [00:17:09] So the first question is, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant B [00:17:18] Well, there's so many dimensions. I mean, it's been incredibly challenging. I don't think I've ever faced anything more scary in my life because for a while I
was really living on the edge of not being able to teach because I couldn't even walk into a classroom with normal lights on. And for a while it was just so threatening because I didn't have a good idea how to manage my condition in what are ordinary circumstances to other people. And so, I would say that yeah, yeah, super challenging. It's also been very lonely, to be honest. I had to to leave, so we have both a regular office and then we have a research lab, and so my regular office is a floor down from my research office that I'm in right now, my research lab. And to get to my office, I had to walk by four fluorescent lights that are right at the level of my head. To open my door, I had a light right in front of my face and then I opened my door and the whole back wall is windows facing east. So, in the morning, sun was shining and then there are windows above that would reflect in light from the hallway, except that that was fluorescent light. And so, it became a space that I could not work in. So, I had to move up to a different floor. And there's nobody else on my floor. And so, for two years I was up here by myself. And I couldn't even go to the other floors because the fluorescent lights down there, I couldn't go to other buildings because all these buildings had fluorescent lights and going outside in the sunlight is very difficult as well. So I was extremely isolated. When COVID came around, all of the ordinary people who were not isolated suddenly had to be more isolated and that was traumatic for them. But it was like nothing for me because I was already that isolated.

Participant B [00:20:35] And so, you know, it's you know, it's been quite an experience in many levels, so I would say that that kind of gives you a sense of what the experience has been like here. Yeah.

Zoe [00:20:52] Yeah. Thank you. OK, what limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility or inclusivity issues and your university related experiences?

Participant B [00:21:04] Well, I've already talked about that some.


Participant B [00:21:06] Yeah, yeah. You know, but, just not being able to go into the spaces where there are meetings, events, food, even my teaching spaces. You know, getting to and from campus for me has been very challenging because unfortunately I live west of campus. So, in the morning I'm driving east and the sun's coming up and driving home and the sun's going down. And all these things I never thought of, I never had to think about before. How do I get to and from home? How do I get home before the sun goes down because car lights blind me? And you're just there's just so many severe limitations to physically where I can go on this campus that it's accessibility has been very, very a very big issue.

Zoe [00:22:11] Yeah. What has been and/or is particularly accessible or disability inclusive at Denison University?

Participant B [00:22:26] Well, I would say that honestly, that Phys Plant was so accommodating because the first summer I was coming back after this developed and I spent the whole summer at home and I came back here, I was like, I'm not going to be able to teach in this room. And I saw one of the Phys Plant guys walking down the hall one day. And I just asked him, I said, is there any way that you could change these fluorescent lights in the room where I
teach to LEDs? And he says, oh, yeah, sure, sure. What kind of LEDs do you need? And it turned out that his sister had a condition that made her sensitive to fluorescent lights. And so, man, he got it in a second. And he was just like, yeah, we'll have somebody up here in the next two weeks to change these out for you. And that was just like incredible, you know, because that was the moment that I realized, oh, my God, I may be able to still work, you know, and do my job. And so I just found that Phys Plant has such a bad rap. But, man, they really just came through, they changed the lights in my research lab here where I spend most of my time and in the hallways. And then through the next year or so, they changed them in the stairwells so I could more easily go up and down stairs. And I just found them to be very responsive. And that was really just great.

Zoe [00:24:17] Yeah, that's great to hear.

Participant B [00:24:17] You know, and I would say also that my department has tried to be very supportive. They've succeeded sometimes and not succeeded at other times, but I think they want to be supportive. They don't always know how to be supportive and find that there's just a lot of variability. There are some individuals who sort of remember and just kind of get it, and other people who just don't ever get it, even if you tell them over and over again. And so, I would say that-- I think individuals and I think that some some people in authority as well, I found people in the Provost's Office to be very responsive and just say, hey, if there's any way we can help, if you want to run for a committee, tell me what committee it's going to be. I will make sure that they meet in a room that you can go to. So, I think that there's this real patchiness of accessibility at Denison and then there just other ways that it's completely not accessible.

Zoe [00:25:45] Yeah. So how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning then there's four options here so you can speak on behalf of any or all of them. So, mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, admin, students and then medical health appointments or procedures.

Participant B [00:26:10] I don't have mobility limitations at all, you know, and academic accommodations. Academic accommodations on this campus are built for students. They are not built for faculty at all, there's no structure or framework for accommodations for disability that I have found on this campus. Every time that I am requesting accommodations, it feels like it's the first-- they're well-meaning, but it's the first time they've ever heard of it. And maybe it's just the first time they've ever heard of my particular rather bizarre disability. I mean, it's a really unusual condition to have. And I don't really expect that people will understand or be able to comprehend very well. And so, I just think that dimension is really different for students and faculty. There's no office for me to go to as a faculty member and say I need help and I need resources. There's just nothing. For communication with faculty, staff, administration and students, the only real difficulties I've had with communication is when everything is electronic because at least I'm much better than I was three years ago. But at that point, I had a very limited time I could read a computer screen and so I had to print out everything and then read it and then try to respond back and then, and so it was very clumsy in a lot of ways, and it was just it took twice as much effort to get the communication done just because I couldn't use the tools of communication the way that other people can do so easily. Yeah. And then medical health appointments or procedures, you mine aren't really, really related to campus, because I don't live on campus. But
just in terms of access to those, I mean, if I didn't have a partner, I don't know how I would have I would get to appointments. I just wouldn't be able to because I can't drive to Columbus or anything like that. So that's a little I mean, again, as a faculty member, it's just a little bit different than the access for students.

Zoe [00:29:07] Perfect. Thank you. OK. What were your initial reactions to Denison disability, inclusive and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? And how have these or have these reactions changed over time? And if so, how so?

Participant B [00:29:23] Right. Well, I arrived on campus without being disabled. And so that, again, is a little bit different than for some students. And and yes, as I developed my disability, I view things just really night and day differently. Just in terms of the infrequency, when we're writing policies and stuff, for faculty and things like that, I'm working on a-- I'm on a committee where we're revising Denison's diversity statement. And, disability is something you just kind of throw in there, I think, to sound good. But most people don't really think about it and or think about the implications or think about the multiple dimensions of disability. And so, I just think that my reaction is now is that it is so shallowly considered and thought about in policy and in conversation, in consideration.

Zoe [00:30:46] What did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility, which this might not be applicable to you?

Participant B [00:30:54] Yeah, I think yeah, I think not.

Zoe [00:30:57] OK, well, we can skip that one then.

Participant B [00:31:00] I mean, if I were going to a new campus, I would have all kinds of things. But but yeah.

Zoe [00:31:07] What would you, what would you what would you look for if you were going to a new campus?

Participant B [00:31:13] LED lights, adjustable switches, you know, to where you can smoothly turn up and down lights rather than having them on or off or have some of the lights. One row of the lights come on instead of all three rows of the lights come on. You know, I mean, those are things that can really make a huge difference for me. You know, can-- is light adjustable? Is it flexible? Are there blinds on the windows for when someone is coming in? All of those things are crucial for me, in their conveniences for other people, you know?

Zoe [00:31:58] Mhm. That's great. I will definitely be keeping that in mind for my proposal. You can see that being written in there, I can guarantee you. OK. What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity, and oh, I missed one. What are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

Participant B [00:32:19] Oh, Lord, I think it depends on the disability heavily. For me, there has been just a huge interpersonal vacuum, I can't just, you know, somebody will send out an email,
oh, it's a beautiful day. Let's go sit down and have lunch together. And I'm like, well, I can't go outside and sit in the sun and have lunch, you know? And so, there's been a just a humongous interpersonal cost. Now I no longer am able to think of, I don't have the privilege of thinking about what do I want to do on campus, I have to think about what can I do? And that, that transition is what's very difficult. And so, I think that there are just so many dimensions to the consequences. It's difficult for me to have research students in the summer now because the light that they need to work in is too much for me to work in. And so, this mismatch has really limited some of the dimensions of what I used to be able to engage in and do on campus. So, yeah, there are many dimensions of that.

Zoe [00:34:15] Yeah, yeah. What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?

Participant B [00:34:25] I think all of those-- it would be a cloudy day, not rainy just cloudy, not rainy. And having those physical tools to regulate light where I go, that would be fantastic to be able to walk someplace and or go to a meeting and be able to adjust light in there. Because otherwise and I've had to go to meetings where I just have to put my blindfold on, which is effective, but it's also very isolating, and I feel very conspicuous and self-conscious in those situations.

Zoe [00:35:39] This is just something that came to mind. Do automatic lights that switch on when you walk in a space, is that limiting for your accessibility?

Participant B [00:35:49] Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, and the other thing, people don't ever think about it, but for me that the lights in the bathrooms are too bright. And so, I've had to learn how to use and I can only use one person bathrooms because I can't shut off the lights for everybody else in a multi-person bathroom. So, I've had to learn to navigate bathrooms in the dark, and that is another just dimension of accessibility and challenge, because there's there's no intermediate, it's either on or off and so that that's just another thing. Yeah, so I think so. OK, sorry, I got lost in that, which question was I answering? The support?

Zoe [00:37:09] This is ideal day. Ideal day of accessibility.

[00:37:18] Oh, ideal day. OK, yeah, all right, yeah, so I have some more things for the next question.

Zoe [00:37:20] OK, perfect. So, yes, the next question is what other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant B [00:37:30] Oh, yeah, this is kind of a big one for me, I find that my disability intersects with my gay identity in ways that I would never have predicted. And I'm sure that being gay shaped my experience of being disabled as well, that many of the experiences I had-- and struggling with a gay identity when I was younger, I found mirrored. There were many parallels there for me. I don't know if they're there for other people, but they certainly were for me, you know, a sense of shame. Like, am I weak because I'm disabled? You know, struggling with that self-acceptance. You know, and isolation, a very different dimension of isolation, but
still, you know, that was a theme certainly in being gay and being disabled. And I think that
there's also, there are parallels in terms of being, of feeling invisible. It's like nobody, everybody
assumes you are abled until you are proved to them that you are disabled and although it's not
quite that much about being gay, but still there is a sense that any person you meet is straight
until they're proven to be gay. So, it's that who is the prototypical citizen here, and the
prototypical citizen is straight. The prototypical citizen is abled. And so that that sense of feeling
invisible and not always being able to identify who are other people who share my identity, if
they're up walking around and they're not carrying a cane and not on a wheelchair, how are they
disabled? Are they disabled in seemingly invisible ways that I don't know and understand and
can't recognize? You know, and then and I would say also that I've seen real strong parallels
between, coming out as gay, but also coming out as disabled, because I have to--if you ask for
accommodations, you're coming out. You're saying I'm disabled. You know, even if you'd rather
not. And so, I just see so many, so many parallels and intersections there between those two
identities. And I think as well, I think that there are aspects I'm learning about myself, about the
intersection being disabled and being a man because men are supposed to be able to be, to go to
work and to drive. And to get used to having my partner driving me everywhere, challenges part
of my masculinity and, it's, I'm learning a lot about myself, but it's not always what I want to
learn, you know? But I would say that there are so many-- so much of my experience in being
disabled, becoming disabled and being disabled have been shaped by these other identities that I
have. Yeah.

Zoe [00:42:00] Yeah. Thank you so much. That's something that I'm definitely talking about in
my research is this intersection of disability and queer identity. And then I'm also looking up
information about black disability and then, of course, the intersection between gender and
disability as this is Women's and Gender Studies so that's very informative. So, thank you for
that. So, the next category will be support. So, the first question in that is what does disability
support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant B [00:42:33] I mean, I think that the first part or the first step, I would say is, is
combating invisibility, having access to resources and an expertise, right? Because as someone
who is disabled in terms of my ability to see and to read, I'm struggling with computer issues that
I don't know how to solve. I don't know what's out there. I don't know if there's a computer
program out there that can help me read better or help me adjust. I had to find all of that stuff
myself so that I could perform my job. And there's no support, as far as I know. I think they're
supportive people. But that's, I think, different. And I would say that that there are aspects of just
feeling recognized. That people on campus are actually disabled and and that maybe instead of
planning three pilates classes and five swimming classes and this class and that class, all for
physically able people to say, you know, could we just have a group that talks about being
disabled on this campus? just to get some support. To find out who we are so that we can support
each other. And so, it seems that all of the health and even wellness and all of that is actually
structured for abled people. So, I think that I think those kinds of things would be, to me, the first
steps really to take. I think also that you as a faculty member, I have to demonstrate, what I have
accomplished. in my salary reviews or going up for a promotion or something like that and
because my disability affects what I am able to do and the pace at which I'm able to do that, that
support to me would mean acknowledging that there's a context. There's a physical context to the
work I am able to produce that is different now than it was before I developed this condition, but
yet all of the materials and procedures are written to be blind to that context. And so just having my performance, my job performance be viewed through the lens of my disability is something that seems unattainable. You know, if that makes sense.

**Zoe** [00:46:37] Yeah, definitely. OK, so our next question is, what does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

**Participant B** [00:46:49] Well. I'm not really sure how to answer this question, because I'm not sure that I understand what anyone else would mean by disability advocacy. I've been my own advocate and I've been pretty much my only advocate with maybe a couple exceptions, but I do think it would mean looking at the structure in the spectrum, maybe the spectrum of people who are disabled on this campus and then consciously putting time and energy and purpose into looking at the structures that are limiting them. You know, and having a way, having a means to achieve that outside of yourself. And I don't see much of that here at Denison.

**Zoe** [00:48:05] Yeah, what would that look like to you?

**Participant B** [00:48:08] Wow, that's a tough question!

**Zoe** [00:48:13] Isn't it? I was trying to answer it in my head and I was like, I'm not sure if I could do that.

**Participant B** [00:48:17] I know it's, man it's really hard. it could simply be that, you know, that disability is thought about and considered. I think that's the first step because it's not thought about and it's not considered and often it's just dismissed as being real. “I'll just find someone else to do that, if you can't go to that room. I'll just find someone else to do it.” Not “I'll find a way for you to do this, to be part of this. I'll just find someone else to do it.” And so those just basic changes in attitudes and in consciousness would go a long, long way in making that even possible on this campus. I just think that disability doesn’t, it does exist, but it doesn't exist, it doesn't exist in any one but the minds of the disabled on this campus and clearly, we're just invisible and I think we have to have visibility and we have to, energy has to be expended, thought and energy has to be expended in order for any dimension of that to be realized.

**Zoe** [00:50:04] Yeah, yeah. Where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

**Participant B** [00:50:15] Um. Mostly myself. You know, I realize that I have to be my own advocate because only occasionally will other people step in. And I think that my colleagues in my department are beginning to, but I think you're just the structure of where I have to be physically, I'm so separated from all the members of my department that it's hard to be it's hard to have people be advocates for you if if they can't see you or interact with you. And so it's very complicated. But mostly for support, my partner, my nuclear family have been the emotional support. I haven't found much emotional support on campus.
Zoe [00:51:45] Thank you. OK, so this next section is second to last, is disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, the first question in this section is, what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty and staff with disabilities?

Participant B [00:52:08] A, that we are invisible, that we don't exist or that our existence doesn't matter, that it's not professional or competent to be disabled. I think that's the big one for me, as a faculty member.

Zoe [00:52:46] What should be improved about Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility? What should be-- what should remain unchanged?

Participant B [00:53:00] Pretty much everything.

Zoe [00:53:02] Well name some so I can write them down.

Participant B [00:53:05] I know. That's the hard part.

Zoe [00:53:14] It is, it is.

Participant B [00:53:15] Yeah, I mean, I think that, that there should be intentional consideration. It's almost I feel almost as if-- this may not come out really very clearly, but that we don't have permission to be disabled. You know, and it's kind of like and again, this intersects with being gay, because I can remember in situations, especially when I was growing up where-- like I remember one time one of my aunts told me this story about a friend she had from high school and she never said he was gay. But the way she described him, I knew she meant he was gay and he would occasionally, come back home. He lived in Florida. He would come back to Ohio, to the farm where he grew up and visit his family. And he would occasionally stop by and just say hi to her and talk to her. And then he would leave and she wouldn't see him for a few more years. But just the way that she talked about him showed me that she was, she saw him as a human being. Even though she said my uncle didn't like him being on our property around their sons, you know, she didn't agree with him on that, and that made space for me as a young gay person, even though I never came out to her. It was, she was immediately a safe space to me. And I don't feel that Denison is creating a space where people can be disabled on this campus. Because when it's when it's as personal as it is and emotional as it is, you understand what is safe space and what is not. And there's very minimal articulation, safe space on this campus.

Zoe [00:55:48] Do you have a safe space on campus?

Participant B [00:55:55] I think increasingly my department is becoming that. It's been gradual and I understand that for, for abled people, it's just incomprehensible. But yet at the same time, I see my colleagues adjusting through time, you know, as they interact with me. And, we're all learning this. It's a process. It's not a state of being. And I think we're all learning this. And I recognize, too, that it's difficult for them because they all knew me as abled. They knew me for decades as abled. And then suddenly I transformed into something and had a dimension that I didn't before. And so, it's a learning curve for them too. And so, it's not I don't think it's about
blame or necessarily deliberate exclusion. It's just that adjustment is part of it. So, I don't know if that's too vague or not.

Zoe [00:57:05] No, that's no, that's wonderful. Is there anything that should remain unchanged about Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant B [00:57:19] Yeah, I described earlier some of the responsiveness that I've seen that I think that Denison is aware on many levels. And I've seen this really change. I've been here for twenty-three years now, so I see so much change about this college. Students of color were struggling to exist here and students, queer students were struggling to exist here. It was hard back then. And and now just the - What is the word that I'm looking for? - the aptitude of understanding the experience of marginalization and all the identities that are marginalized. So, I think that that Denison can be very adaptable because it's like they've they've ridden, four different kinds of bikes. They just never gotten on this bike. You see what I mean? And so, I think that Denison can be very responsive, but they just haven't ridden that bike very much.

Zoe [00:59:02] That's a great metaphor. What is the most urgent accessibility and inclusivity concern you have?

Participant B [00:59:16] I think the visibility and invisibility thing is huge. I think there needs to be access to enabling a disabled community at Denison to gather. You know, to allow us to exist as an identity rather than as an exception. I think it's you've got to make it to first base before you go to second or third or home.

Zoe [01:00:04] What do you think the first step would be to that?

Participant B [01:00:10] You know, we have all of these, all these surveys. I think about the Common App, and students are asked about their race, their-- and they may even be asking about whether students are queer now, I don't know, we've been fighting for that for a long time, but their religion and these other aspects of their identity. But I don't know, do they ask about disability on those apps?

Zoe [01:00:49] That's another thing I'll look into one hundred percent. I'll definitely look into that.

Participant B [01:00:53] Yeah. And then also, not just are you disabled, but, how are you disabled? Can we find people who are having similar struggles and allow them to meet? Can we devote, a counselor to have a meeting among disabled students so that they can begin to share and support each other? Can we do something similar for faculty and staff? I think those would be great first steps. Because identity politics only works if people can recognize each other and form a community that can advocate for their rights and their existence. And so those first baby steps have to be taken. And, and I just don't see any attention to that on the campus. It could well be that there is something in the students’ sphere. But I don't I don't have access. I don't know about that. I haven't seen anything in the faculty or staff spheres.
Zoe [01:02:29] So we are come to our last question, which is, is there anything you would like to share regarding Denison's accessibility that has not been prompted?

Participant B [01:02:41] So I wrote this down yesterday, and I think I've already dressed it in one way, but maybe not in another. I wrote, I think Denison has potential, but no leadership. I just think there's no leadership that is devoted or recognized or designated to meet the needs of the disabled on this campus.

Zoe [01:03:16] Yeah. Do how do you-- do you think that leadership would be best coming from a disabled community member or a non-disabled community member?

Participant B [01:03:33] I've struggled with that question myself and I think for where I am right now. God, it would be great not to have to do everything myself, because I thought about it, I thought about just saying, hey, Biology department, I want to start a support group for disabled people on this campus and just send it out, I don't know that it feels risky, but it feels intimidating.


Participant B [01:04:17] It is. It is. Absolutely, and it's very nakedly doing so. And without an explanation, because I see people like I have a parking pass for-- this is actually something else I forgot to mention earlier. But disabled parking, I mean, come on, there was one spot that was anywhere close to my building and there was no other disabled parking spot. And I had to go to safety and security and request there to be another designated parking space. So, if there's one disabled person, any other disabled person has no access.


Participant B [01:05:21] Yes, yes. Yes. And and so yeah, so that was just kind of another example, but I just I just feel like it would be so nice if I got an email that said, hey, I am going to set this up. Would you like to join without outing yourself to the entire campus? That would just be fantastic. That would be a good day. That would be a good day.

Zoe [01:05:52] That would be maybe your-- what was that question that I have? Your ideal day of disability inclusivity.


Zoe [01:06:04] OK, that was the last question.

Participant B (in an email after the interview): I thought of one more thing that I didn't mention during the interview. And that is my students have been just terrific. The first day of class I explain that I had a traumatic brain injury and am now hypersensitive to light, and they have adjusted without any complaints - ever - to my limitations. I wear dark glasses all the time, and when I tell them that I can't look at their computer screens they just accept that they need to email me their graph or lab report or whatever, and we work from there. Of all groups of people
at Denison I feel most comfortable being disabled around my students. I am so thankful for them, more than they could ever know.
Interview D

Zoe [00:00:51] OK, sweet. So, these are kind of broken down into sections. So, the first part of this interview is going to just be some identifiers. So how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns do you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant D [00:01:14] I use she/her pronouns. And what is the other part of the question?

Zoe [00:01:23] Yeah, that's exactly right. OK, how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, student, faculty, or staff?

Participant D [00:01:32] I am a student at Denison.

Zoe [00:01:35] Perfect. OK, so now we're going to go into the terms and definitions section. So, the first one is how would you define disability?

Participant D [00:01:46] Disability, to me personally, I feel like it's just a-- something that is used to identify someone that is considered not normal. But personally, I do not like the term disability because I think in some ways it can be a bit derogatory towards people who have disabilities. And so personally, I don't like the term disability.

Zoe [00:02:12] OK, perfect. What term should be used when referring to disability? And this is the term that I'll use throughout the interview. And it also can be disability.

Participant D [00:02:26] Terms related to disabilities?

Zoe [00:02:27] Like when I go through this interview and I'm referring to disability, which term should I be using? And it can also be disability.

Participant D [00:02:42] And it can't be disability?

Zoe [00:02:43] It can be. It can be disability.

Participant D [00:02:49] OK, I guess disability is OK and if we are referring to it.

Zoe [00:03:01] Sounds good. OK. How do others think-- what do others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant D [00:03:12] Oh, your audio cut off.

Zoe [00:03:16] OK, sorry. What do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant D [00:03:23] You're frozen.

Zoe [00:03:23] Let me know and I-- you can hear me again.
Participant D [00:03:31] I can hear you now.

Zoe [00:03:32] OK, sweet. Sorry about that.

Participant D [00:03:34] I can see you now.

Zoe [00:03:34] Great, OK.

Participant D [00:03:36] It must be my part.

Zoe [00:03:38] No, you're totally fine. OK. What do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant D [00:03:46] I need to move to a different part of my house for connectivity.

Zoe [00:03:56] OK, no worries. OK so, what do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant D [00:04:05] I guess for me personally, I think about just how big people with disabilities like the community is, because personally I am part of the community. So, I think I just think about or wonder about the credibility it is, it has. And I guess for some who don't have a disability, I think they could see it like some person who has a limit.

Zoe [00:04:42] Some person who what? Sorry, I'm having a little troubling hearing you.

Participant D [00:04:44] It has like a-- it has a limit. First yeah, but not everyone can do the same things. They don't have a poor quality of life because they have a disability.

Zoe [00:04:55] Yeah, perfect. So, this one can be interpreted quite similarly, but what do other think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant D [00:05:06] Others probably, probably would see it as like a physical or physical disability because those are the most common ones that are shown. People don't realize there's that it's intellectual disability, learning disabilities, or invisible disabilities, like deafness, autism, etc.

Zoe [00:05:33] Yep!

Participant D [00:05:33] Yeah.

Zoe [00:05:33] Definitely. OK, do you see disability as an identity? Why?

Participant D [00:05:41] Personally, I do. I, it's my disability is a part of my identity. So, I feel like it's very important, but it depends on the person and how they choose to identify.
Zoe [00:05:55] Do you perceive yourself as disabled? Why?

Participant D [00:06:00] But I don't think I am disabled because I had the privilege to be exposed to-- so I'm deaf. So, I've had the privilege to be exposed to cochlear implants at a young age. So, I have grown up hearing and speaking. I have not exactly been exposed to deaf culture, unfortunately. I wish I was, but yeah, I don't think I am. I don't consider myself disabled, but I do like recognize that I do have a disability.

Zoe [00:06:39] Right. What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant D [00:06:42] Accessibility, to me, means that providing resources to those with disabilities can have a better access to education, better access to buildings like other students, those that do not have a disability.

Zoe [00:07:04] Right. What does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant D [00:07:14] Disability inclusivity means to me that you realize that people with disabilities can be included. That because of their disability, they are not limited on what they can do. Like those who are deaf. There is a common stereotype that those that are deaf can't drive. And it's possibly not true. People don't realize driving requires seeing much more than hearing. So, it's just just realizing that those with disabilities can do as much as those without disabilities.

Zoe [00:07:55] Yeah. OK, so the next part of our questions is going to be experiences. So, the first question is, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant D [00:08:09] Personally, so I've only been at Denison for a short period of time. So, I have yet to really have a whole year at Denison. And and so far, it has been pretty good with accessibility for my specific type of disability. And I feel I would get what I needed.

Zoe [00:08:31] Great. What limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability, accessibility and/or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?

Participant D [00:08:47] For accessibility issues, I've noticed that a lot of the videos primarily online now. It struggles with having closed captions.

Zoe [00:09:03] Right.

Participant D [00:09:05] And that's pretty big from the video quality and video audio on videos do not help that much. And I think I rely on captions a lot. And I struggle with that too in my classes because some classes are recorded. And sometimes I want to go back and watch it, but there's not any captions there, and it's harder. And then for inclusivity, I think as of right now from my viewpoint, I have no trouble with that.

Zoe [00:09:47] Do you want closed captioning on this? Because I can do that if you want.
Participant D [00:10:01] Oh, no. I'm okay. I read lips so I can see your lips so I'm fine.

Zoe [00:10:06] Perfect. OK, just wanted to make sure. Let's see. What has been or is particularly accessible in disability inclusive at Denison University?

Participant D [00:10:30] Accessible, I guess like just the office of accessibility is just really a big factor in it because they set up meetings for people who need resources in accessibility. Denison has done a pretty great job, but I have yet to run into any problems with it.

Zoe [00:10:46] OK, how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning-- and then I'm going to give a list so you can say your experiences to any or a few of them, anything that you have an experience about. So how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, administration and students, or medical health appointments or procedures?

Participant D [00:11:20] So for mobility, I just noticed the lack of entry points at Denison for those who may have a wheelchair, for those who are visiting that may have a wheelchair. The lack of elevators, I would say as well, actually in the dormitory halls is a little bit concerning in my opinion. That's the main thing that I will talk about mobility. For communication, I actually had some trouble communicating with my teachers about my disability because my papers were not on time for school starting. So, my teachers didn't know that they had a student with a disability until a little bit late in the semester. But other than that, there really isn't anything that is really concerning to me.

Zoe [00:12:19] What were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you arrived on campus? And have these reactions changed over time? How so?

Participant D [00:12:29] So I visited Denison as a junior in high school and we actually set up a meeting with the accessibility office and we talked for about 30 minutes about what they would need to provide for my disability. And it was actually-- they were pretty well informed. And this was a reason why I chose Denison. I will honestly say after the, my papers weren't reaching my teachers in time, it made me lose a little confidence in the accessibility office. But yeah, the accessibility office helped me wave my foreign language credit due to my disability. And that is really important to me.

Zoe [00:13:23] What was the reason that the papers didn't get to your professors on time?

Participant D [00:13:32] So the reason that I was given was because my papers were at the bottom of a pile of papers and they just didn't see it.

Zoe [00:13:41] Oh gosh, that's awful! I'm so sorry.

Participant D [00:13:42] It's OK.
Zoe [00:13:45] What did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability, inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant D [00:13:52] I looked for things like which school would be willing to provide the kind of stuff. But also, be willing to allow for me to be my own advocate. So, like for example, one of the schools that I visited said that, oh she would be great for raising awareness on campus, but I didn’t want to go to a school that needed someone to raise awareness. And Denison seemed like they had experience with people who had a disability like I did. And I felt very comfortable with that.

Zoe [00:14:29] Nice, OK. What are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

Participant D [00:14:33] I guess as right now at the situation we're living in, as a consequence of this year, you may be missing a lot of stuff. Students with the situation I'm in, with the masks, etc., it's just harder to communicate when we are learning stuff online. And the lack of communication between faculty and staff, etc. So those are just some initial consequences.

Zoe [00:14:52] Yeah! OK, so what would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?

Participant D [00:15:19] An ideal day it's just, for me is being able to do things that are considered normal, I would say. Just being able to go around campus and not having to worry about not being able to get around as someone with a disability. And at Denison, I did not experience anything like that so.

Zoe [00:15:48] What other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant D [00:15:56] I'm a member of the LGBTQ community, so I'm a disabled LGBTQ member. And that's really brought in my eyes like how much people are, what's the word? People with disabilities are not accepted into communities as much as I thought, as I thought that they were. Cause I come from a small community that really accepted disability. That it is okay to have a disability. And I just like didn't realize how many people didn't want to be associated with disabilities or like, that minorities are like people who can't learn anything. So, yeah.

Zoe [00:16:52] Okay. And you experience that particularly in the LGBTQ community or all over?

Participant D [00:17:03] Not specifically, but it's more like when I started reaching out to other members of the LGBT community, not generally at Denison, but just like worldwide for social media. I just didn't realize much like oppression that disability, like the disabled community experiences both from heteronormative society, the sexual society, and from the LGBTQ community. But I feel like the LGBTQ community is more accepting in my opinion.
Zoe [00:17:51] Could you expand on when you said you said something about sexuality and that how that interacts with your disability identity and then you said another-- I can't remember, you said sexuality, the LGBTQ community and then you said one other thing. Could you expand on maybe two of those?

Participant D [00:18:15] Yes. So, for me, I identify as pansexual. So, I didn't realize and I started researching individuals with the disabilities I do. And I didn't realize how much oppression that they go through just based on their disability. Because I grew up with a cochlear implant so I didn't realize how much oppression how it affects your mental state mainly. I guess I'm just becoming a little bit more educated on what disability actually looks in the world, like disability awareness and LGBTQ awareness. And it's like my sexuality is what prompted me to find other communities online.

Zoe [00:19:15] How does heteronormativity affect the oppression of the disabled community faces?

Participant D [00:19:22] I guess just because there are people who don't think that like, oh, we are normal. We don't have a disability, therefore those people who do have those limits, they can't do-- I have personally not experienced a form of oppression, but based on what I've seen or talked to, talked to others with those who being individuals with a disability are just not able to do the same things or are not seen as intellectual as they are.

Zoe [00:20:06] OK, so now we're going in the support category of our questions. So, the first one is what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant D [00:20:18] Disability support means to me just providing the appropriate items that I need, such as like I need a strobe light for my room, just in case for fire alarms, etc. It's just making sure I have that. Closed captioning, obviously. And if something were to happen in one of my classes, I would need Denison support on like getting the information that I need for my classes if I am unable to attend. Providing me information I need for my classes so I can stay on top of it.

Zoe [00:21:06] In what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a disabled student?

Participant D [00:21:23] I partook in the D.U. Lead leadership retreat at Denison this last semester and we talked about Denison accessibility and providing for areas for it and I that is definitely when I saw first, I didn't realize how much Denison-- I think personally, I feel like Denison can be improved in providing resources for disabilities. And a lot of like my peers didn't realize how much we needed to improve because many of them do not have disabilities. So, I definitely felt very heard then. Although I have not experienced a time when I did feel like I wasn't heard. So, I think that is very good.

Zoe [00:22:16] Good. What does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?
Participant D [00:22:23] Advocacy to me means fighting to sustain basic rights, educating others about disability, for example, I'm thinking like educating others about what is happening and what to improve on. I feel like that is a great example of advocacy. I am definitely a very big advocate for disability, in my opinion.

Zoe [00:22:48] Great. OK, where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Participant D [00:23:14] As of right now, I do not really have that peer foundation for turning to. I probably would say the office of accessibility, because the people there feel like they have an idea of what to do in terms of advocacy. But I also feel like I could probably find other people, services, etc.

Zoe [00:23:51] Of course. OK, so now we're going to go into disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, the first question is, what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty and staff with disabilities?

Participant D [00:24:09] Like currently?


Participant D [00:24:13] OK. I feel like right now it conveys a very positive image. Like say if a person was touring Denison and they needed a form of accessibility, I feel like Denison would provide that because that's how I felt when I was touring. But I think that message is very very strong, but I do see room for improvement.

Zoe [00:24:47] OK, what should be improved about disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

Participant D [00:24:58] I feel like probably the location of the accessibility office because if there's an individual with a-- it's very hidden in my opinion, and that doesn't speak to me as like an office or a place that they can go to. I know they want to respect the identities of some people, but it's kind of very hidden. It looks like people want to hide it. And I know that Denison is very accepting and it's just hard to move an office around. But that's just one part that I have, the location of it. And then, yeah, mainly that. Just the location of it.

Zoe [00:25:48] Where do you think would be a better placement?

Participant D [00:25:57] I think somewhere that is on a ground level. Maybe Slayter because Slayter seems to home of different spaces, like the Red Frame Lab. It just seems very awkwardly placed at the bottom of Higley. And if you can't-- there's no signs really indicating that it's there. I feel like it needs a better office overall and just a place where people can go to.

Zoe [00:26:42] Mhm. OK, what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?
Participant D [00:26:52] I don't think I have one, to be honest, other than the fact that there's not a lot of mobility. But resources for those who need to be in a wheelchair or have a walker, there's not that many ramps or elevators for those individuals. And that's just my main concern, but I don't have anything urgent.

Zoe [00:27:20] Mhm. What should remain unchanged about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant D [00:27:29] Definitely the meetings. I definitely agree with that. And it technically is required, I know that, but it's definitely very important. A lot of things I agree with, with how Denison's accessibility office runs. A lot can remain unchanged, in my opinion.

Zoe [00:27:43] Great. OK, so that ends my questions. So, is there anything you would like to share regarding Denison's accessibility that has not been prompted?

Participant D [00:28:07] No.
Zoe [00:00:01] OK, let me just make sure. Yep, OK. So, the first question is going to be, how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant E [00:00:14] She/her pronouns and I'm a woman.

Zoe [00:00:22] OK, how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, student, faculty or staff?

Participant E [00:00:29] I would say my relationship to the community is probably like love/hate kind of thing. I appreciate and I also see a lot of issues in the Denison community.

Zoe [00:00:43] For sure. And you’re a student?

Participant E [00:00:46] Yes.

Zoe [00:00:48] Definitions and terms. This is the next section of our questions. So, the first one is how would you define disability?

Participant E [00:00:56] Ah! So, this is something I've definitely been learning a lot about in the past year, especially with the different ways to identify disability. And I feel like I have--everything I thought I knew about disability is not right. So, I know that it has to do with, like, not being able to access the same life as easier as other people because of anything really, I guess like medical issues or so on and so forth.

Zoe [00:01:35] Yeah, definitely. Great! OK, so what term should be used when referring to disability? And this will be the term that I continue to use throughout the interview and it can be disability. You're frozen on me just so you know.

Participant E [00:01:55] Your microphone just cut off.

Zoe [00:01:57] I think our Internet cut out. But I can hear you now. Can you hear me now?

Participant E [00:02:09] Let me see if-- OK, oh my gosh my internet in my house is just terrible.

Zoe [00:02:18] No, you're totally fine. But I can hear you right now.

Participant E [00:02:20] Can you hear me?

Zoe [00:02:21] Yeah.

Participant E [00:02:21] OK.
Zoe [00:02:22] I can just like you know if I can't and you let me know if you can't hear me, OK?

Participant E [00:02:26] OK.

Zoe [00:02:26] OK, so what term should be used when referring to disability? This will be the term I use throughout the interview as well. And the term can be disability. So, whichever whatever you're comfortable with is just what I want to know.

Participant E [00:02:40] Yeah! That's good, of course.

Zoe [00:02:45] OK, what do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant E [00:02:53] I think people think of pity and which is like one thing, and then I also think people think about like a handicap restroom in very short, so I don't think people think about it all too much. Yeah, a lack of accessibility.

Zoe [00:03:23] Mhm. OK, this is a very similar question, but what do others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant E [00:03:35] I would say very similar things of lack of accessibility in a very general sense or in more narrow-minded mind like physical accessibility. Yeah.

Zoe [00:03:52] Do you see disability as an identity? Why?

Participant E [00:03:57] I think it can be. I don't see for myself, but I think for a lot of people it is how they go about living in the world, constantly being reminded of whatever aspects of their life or isn't there like things that they need if they're not accessible, that's such a constant reminder. So, it does become a large part of your identity, but I wouldn't say it is for myself necessarily.

Zoe [00:04:23] Mhm. Do you perceive yourself as disabled? Why?

Participant E [00:04:28] I don't think I have a like clear answer to this question, because I think there-- I've had experiences where I definitely feel like there is a lack of accessibility there. With like I've had concussions in the past, but that's like a more of a medical issue. But then I would say that my mental health definitely plays a role in school and not largely to my academic life and there's definitely been a lot of hurdles there with communicating to professors and like needing my doctors to step in, and like send notes back and forth. So in that way, I think there's definitely been some hurdles in my accessibility to that part of my education. Communication hasn't been like super ideal, you could say.

Zoe [00:05:15] OK, for sure. What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant E [00:05:28] Yeah, so I'd say a lot of it is support, and especially this past when year I had a, this past semester when I had a concussion and I was struggling with mental health things, I think like accommodations was a really hard thing to get my hands on, to attain,
especially and like professors are always a little hesitant to, in my experience, have been hesitant to give accommodations for mental health. But even with my concussion, which I thought was like would have been far more like it would have been taken seriously and my professors would have understood it, they were like constantly wanting doctors’ notes. And I was like, you have one first of all! And expecting me to hop on a zoom call when I wasn't supposed to be looking at my computer and like having trouble reading, staying awake. And so those were-- I don't even remember what the question was, but yeah.

Zoe [00:06:26] It was, what is-- what does accessibility mean to you?

Participant E [00:06:29] So I think yeah, I would definitely-- oh I also have ADHD. I have a lot to talk about on that and like yeah, so I would say my ADHD is also like school like accessibility in schools is what I usually think of relating to myself. But yeah, I would say accessibility, just means like getting the support I needed to be able to like live my life, how I see like, and get the education that I believe I should be getting.

Zoe [00:07:03] Of course. OK. What does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant E [00:07:12] It's something I've heard and I would say just always making an effort to learn about what accessibility is and what it means, what other people need, like listening and making changes.

Zoe [00:07:33] Yeah, great. OK, so now we're going to the experiences section of our questions. So, the first one in this section is what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant E [00:07:51] Yeah, so I still feel weird because I don't know if I fully can claim to have a disability, but I think that there's like more of a range of what's not accessible, like in my experiences. And so, I would say like the main things would be ADHD, having like depression, anxiety and then with my concussion this past year and I've also had like other pretty serious--like my freshman year I got this flu and my sophomore year, I got really sick again. And like, I've just had a lot of experiences with professors, like not thinking an excuse is valid enough. Or if I'm like, hey this one night I'm struggling with this assignment and being able to get it done. Can I have an extension? Like then everything to be fine and they're like, well, I give you an extra day. And I'm like, if you gave me the weekend, everything would be fine. That all I need. And they're like, I can't make that happen. And I'm like yeah well, that's fine, but OK. Yeah, so I would say that's a large yeah, a large part of my experience is stories like that.

Zoe [00:09:09] Yeah, for sure. OK, what limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility and/or inclusivity of the issues in your university related experiences? And if you ever need me to like repeat questions like let me know.

Participant E [00:09:25] OK, yeah. I get so sidetracked.

Zoe [00:09:29] No, you're good!
Participant E [00:09:29] Well I would say with like zoom classes, that's the-- wait can you repeat the question again?

Zoe [00:09:38] Yeah, sure! Do you want me to type it in the chat too?

Participant E [00:09:40] That would be great, actually.

Zoe [00:09:41] Yeah. OK, so just got to get situated. OK, I'll pull up the doc too so I can just copy and paste after this one question. So, I'll just read it again. What limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility and/or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?

Participant E [00:10:26] OK, so I would definitely say a disconnect between Whisler stuff and professors and what is accommodating and what's not, and I've had professors say to me, being like, look, I know I need to provide you with accommodations, but... And there's always a but, of like like I don't know if the question of, like, deserving and a question of like, if it's valid and I'm like, it's it's like I don't know. And then Whisler sometimes steps in and they're like, oh yeah, like this is like-- especially with my concussion, which I feel like was a serious thing. I needed to like heal from it to be able to like move forward and learn and like I had a previous one and ever since that, my eyesight has been like a little off. And so, I wanted to make sure I could take care of myself. And they asked me to compromise my health, which was a weird, yeah it was an uncomfortable place to be. And I have definitely, I've definitely experienced a lot of things with my ADHD/anxiety and depression. They're all pretty tied together. And I'm just like, if I ever get sick or have my concussion, like they kind of respond in similar ways except for like getting a cold. It's like they're more understanding of that than they ever have been for like anything else. So, I'm like OK, that's great, but sometimes I'm just like, I have a cold and they accept it. Anything else-- yeah so, I like was like well, I guess I have to say something less serious to get more like accommodations.

Zoe [00:12:22] Like a migraine. Migraines always get you out.

Participant E [00:12:22] Exactly. So, it's like more of me playing a game of like what can I say to get what I need? And kind of having to learn how to manipulate it a little bit because they're more likely to listen to me having a cold or a headache than when I'm having a rough mental health day.

Zoe [00:12:49] Yeah, OK. What has been or is particularly accessible and disability inclusive at Denison University.

Participant E [00:13:05] Professors. Professors have actually been really accommodating and have been so understanding of like, oh, let's see if there's a better, like, time line that would work or like a better way to get this assignment done. Or they say, I mean they have to do this with extended time with tests. But I've had some professors reach out and set up a meeting and be like, what else do you need? And they are very proactive about learning about my learning styles and learning about what I need best. And I've seen that, but that's more of a rare occurrence for Denison professors, in my experience. Even with ARC I have had some troubles because I've
reached out to ARC for just support and I definitely get support, but there's still kind of a thing where they're like, oh, but this was an issue a week ago. Why is it still an issue? And I'm like, well it's still here so, yeah.

**Zoe** [00:14:24] So, this is halfway through our questions. So, I just want to-- if you need a break, this would be a great time to have one. You can also have a break anytime. But would you like a break right now? We're halfway through.

**Participant E** [00:14:33] I think I'm all set!

**Zoe** [00:14:37] OK, sounds good. OK, so our next question is kind of lengthy. So, here I'm just coping and pasting it. So, have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning-- and then I have like four different points and you can speak to all, any, all or any of them. So, mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, administration and students, and the last one is medical or health appointments or procedures.

**Participant E** [00:15:10] OK, so for mobility at first, I didn't and this is like nothing chronic. But my sophomore year I came back and I had like a cyst on my ovary. It was like no big deal, but I got it removed and I like was having like a week or like a matter of days before I came back to campus. And it was really hard to move back in and carry all of stuff. So, my mom had to drive out and like help me move in just because there wasn't an elevator. And so, there's something you need something for like one day. It's like it's really just like two weeks where it affected my life. But I have experience with that. So, and that of like academic accommodations, definitely I have. And yeah, so there's like I've experienced professors giving me accommodations, but then not like outlining what that is. And like kind of being like, OK, well, you make this up as you go. And sometimes I appreciate that, but then sometimes they don't communicate what an extension is and sometimes they say, of course I understand that and like, here's an extension, but they take it out of my grade without telling me. And I've also had professors give me extensions and then threaten to take them away if like they have an idea that I'm not doing as much work as I was supposed to, before there is even a deadline to turn anything in. Not that their absurd. And so, there's like even with trying to get an extension for my concussion this year, people who worked at ARC were like yeah, I don't know if this is the best thing. And I'm like, I missed two weeks out of the semester. And they somehow tried to tell me that I didn't need it or shouldn't have it. Like this is what my doctor recommended. What? Like, why do you know better? And so, I'm like I've definitely had some conversations with like between me and professors. It was like almost like needing to like be so assertive when like telling them what I need. And they don't give that to me, fine. But like, this is what would make my life easier and like take it or leave it. And then sometimes, it's like thirty percent of the time they are accommodating. I would say like seventy percent of the time it's a struggle. Yeah. And then, yeah so, I would say a lot of times it does come down to like academic accommodations with like health issues and-- yeah, the communication is just like always rough. Like one time I had a meeting with a professor on zoom and I was like having like a breakdown in the middle of it and he was still just being so inappropriate and unprofessional and telling me, like, how what is an acceptable way to handle what I have going on and whatnot. And that was even just pertaining, like mental health was kind of a part of it, but it was just like it was so weird. Yeah. So medical and health appointments and procedures. I have found for the most part Whisler stuff
to be pretty supporting and also like pretty good at advocating for like what I need and getting advice. And so, I definitely appreciate most of what I've seen from Whistler, but I also know Whistler is like-- I have pretty standard things I deal with so they know exactly what to do. But and like I think they're used to this and yeah. So, but I, the counselor I saw Whisler this past semester was amazing and like was always so generous to write letters to my professors if I needed it or to like advocate for me. So, I would say I've definitely gotten like some solid support in, more from the like from Whisler from the from like academics at Denison.

Zoe [00:19:51] OK, so our next question, what were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? Have these reactions changed over time? How so?

Participant E [00:20:07] Yeah, so I would say like. This is a good question. And I would say that when I arrived on campus and versus now, I, I need different levels of accommodations for-- like when I first arrived on campus, I was not yet diagnosed with ADHD and I had a pretty good mental health at the time, which has changed. And so, I definitely never thought about it because I never needed it. But now, yeah, so things have definitely changed, but only because now I need more communication between professors and there like is just a lot more that is required of me to get what I need.

Zoe [00:21:09] How was the process like having to-- was it was it a difficult process or not to get that diagnosis and then to reach the accommodation s at the school? Like, could you describe how that process was for you?

Participant E [00:21:31] Yeah. So, I was diagnosed last last fall, so about a year ago. And it originally was because when I was like seeing my doctor about my meds. It's like, oh, what's up? And I'm like, I'm still having trouble focusing. And he's like, well that might be ADHD. Like does your family have ADHD? And because my entire family does have ADHD, he was like OK, well, let's send you over to get that checked out. So, I went to a place in Newark and within a week they diagnosed me, which is pretty-- it was not expecting it to be that fast, which was helpful because I finally got like the meds I needed to help me like pass my classes for that semester. And I was like, wow, I can focus. But even since then, I didn't know that I could get like time extensions for things until this semester. So, it's like there's a lot I didn't know about. And I think it wasn't until one of my professors was like, oh, like if you have like she's like if you have, like, accommodations like if you have ADHD, for example, and you need extended time, talk to me. And I like what? I can get this? I think it was a friend who had it and I was like, I want that! And like I needed it. Like I've never finished a test on time or with like extra time, if I was like, unless I really knew the material super, super well and it was easy. And I didn't know that until like almost about a year after I got my diagnosis. And so, I was like, what else is there that I can get to make life easier? So, my diagnosis was really fast, but I feel like I still don't know a lot about like what is available. Like I know that, like now if I ever want to go to grad school, I think I have more time on the tests too. So, there's like this is like something that I wish I knew earlier. And like, yeah.

Zoe [00:23:48] How do you-- I'm just trying to think about, like, how because I'm sure other people have had experiences with not knowing information about what support they could have.
Do you have any suggestions on how students, faculty or staff could receive that information, a good way to receive that information rather than them having to seek it out?

**Participant E** [00:24:15] Yeah, that's a good question. I think it would have been helpful if, like when Whisler did they tell me that I have an issue, that if there is some kind of white sheet of paper that just had like what is available and what the process is like, make to like, how to communicate this to my professors and just to get that conversation going would have been really helpful. Or if maybe professors knew that. Well I mean they do you know, but think sometimes it would be helpful for them to address it at the beginning of every semester, because I know a lot of professors do that. But most of my professors I don't think have that like they put in the syllabus, of course, but I don't think it's ever been spoken.

**Zoe** [00:25:10] OK, perfect. Thank you. OK. So, our next one is, what did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility? And if this doesn't pertain, you can also explain that.

**Participant E** [00:25:28] Yeah, well I definitely wanted to make sure that the campus I was going to had like a good relationship with campus safety, which I still don't know if Denison does. But more so than a lot of other schools that I was looking at and also that the students had a good relationship with the health center. And there isn't a lot of ways to know if they do. But I remember looking at like the top two schools that I was and I remember being like, oh, it seems like students were comfortable at the school versus the other one. Not like that was my decision factor, but I definitely looking into, like, getting support from other parts of campus life, like the health center or like if counseling is accessible.

**Zoe** [00:26:18] Would you say counseling is accessible at Denison?

**Participant E** [00:26:23] I think they have a lot of room for improvement. I know that their resources limit them, but this year I got more-- I had like experienced and heard from other people like there was more availability to meet with counselors. And so, I was allowed, I got to talk to my counselor once a week rather than like twice a month, which was nice. So, in that way, things have improved, but yeah.

**Zoe** [00:27:05] OK, what are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

**Participant E** [00:27:14] So with ADHD and mental health, it can definitely like take a toll on academics and not getting accommodations for things definitely just takes like tolls on your grade. And like that's stressful. So, I think the main thing is just like it's harder to get good grades and maintain a good GPA because I'm mostly focused on like, my struggle at Denison has been turning assignments like making sure I don't get points docked from assignments when I turn them in rather than like, I'm trying to think how to phrase this. But it's easier to keep points because it's like a well written paper. But I always lose my points on like, if I turn it in a day late. So, and like a lot of it does come down to like my own issue of managing time, but it mostly comes down to like my ADHD, and like anxiety and depression.
Zoe [00:28:24] What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?

Participant E [00:28:34] Definitely hearing people's experiences, because it's a lot of people, including myself, don't know a lot about what disability or accessibility means. So definitely a place to be able to listen to other people, but then also like just education and resources, whether that's like just a pamphlet with basic definitions on it or. Yeah, just looking for people.

Zoe [00:29:11] How how could you see a place to listen to other people's experiences? Like what would that look like?

Participant E [00:29:24] I think it could be like a talk per se or like or it could be just like a written kinda format of people's experiences, I don't know. Yeah, I would probably say like to talk, maybe a zoom with COVID. A discussion.

Zoe [00:29:44] Yeah, yeah, for sure. What other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant E [00:30:00] Oh definitely like coming from like a pretty like like I'm a white woman with solid health insurance, so that makes things a lot easier for me. And my family also has my two sisters and my dad both have Type 1 Diabetes, which means like our health insurance costs a lot, but because of that, like I benefit from having that health insurance. That's like like because my family needs like higher quality health insurance, I get like pretty good health insurance. So that that helps it for sure.

Zoe [00:30:46] Definitely. OK, so that concludes the experiences section. So now we're going into support. So, first question is, what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant E [00:30:59] I would say that on campus, I would rather have people who are trying to support me and are interacting with me about like whether it's like my ADHD and whatever it is to, to like, ask how they can help rather than be like, OK, here's your solution. Let's see if you can make this work. So, it's like another test for me to do. And I'm like, oh, great, thanks. When in reality, like, that's not what I needed. Sometimes I'm like yeah, can I just have another two hours to turn this in. And then I turn it in and then sometimes they're like, oh my gosh, don't worry about that. Like, get it to me when you can. And then other professors are like, sure if you don't get it into me in an hour, like sorry, or like no sorry, you can't. And I'm like okay, sure. I have to accept it, that's fine. Yeah, so I would say support's very varying.

Zoe [00:31:53] Definitely. OK, in what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a disabled student, faculty or staff? So, student.

Participant E [00:32:21] I would say I think a lot of, in my experience, professors have definitely questioned my experiences and questioned the validity of what I need and my experiences and all of these things. And I'm just like, OK, you can question me like that doesn't help me. Like what does that do? It doesn't do anything. But I definitely, I feel heard from from
the Whisler staff that I've worked with and like talked to. But I definitely like need to make myself heard for with professors and with academic support like it it takes more than reaching out, like it takes discussions, and like daily emails and like it takes so much time. And like most of my classes, it's like talking to my professors about like what I need and advocating for myself rather than like focusing on my work.

Zoe [00:33:34] So what, how-- what would you like to see different in terms of that situation?

Participant E [00:33:46] I would like to see professors accepting doctors' notes especially with my concussion. Like I mean, I think whenever I have a doctor's note, it should be valid. But like, I was so shocked that when I had my concussion and like the first week, like a day after I figured out that I had a concussion, my professor is like, no, we need to zoom right now. Like, we need to zoom today between like four to six. And I'm like, that doesn't work for me. No, I can't. And and then with that, like, because he was like, I could never, it was so hard to find a time to talk to you. He was like, that meant that I didn't take the class as seriously. And like he was less willing to provide accommodations like throughout the rest of the semester because he was already, like, hard to work with. And so, I was just like okay. Not much I can do about that.

Zoe [00:34:48] It's like, girl, I had a concussion!

Participant E [00:34:56] Yeah, I don't know if that answers your question.

Zoe [00:34:56] Yeah, no, definitely, definitely. OK, what does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

Participant E [00:35:12] I feel like there's definitely a lot of room for more advocacy, just with like different learning styles and people's brains working in different ways. And I-- it would be nice if professors knew more about like education styles and education theory, per se, with knowing how to specifically teach students with ADHD or whatever, like if your brain isn't neurotypical. Like learning how to connect with those students and learning how to make just a different format of learning more accessible. And I had some professors who are like awesome at that, and it's clear that it's intentional, but it works really well and it's a really good learning environment. But like, it's a pretty simple thing, but I think that would be really helpful.

Zoe [00:36:17] Definitely. OK, where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Participant E [00:36:29] I would say Whisler, mainly and then ARC, but I haven't had as much luck with ARC.

Zoe [00:36:41] So now this is our last section, is disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. That's loud, there's a motorcycle outside. What do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty or staff disabilities?

Participant E [00:37:03] I would say it conveys that it's not really a thing because I would say I'm, no a lot of school is accessible for me and like most learning most of my life, so it's not like
it's like the most traumatic thing. But at the same time, it does take a large toll of my energy. A large toll of my time to like advocate for these things that I didn't even realize, like I necessarily needed or things that I have trouble convincing myself that are valid. And I think because there's not much of any conversation about, like accessibility and disability like that, it's not really a thing and it's there's so much room for improvement.

Zoe [00:37:56] What should be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

Participant E [00:38:07] I definitely don't have many specifics for what should be improved, but I think there can definitely or maybe with Aug-O. I was an Aug-O leader this past year and there's so many informational sessions and there's so many things about diversity and sexual respect and we have so many important conversations. So, like, what's one more and why is this not being included? And so, there are so many easy, easy opportunities to just help people learn about that. And I think this could be the most important thing for professors and students to be forced just to learn about it like they can like, it's a constant thing, but it's like having a conversation doesn't take more than an hour so, yeah.

Zoe [00:39:08] Is there any, because I, Aug-O is like, I don't remember Aug-O at all. At Aug-O, is there any information about or discussion at all about accommodations, ARC, disability? Like do you know?

Participant E [00:39:22] There's definitely a session about ARC. But think a lot of it like ARC exists and it's kind of tied in with, like, finding resources at the library.

Zoe [00:39:33] OK.

Participant E [00:39:34] Yeah. So, like I think it's mostly focused on tutoring and like how to find a tutor and that kind of stuff. And so, I think it's like, you know, if you need anything, these people exist. These people can help you and you can find a tutor and that's kind of it.

Zoe [00:39:55] Hmm OK. OK, what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity-- oh wait! Also, what should remain unchanged about Denison inclusivity and disability.

Participant E [00:40:15] Everything can change a little bit, I would say. Yeah, I can't think of anything that's like great about Denison's inclusivity.

Zoe [00:40:21] Yeah, no worries. OK, what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?

Participant E [00:40:32] I would say that I have like a fairly common experience, like know a lot of other students experience the same struggles that I do and like that's just at one end of the spectrum. And there's definitely a lot more things that other people are experiencing that I have no idea about. And if I can barely get like accommodations for ADHD or like my mental health, which so many students struggle with, then like, what's not getting any attention? Yeah.
Zoe [00:41:04] Yeah. For sure. OK, so is there anything you'd like to share regarding Denison's accessibility that has not been prompted?

Participant E [00:41:16] I don't think so. I think I'm all set!
Zoe [00:00:01] So, I'm going to be copying and pasting the questions into the chat, but I'll also say them. So, we're going to start off this is our definitions in terms section of our interview. So, the first one is, how would you define disability?

Participant F [00:00:20] I would define disability as either like a mental or physical condition that impairs your daily activities. Like it affects you in one way or another.

Zoe [00:00:32] Perfect. Thank you. OK. Our next one is, what term should be used when referring to disability. And this is going to be the term that I use throughout the interview and the term can also be disability.

Participant F [00:00:50] I think it really depends on the case to case basis, depending on what you would consider your disability to be. I usually tend to just call it like your condition or just kind of like your like needs more than a disability cause I think like sometimes like the term disability can kind of like make people feel like their condition is being devalued.

Zoe [00:01:17] For sure. OK, yeah. So, I'll go ahead and use condition or needs throughout then. It'll say disability though in the questions, but when I recite it, I'll say condition or needs [I ended up changing 'disability' to 'condition' or 'needs' where applicable in the chat]. And then I also did forget two identify questions. The first one is, how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns do you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant F [00:01:40] So, female and she/her/hers.

Zoe [00:01:42] Perfect. And then how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, student, faculty, or staff?

Participant F [00:01:51] I think it's been a very progressive relationship because I know for like me personally, it was really hard trying to adjust to Denison's like new environment and also because it was very different from like high school. And I think my relationship at the very beginning was kind of rocky. Just because I was still trying to find my place and trying to find my people, but then now, now that I like really like look at it, I see my relationship is pretty stable because I really found like what works for me, what doesn't work for me and, you know, stuff like that.

Zoe [00:02:27] Of course! Great. OK, and then just for the record, you're a student, correct?

Participant F [00:02:32] Yes.

Zoe [00:02:36] OK. I just have to say that. Our next question is, what do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant F [00:02:47] I think people tend to think about a disability as something that is physically seen. I think when the term disability comes to mind, kind of like condition, people
tend to think of like a physical attribute that they can see on someone like for example, people don't really consider things such as like mental health issues as like a disability. So that's, yeah.

**Zoe** [00:03:13] For sure. OK, and then this one is quite similar, but some people interpret it slightly different. So, what do others think of when they hear the term disability?

**Participant F** [00:03:28] I think others think, I think when others hear the term disability, they tend to see something that is quite obvious. Like something that they are able to see that affects their daily life. But I also think it also makes them think it kind of like influences them to think that they have something like very huge in their lives that kind of like doesn't allow them to do like normal activities that other people without a disability would be able to do.

**Zoe** [00:04:07] For sure, OK. Our next question is, do you see disability as an identity? Why?

**Participant F** [00:04:15] I think that it doesn't necessarily serve as an identity, but I think that it can definitely contribute your own identity in the way that you see life and the way that you see others. The reason why I think this is because I think that like a disability shouldn't or most of the time it doesn't define who you are as a person. But I think that having a specific condition or having gone through like specific experiences really influences the way that you think, the way that you view yourself and the way that you view the world. So, I think if you have a rough upbringing because of this condition, most of the time, you use whatever you've learned to kind of identify yourself and like help build your character off that.

**Zoe** [00:05:10] Yeah, definitely. OK, do you perceive yourself as disabled? Why?

**Participant F** [00:05:18] I for the longest time, I had kind of like a love/hate relationship with the way that I like identify myself because for the longest time, my condition was undiagnosed. So, I didn't know what was wrong with me. I just knew that it wasn't like normal. But also like my friends didn't get it and we didn't get it and I wasn't getting any answers. So, I think for the longest time it wasn't that I perceive myself as disabled or having a condition. It was more of like oh, I'm different, but I don't know why. So, I actually wasn't diagnosed until last year. And it was after like a big surgery. I had like a surgery like, right. It's like a really like rocky story. I had like a surgery like right before graduation. So, I was in a wheelchair for like months. And even then, they weren't able to catch my condition. And it wasn't until a few months after the surgery that they were able to diagnose me when I went to a different doctor. And I think that when I started receiving those answers, it kind of like makes sense as to why I felt the way that I did because sometimes I felt like excluded in certain ways. So, I right now, when I think about myself, I don't necessarily perceive myself as disabled, but I think that like having like a disability definitely changes my perspective on like certain things. So, then for me, for example, like it's something that like is in view like physically like when people look at me, they just think, oh yeah, like you're normal. You have all like you have like all your-- you're not missing like a body part, like you don't have like an obvious like change in your appearance. So, it's kind of something that like a lot of people don't really know about until they get really comfortable and like talk to me about it.

**Zoe** [00:07:21] Right, yeah. Definitely. OK, what does accessibility mean to you?
Participant F [00:07:30] Accessibility, what it means to me, I think that it mostly pertains to having like the resources and opportunities to be able to do as equally good or even more good than other people. And I don't specifically face your particular challenges or has your disabilities. So, I think it really means just having like the resources and the support that you need in all in order to be like successful.

Zoe [00:08:03] Great. Thank you. OK, and what does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant F [00:08:11] I think disability inclusivity is just not only knowing more about yourself and your condition and ways to support yourself. But I think it also means educating others around you and just kind of having like a support system where people that might not have have been to have that that do not have this condition or do not know anybody personally that has a specific condition, is aware of it and knows how to support you in the way that you don't feel like pressured to advocate for yourself, if that makes sense. Because I think like that's a very controversial term in a way, because like you should obviously always advocate for yourself, but you also shouldn't be placed in a position where you constantly have to push through to make others view your point of view because that can also be mentally frustrating. So, I think keeping that in mind and just having like a more like supportive community is what really defines inclusivity.

Zoe [00:09:18] That's a great answer. Thank you. OK, so what has your experience been like-- here just give me one second. How what has your experience been like having your condition on Denison's campus?

Participant F [00:09:39] I think it's definitely been challenging because when I entered Denison, I still wasn't diagnosed. I was diagnosed towards the end of my first semester at Denison. So, I think like my first semester because I didn't really have the answers that I needed yet, I wasn't sure how I feel about my situation and I didn't know what was wrong and I think for my particular situation like I have endometriosis, which is a chronic pain condition and I think like what's most challenging about endometriosis itself is that people can't physically, they can't physically see it. But also, I think a lot of people have like a lot of misconceptions and stigma, especially because that condition specifically affects the way that you feel like your pain and also like it affects your periods. So, then with me, ever since I was in high school when like I got my period, I wouldn't go to school at all. Like it would go to the point where like I couldn't go up the stairs and I couldn't go up like I couldn't stand up at all. And it was kind of like everybody was like oh OK, like you have cramps. It's normal, but like it's not normal to not go to school every single month. And I think that like my first semester at Denison because I was undiagnosed and a lot of the doctors that I've seen were like oh, no, that's fine. Like, you know, it's just pain. I think that like it was really difficult because especially since I'm like a STEM major, I have labs. And on the days where I felt like I could get up, I felt like I had to force myself. And I feel like that also took a toll on my mental health. So, I think I definitely the very beginning, my experience with like having endometriosis on Denison's campus was very tough and I didn't have the answers because I wasn't diagnosed yet. It wasn't on my file. Like I didn't have like ARC resources. I was kind of limited on what I was able to do, what I wasn't able to do. And for me, it was kind of hard because I can't just say like every single month to a professor, oh yeah, I can't
like go. I have pain. Because then they're like pain? Just come to class. But it's like I feel like it's one of those things where it's kind of like stigmatized. A lot of people don't really know much about the condition that I didn't feel comfortable sharing what it felt. So, then after I was diagnosed, I was put on treatment. So, then I became I started the transition. I was like getting documents with ARC to get accommodations because a lot of the things that I personally needed was like more like time for exams and stuff like that because with endometriosis, I can't stay in one place for like more than 30 minutes like I have to get up and move because I also get a lot of back pain. So, then for me I knew for sure like I would fidget a lot because I would be trying to move, but also not make it look suspicious that I was trying to cheat when I wasn't. So, I started the process and everything with my doctor trying to get everything approved by Denison. Then COVID hit and I wasn't able to finish the process. And then we went back to camp and there is a bunch of you know, you can’t go out, a bunch of regulations. The clinics started being more strict about the reasons why you could go in and the reasons why you couldn’t. For some time it was closed. But I think that ever since I've ever since I learned about my diagnosis, I have been able to better advocate for myself. And I think that I started having more personal connections with my professors. And depending on who the professor was, sometimes I will share what what I needed as an individual. And I told them about, you know, like I'm trying to get everything approved with ARC, I'm trying to work with my doctor right now, despite all the COVID things going on. So, they were aware that I was trying to make accommodations and even though I didn't have the actual documentation already set in place, they were really understanding. So, I think that once I knew about it and I did more research on the condition, the place to really talk to people and sometimes with friends educate them as well, I think that I was able to have a more positive experience because I was definitely able to also take care of my mental health in the same time because I didn't feel as lost or as confused as to what was happening. And I think definitely it's been progressively getting way better since the first semester here.

**Zoe [00:15:00]** Great. OK, thank you. I'm just copying and pasting the next one. OK, what limitations, if any, have you experienced due to accessibility or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?

**Participant F [00:15:22]** I think, well still the limitations that I experienced have been mainly around, just like just trying to effectively communicate my needs with other people. And also, I think a huge part in that is that a lot of people, like I previously said, a lot of people they attribute to like disabilities to physical needs. So, I think also, like I know I had an instance where sometimes I will say oh, hey. I'm in a lot of pain, like I can't go. My back hurts. And a lot of people are like, oh, you're a college student. Like you're not like everything is wrong. And like you don't look bad. So, I think that's like a huge thing. Just like I think like the term disability and what other people you and think of it, I think it's right now it's like really like a narrow definition. But I think not a lot of people are educated on like what it actually means to the disabled and to have a disability or condition. So I think because of that, that's also like why it's so hard to communicate my needs sometimes. And I think also like I know like for Denison's campus sometimes when there's like programs based on like mental health and like physical wellness and stuff like that, I think most of the times chronic pain is in one of the programs that I usually incorporate into campus. And I think that's also like a big issue and something that we definitely need to work on because chronic pain management is something so important, anything that it's not really talked enough about in on campus,
especially because a lot of these conditions affect a lot of people do cause chronic pain. So, even if it's not directly correlated with it, I think it's something that it's definitely worth mentioning about because a lot of people tend to forget about that and yeah.

**Zoe [00:17:31]** Yeah, yeah, seriously. OK, what has been and/or is particularly accessible and inclusive at Denison University concerning your condition?

**Participant F [00:17:51]** I think it's in a way kind of touching on some of the things from like the previous question because I think that like something that has been incredibly accessible is like mental health resources, like counseling opportunities and alternative therapy sessions are also something that like Denison often prides themselves with, such like aromatherapy. And they know they have like a lot of other therapies that they're trying to incorporate. And I think that's something that is really is something that like Denison is doing a good job in it because I think that like this is like an awesome opportunity for students to have one on one time and talk to like a medical professional about the way that their feeling, the way that like, you know, the way that they're just going about their feelings. And I think that's something really important because in a lot of these conditions, your mental health is often really impacted. And I think that a lot of times there's some communities that have like a huge stigma in the mental health field. So, I think that's definitely something to talk about. And I think in terms of inclusivity, I think that it's also inclusivity seems Denison is something like they have to work on because I know that. Yeah, like they can have the resources, but I think also like a big issue that arises from that is that sometimes like students feel scared or discouraged to participate in these resources that are accessible to them because they're often like they often feel like they're not being represented, whether that's in terms of gender or race or ethnicity. So, yeah.

**Zoe [00:19:52]** Yeah, definitely. OK, so this question has a couple different components and you can speak on behalf of any of the ones that are relevant to you and then you cannot speak on the ones that aren't relevant. So, how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning and then we have some four options, so mobility academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, admin and students, or administration not admin. Same thing. And then medical or health appointments or procedures.

**Participant F [00:20:24]** For academic accommodations, I think, although although I was not able to officially submit the documentation because of COVID, I think the ARC center's flexibility with it and also like the professors' willingness to accept unofficial like paperwork is also like a really good thing because given the circumstances, I think that like COVID had already added a lot to our plates. And so, having gone through all the stress of like getting everything approved, even though, like there was a lot of restrictions going on, like the medical settings and also the Denison's community. I think that's a huge advantage that I personally got in with professors and also regarded that like communication between between faculty and like staff. I think with me when I started, when I got my diagnosis, I went well, I was already going to therapy sessions at Whisler. So, I was working one on one with my therapist and I told her I wasn't really sure how I was going to communicate my needs and I wasn't really sure how I wanted to communicate like what I needed, what I felt and stuff like that. And so, she actually gave me a lot of like advice on how to properly communicate with professors and also with like my family. And there was one point where she directed me towards a staff member so I could
talk one on one with the staff member. So, I think having that help with like initiating the conversation was a huge help because that was like the beginning was like oh, like how was I going to obtain the resources and like the accessibility that I personally needed. And for mental and health appointments, most of my medical appointments were done outside of campus because that felt like insurance over there in Ohio. So, I traveled off campus for most of my medical appointments for stuff such as like therapy so, like mental health appointments basically, I would go to Whisler for those. So, that was something that I felt like I had easy access to because it was right on campus, like it was really easy to set up an appointment. And I was like lucky to be matched with like a counselor that I felt very comfortable with. So that was something that definitely helped with my experience.

Zoe [00:22:57] Great. And then you talked about the flexibility with accommodations without the diagnosis. Could you speak a little bit more on what that looked like?

Participant F [00:23:08] Yeah, so I when I went to the doctor and she gave me my diagnosis and I started learning more about my specific condition. I was also placed on treatment and I think a lot of the academic accommodations that I received from my professors like without the official documentation was also based on the medication that I was in because I was in a medication that was like very well, I'm still I'm still on the medication right now but when I started, I started having a lot of side effects and it helped with my pain. So, my chronic pain like it definitely it definitely helped in the sense that I have less back pain. I had that same period pain that I had, like where I couldn't stand up. I felt like for once in my life I was able to stand up and like go about my day while I was on my period, which is really weird to talk about. But like, I felt so relieved because I've never felt like that in my life. And it was because of this medication that I was able to continue doing my daily life activities. But there were also some some side effects that came along with all of these benefits and examples of the side effects that I had was like hot flashes. So, I would be in class and I would randomly feel like it was like ninety something degrees when it wasn't like that at all. And then I would be hot and then like really cold and then hot and then really cold. And I started, I was like more thirsty. So, I was constantly, constantly drinking water. And because of that I also had to go to the bathroom more often. And then I think at the very beginning, it was a really weird side effect that I had where it was kind of like I would feel like very, very like I would they were like they would be moments where I would be super hungry. And then there was a moment where I didn't eat like almost like a whole day without eating. So, my eating habits were affected by the medication. And I think because I was. Going through that phase of adjusting with the medication and kind of like experiencing a kind of like experimenting and dipping my toes to see if this is a medication that would have like that would be better for my health in the long term. And I also wanted to see the side effects would go away. But I think after talking with my professors and explaining to them, oh hey like I'm taking this treatment plan right now, these are the side effects. And I was wondering if like I could personally have like certain accommodations. So, I obviously wasn't because of the because I didn't have like official documentation, I wasn't able to have specific accommodations such as like oh yeah, like extended time on like exams and stuff like that. But I did have like accommodations such as like extended more like time or like for like essays. If it was like a class where it was like writing based or like my Spanish classes where it was like where I like writing component in it. I would also have more time for the assignments or homework. If it was presentations like the professor who allowed me to go over time without any
penalties. And it was like small things like that that really helped me because I know that there was sometimes times where I felt like I couldn't do it in the time that I like had just because I was-- there was a lot of external issues or like more like internal issues that were going on at the same time that were kind of distracting me from my academic performance. So, those were like the academic accommodations that I personally received without having like the official documentation yet.

Zoe [00:27:12] Right. Would it have benefitted you if you were able to get accommodations through ARC without the diagnosis? Like the official accommodations or the official documentation.

Participant F [00:27:27] Like if I would have had it, if I would have had the official documentation?

Zoe [00:27:31] Yeah. Would it have been beneficial for you to get those the actual ARC accommodations like registered through the school without the official documentation? Would that have been beneficial?

Participant F [00:27:42] Yeah, I definitely think so because something that I was talking with my doctor about like regarding this specific like form that we had to fill out was also that there was, all like the medication was going was, you know, working for me. It was going great. After like a few months, the side effects started going less and less and less. So, that was a good sign, but I think that even though there was a lot of benefits to the medication at the same time, there was also some days where it will fluctuate. So, when like for example, like before medication, my period would be like a full, a full week. And for the whole week like I couldn't like get up. Like I couldn't do anything. And on this medication, most of the time it would be like oh OK, like six out of the seven days I would be fine. But they would always be that one day where I was like, OK like where did I land? And for, I think with the ARC accommodations, like I would have had more flexibility on like days to be absent, but also catch up on work. And I know for a lot of professors they have like oh, you can only be like absent for like two days or like three days. And then after that we started deducting points from your grade. So, I think that's something that would have definitely helped me. If I had like official documentation because I know sometimes like, I felt like really forced to like go to class even though I wasn't like, I didn't feel like mentally or physically well. So, then because sometimes I had to go, I feel so uncomfortable. There were times where I had to go to the bathroom because of pain was too much and I couldn't go. And I would feel bad because at the end of the day, it's like I can concentrate in class. I'm missing out in class even though I'm physically there, but I'm not really there because I'm in the bathroom. So, then I think that was like a huge challenge for me personally. So, then I'm think with that like with that in mind, I remember like for one of my classes, I definitely went over like the that like, the amount of days that I could be absent from class. So, then I talked to the professor like one on one and I was like hey, like this is happening. But I felt, I remember being so anxious about telling her because I was like, I don't know if she's going to understand. I don't know if like. This is going to like I don't know, but I just didn't know how it was going to end. So, I think that like definitely having that in place would have definitely helped.
Zoe [00:30:34] Yeah, thank you. OK, so we're halfway, so I will offer a break if you want to break. This would be a good time to take one. Of course, you can take a break whenever. But do you want to break now or do you want to just keep on truckin?

Participant F [00:30:47] Oh, we can keep going.

Zoe [00:30:50] OK, sounds good. OK so, let me copy and paste this next one. OK, what were your initial reactions to Denison inclusivity and accessibility regarding various conditions when you first arrived on campus and have these reactions changed over time? How so?

Participant F [00:31:23] I think my, OK so, when I went to Denison the first time that I went as an admitted student, I was actually in a wheelchair. So, because that was during the time that I wouldn't like still recovered from surgery. So, that was for like June-O. So, then I had to go because then I was also Posse. So, they wanted us to meet with our mentor and everything. So, my initial reaction to Denison inclusivity was like oh wow, this is actually hard for people that are like in wheelchairs, that are like physically disabled. So, I think I got a little bit of an idea what it's like to actually have a physical condition on campus. And I think I didn't realize how it was kind of like really hard in a way, just because like the way that you would get around campus. I definitely couldn't go by myself. So, I remember just sitting there thinking like, wow like what if like-- would it be almost like impossible for someone that's like physically disabled to actually come to Denison and attend school? And whether that's attributed to in the natural course of like being on the hill or, you know, stuff like that. I think that like I like really like stop and think about it. And I don't remember ever seeing anyone that was like physically disabled in a wheelchair type of way. I would see people on crutches, but even then on crutches, I was also on crutches for a semester because I broke my ankle. It was hard. And I think my initial my very initial reaction was wow, like Denison, it doesn't really have a lot of like inclusivity and accessibility for people that either have difficulty with walking or can't able, like are not able to walk. So, then ways to make that better, I'm not exactly sure just because of the nature of like the campus, but also, I think navigation around the buildings themselves are also really tricky, especially with the residence halls where like there's no like elevators. And, you know, it was just like with me, they gave me a room on the second floor and we had a call Denison to give me like a room on the first floor cause I was in a wheelchair. So, I think yeah, my initial reaction was wow, this sucks. So, I think, as you know, as I got better and then I was, you know, how I am right now, I guess like where I wasn't on crutches, I wasn't in a wheelchair. I was able to walk by myself. I think that I really felt like looking into resources at Whisler and stuff. And when I first came in, I didn't really know anything about Whisler. And it seemed like there's a lot of misconceptions going around about like the resources that Whisler offers, especially within the upperclassmen because I remember asking around about therapy sessions and I got a lot of different opinions from upper classes, from them being like no, don't go. They suck or no, they charge you extra. Whisler always charges extra. And there was like a bunch of other misconceptions where I was like, I don't really know. I don't think I really understood how the Wellness Center worked until I started working with them because I work at the Wellness Center. But I think when I started working with them, I started learning more about what they do in order to promote inclusivity within like the student body. And certain therapies, like the medical procedures that they offer and stuff like that. And also, I agree that it's not the best. I think that is definitely like a good start. But I do think that
like, there's definitely a lot to improve on, but at least we have like kind of like a stepping down that we are able to expand.

**Zoe [00:36:06]** Definitely. So, what did you look for in a college campus in terms of inclusivity and accessibility?

**Participant F [00:36:16]** So, when I think of like inclusivity and accessibility in a college campus, I mostly look for how welcoming, like the student body is with like different like identifications and like different kind of ways that people identify themselves and relate to. Just because I think that like inclusivity and accessibility also isn't like one hundred percent determined and kind of assessed by like the medical setting or like the Wellness Center for that matter because they think that there's also the people that contribute to the inclusivity and accessibility. So, I think, I don't know, it's like kind of hard to answer this one because I think I already look for something in particular. I just kind of like observe and kinda see like oh OK, like where do we need improvement and where are we good? But I think if I would have to look for something, I would definitely be like how like how people like are able to obtain the resources and how well they are informed and educated on these resources. So, kinda like how well aware are they of like, you know, the resources that they offer.

**Zoe [00:37:43]** Yeah, definitely. OK, so this next one is, what are the consequences for having a condition at Denison University in particular?

**Participant F [00:37:58]** I think the consequences, well I think the I think Denison and it sounds like academically it's very rigorous and it's very fast paced. So, I think that having like a condition in places already before coming into Denison or even if you develop it during Denison. I think it, I think one of the consequences would be kind of like struggles academic wise just because I think that like a lot of the people that aren't diagnosed with the condition that they have and stuff, I think because they don't have a diagnosis and obviously you don't have a diagnosis, like you don't really have the support from ARC, I think that it can really jeopardize their academic performance at Denison and also like things like their attendance and kind of like their participation within the Denison community and an extracurricular activities is really affected by it.

**Zoe [00:39:00]** Mhm, definitely. OK, what would an ideal day of inclusivity and accessibility regarding your condition at Denison look like for you?

**Participant F [00:39:21]** I think, well my condition in specific, the days can fluctuate, but I think that an ideal day would be kind of just like waking up and I feel like physically well to go to class, like I would go to class. But I think just having like the support and like already knowing like 100 percent that you have your professors' support and encouragement and kind of like they're they're like green light that I would feel comfortable enough to get up and leave the classroom if I would need to. Or like I would feel confident asking my professors for additional help or asking my professor for something in particular, like an extension or something like that, because I don't know, maybe I was having about morning or maybe a bad night. And I think just having like the assurance that your professor would understand and also that your friends would understand is something that would be considered a perfect day. Because I know especially like
well, my friends know about my condition, but I know sometimes when I'm talking with other students, sometimes they're not aware that like a disability is something that goes way beyond like physical appearances. And I think just having like full comprehension from everyone and from everyone, including my professors and students, I think that that would be a perfect day.

Zoe [00:41:00] Yeah. OK, so the next one is, what other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of inclusivity and accessibility regarding your condition?

Participant F [00:41:22] I think, I think another like other aspects of my identity that have really shaped my experience has been definitely my race and ethnicity, just because I like I grew up in a very Hispanic dominated community and also like there was, there's always going to be stigma about the condition that I have, especially in the Hispanic community. But I think that, like because I was in my community for so long, I think that in some ways, like I already knew my mom's response, I really knew what it like that my family were going to be supportive. I already knew that, like, you know, that I can be comfortable and like share my experiences with my family. But I think that like having like having come from like a Hispanic dominated community and also having like close relationships with people in that community, I think it really affected my experience at Denison just because at the very beginning, like I couldn't find people that looked like me, I couldn't like even at like the Wellness Center, when I went over there, like there wasn't a single person that looked like me. And I think that was like a thing that kind of like tormented me a little bit just because I felt like oh, what if people understand me? Like, even though this was like a medical concern, I think that in some ways, like my like finding someone that looked like me brought me comfort in a way. And I think that not having that in the medical setting kind of like affected my experience.

Zoe [00:43:14] Yes, definitely. Okie dokie. So, now we're in the support section of these questions. So, let's see. What does support for your condition mean to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant F [00:43:34] I think support, what support means to me is just having like a nonjudgmental support system and also having an open mind and kind of willingness to learn in a way because like endometriosis is a condition not a lot of people know about, and it's also like a condition that people often just contribute to like periods when it really affects life outside your normal like cycle as well. So, I think just having like having like the willingness to also talk. And also in a way, like not try to compare is something that's really essential because sometimes like people like unintentionally would compare themselves to the person, although they're themselves not diagnosed. So, they're not they don't have the condition at all. So, it's kind of like devaluing the experiences of the other person. So, I think that like having like that willingness to really learn and kind of like listen to the other person and like learn what works for them and how to make them feel comfortable is something that's really important and like support wise.

Zoe [00:44:47] Definitely. OK, in what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a student with your condition?

Participant F [00:45:08] I feel heard in the way that, wait I think it's easier to start in like how I'm not heard. I think in ways that I do not feel heard as a student with my condition is that a lot
of people don't like they don't consider like something like endometriosis to be a disability. So, then I think this is something that also tends to be like a very specific condition where a lot of males, for example, do not know about. And I think that sometimes just especially with like male students or like male, just like males in general. I think that sometimes there is like a big misconception of like how this condition can affect a person. And I think that like not having gone through the experience of like actually having a period and going, you know, having like everything that goes along with this, such as like ovarian cysts and stuff like that, I think not going to experiences of having gone through this like this like female, like what they consider like the female things is kind of in a way of like sometimes it affects kind of like their viewpoint and their opinions on it. And in a way, sometimes it feels like they're devaluing your experiences as a female and also as someone that has the condition. So, yeah that's sometimes that's how sometimes I feel like I'm not heard. But in ways that I do feel hurt is sometimes is that sometimes I meet people that have similar conditions such as PCOS. And I feel like because they have these conditions and they've told their friends about it and their friends are like more aware of the conditions. And I feel just like having like the general like education of kind of like idea of like what it is to have like a condition that kind of like affects your reproductive system and like your chronic pain levels. I think that's something that like is definitely attributed to feeling supported and heard in a community. So, yeah.

Zoe [00:47:19] Definitely. OK. OK, what does advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison with your condition?

Participant F [00:47:42] I think we can see, I think advocacy, it tends to be a lot-- I think like so, let me rephrase this. So, like advocacy related to my experiences at Denison in my condition, I think it really depends on like just kind of like how well like people are really willing to look at not only the female reproductive system and also like medical conditions that affect strictly like a woman's body. I think that's also like a way to show like that you're an advocate in a way because you're also being inclusive of like females. And I know that like a lot of people tend to only focus on, you know, diseases of affect both genders and something that is really commonly seen. And I think because endometriosis is something that is not often talked about just because of the general stigma behind it. And like there's certain religions and certain like groups that like, you know, they don't really like talking about like periods or like their reproductive system or like specific medical condition that affects you as a female. I think that just being willing to learn more about and kind of like be there for someone in times of need. I think that's a way to show advocacy towards not only like the person, but also like people in general that have endometriosis. And, yeah.

Zoe [00:49:20] Yeah! Perfect. OK. Where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding your condition at Denison?

Participant F [00:49:37] I, well, my the first the first group of people that I turn to are definitely my closest friends because they tend to be like the ones that really know me the best and really have like heard like firsthand experiences or have even seen me in my worst days where they're physically they're like literally able to see me like not physically able to do things. And I think that's a huge thing because not that like sometimes they're able to really, like, talk to me and distract me from, like, all the negatives that affect my mental health and then think that's a huge
thing because it definitely alleviates some of the worries that come along with like oh yeah, like showing like my needs as someone that has endometriosis. And I think the second person or the second like the like the second way that I kind of turn is definitely someone from the Wellness Center. So, there's someone in there in particular that I have like a close relationship with and I usually talk to her about ways that I hope to feel better supported. And I think that like this person like knows where to direct me if I ever need help, either with my mental health or like physically and stuff like that. So, those are usually the two groups of people that I turn to.

Zoe [00:51:12] Great! I'm glad you have that support here. OK, so we're in our last section, which is disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, this first one. What do you think the current state of inclusivity and accessibility of various conditions conveys to students or faculty and staff with these various conditions?

Participant F [00:51:45] Wait. So, are you asking how the current state of inclusivity and accessibility of like different like conditions kind of like pertain to students?

Zoe [00:51:58] Yeah, yeah. So, what does-- the current state of accessibility and inclusivity, what does that, of Denison University, what does that show to students, faculty, and staff with disabilities? What does, what does that mean to students, faculty and staff with disabilities. Just kind of how does that how does the current state of accessibility and inclusivity of various conditions kind of show up?

Participant F [00:52:24] I think that Denison has definitely shown more interest to expanding their their programs and kind of like resources for people of different disabilities. Because I know that like when I, well I don't know for how long it has been because I'm only in my second year. But I remember when I started working at the Wellness Center, there was there was a talk about growing more alternative therapy options for people that didn't feel comfortable with like probably talking to a therapist or trying to find alternative ways to kind of help alleviate some of the worries or the pain. So, I think that it's definitely something that has been growing ever since my first year here at Denison. And I know there has been like a like a more wider emphasis on mental health and trying to like kind of like help students navigate with better coping skills. But I think that like the like Denison's current state definitely needs a lot of work in there. Like I previously said, I think like chronic pain management is something that needs to be worked on. And I think that also like in terms of like mental health, I think a lot of people tend to focus on like depression and also anxiety disorders. But I think that there needs to be a bigger emphasis on other mental health disorders such as OCD and other things that like other students could kind of like relate to. Because I know that, like mental health is such a broad field where I've seen that, like they have like the general idea. But I've think that there also needs to be more inclusivity within the specific branches that they're trying to target towards students.

Zoe [00:54:29] Yeah, definitely. OK, what should be improved about Denison inclusivity and accessibility towards various conditions and what should remain unchanged?

Participant F [00:54:53] I think having more I think having more education, especially in like orientation sessions, especially for the incoming classes, is something that needs to be revised in a way that there would be like a mandatory kind of like I don't know, like I don't know exactly
how we look like a mandatory introductory like session or something that pertains to mental health and physical wellness. And kind of just also kind of like emphasizing that hey, let's clarify some of the misconceptions. Like you know, like we offer like therapy here, like it's completely confidential and, you know, stuff like that. And I think just having that kind of like voicing those resources at Denison already has in place at the very beginning of someone's whole academic career is something that's really important because it's kind of like reassuring students, if I ever need this, I know exactly where to go and I know what to expect rather than just hearing misconceptions or misinformation from other people. And I think that like ways to improve on the current state is also kind of like connected to the previous question, where it was kind of like, I think also expanding programing towards different other mental health conditions. And also, kind of like I think it's also important that, like at the very beginning of each class to also like have like, not actually like a survey, but kind of like if they're like, I don't know if like Denison like goes through everyone's like medical files when you fill them out the very beginning of the year. But I think just having like the staff and administrators just kind of know what what conditions are being represented in the general student body and kind of making programs and events around the specific conditions could also be helpful just to ensure that everybody in the class has some sort of support that pertains to their specific condition is definitely that would be really helpful. And something that should remain unchanged is probably kind of like the therapy sessions that they have. And just having like the easy accessibility to making appointments is just like you can either call in or make online and stuff like that. And I think that's definitely a good thing, especially for people with anxiety disorders. Like some people are just really shy. They don't want to really talk about like, you know, they don't want to talk to someone that they don't really know and stuff. And just having that less stressful experience of like booking an appointment is really helpful.

Zoe [00:57:50] Yeah, definitely. OK, this is our last one. So, what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?

Participant F [00:58:03] I think the most urgent concern that I have is kind of just having some, having, OK. So, I think the most urgent concern that I have personally is just having like someone in like Whisler exactly that is more like experienced in like female reproduction because I know for me, like I I've been going to different doctors and stuff and I've never been diagnosed until like I went to like a specialist. And then just like the fact that like there's only like general providers at Denison and I think like there's only one nurse practitioner and then one actual doctor. And I think that creates like an issue because originally at the very beginning, I felt like I was the only one that had endometriosis on campus. And then when I started talking about like other like other females on campus and when they started describing like some of their worries, I was like, wait do you have like a condition? And then like they came across like people that have been like, yeah, I have PCOS. Oh yeah, I have like, you know, so-and-so. And it's like conditions that kind of like relate to endometriosis. Like they're called like sister conditions because they're within the same branch. And I think that like something that is often like commonly talked about within like our groups is just kind of like yeah, like we don't just feel supported. And I know one of my friends, one of them, they have to drive all the way to Columbus to receive care, to even like go look at a doctor. And I think like a huge issue because I feel like, you know, being a student is already hard, especially at Denison. And to have like, if you don't have a car that's already like a huge struggle and it's just like it's like bizarre to me that
like I know for like me, I wouldn't be able to get the treatment that I'm getting if I were to be going to like Whisler. Like I would just be getting like ibuprofen. That's not gonna cut it. Yeah. So, right now that's probably my most urgent concern.

**Zoe [01:00:39]** Would that be like a gynecologist? Like what, like what medical provider would you want at Whisler specifically.

**Participant F [01:00:51]** Yeah. So, I know that like Whisler someone that works there, I think like for me and myself, I didn't know that like until I started working there that like Whisler offers a lot of like oh yeah, like birth control counseling, they offer like you know, like your wellness checks for females and stuff like that. But I think that like when it comes to specific questions regarding, you know, like birth control and stuff like that, I think it's really hard to get answers. Well, I think that like a gynecologist would be very helpful, especially on campus, especially because a lot of the a lot of the resources that are offered through Whisler would technically be attributed towards a gynecologist, especially because a lot of the questions that we have as females aren't often able to be answered by a general practitioner. So, I think just having a more specialized professional on campus would definitely be so helpful.

**Zoe [01:02:00]** Yeah, I totally agree with you. OK, so is there anything that you would like to share about Denison's accessibility that has not been prompted?

**Participant F [01:02:14]** Not that I can think of right now.
Zoe [00:00:01] We're going to start with the first question, which is just some identifying questions. So, I'm going to type them in the chat box as well. So, how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant G [00:00:15] Gender wise, I identify as a female. I use pronouns she/her/hers. And then language wise, I only speak English, but I am learning Spanish so.

Zoe [00:00:29] Nice. Awesome. Okie dokie and then here's our next one. How would you describe your relationship to the Denison community?

Participant G [00:00:42] Well yeah, I'm kind of new into it. But I mean, as a freshman, I mean, like I want to say, I'm starting to get pretty well involved. I mean, I'm in good contact with professors and some faculty for the most part. I mean, the ARC Center and I are pretty much besties. So, yeah pretty well involved.

Zoe [00:01:08] Perfect, OK. So, the first section or I guess this is the second section is definitions and terms. So, I have a hair on my computer. The first question is how would you define disability.

Participant G [00:01:21] Disability in my words is just something that, it can be either like physical or mental that-- I don't want to say refrains, but kind of like holds a person back from being able to do things in normal circumstances. Like an example, I would say like a person who is an amputee who lost their leg, has a harder time walking around or getting able to do things just simply because, you know, there are a lack of conformity. So, that's what of when I think about disability.

Zoe [00:01:58] Perfect. So, our next one is, what term should be used when referring to disability? And this is the term I'll use throughout the interview and it can also be disability.

Participant G [00:02:10] Yeah, I mean, like I would just say disability, because most of the time anyways, like the environment I grew up and no one ever referred to anything other than disability is just disability. So, and that's also the way I've seen it like everywhere. I mean, I have lots of family and friends who have like learning disabilities and physical disabilities, so. Yeah.

Zoe [00:02:31] Perfect. What do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant G [00:02:38] Others, well a lot of people think about me. I have multiple learning disabilities, that's why. I think most people think about like actual physical disabilities because it's something that they can see and they can recognize. But like if they think about like mental disabilities and things, I think that would come later into the conversation. Usually if someone can see something, something that catches your eye, you know. It's like what's the rule? It's like if you can't fix it in like five seconds then don't mention it so, yeah.
Zoe [00:03:15] OK. This one can be interpreted the same, but some people interpret it a little differently. So, what do others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant G [00:03:24] I think, again, something like physical activity, like an amputee. I guess a person with a mental disability or like they have something that affects them in the way they do things or whatnot. So, something that's going to catch your eye right away.

Zoe [00:03:38] Mhm, perfect. Do you see disability as an identity? Why?

Participant G [00:03:44] As an identity? No, I don't really think so. I mean like it's, I don't want to be like it's something that defines a person, but like, you know, is a part of their daily life. I mean, that's kind of like that's kind of hard to answer because it's fifty fifty for me, because I'm like it can define you. You know, a lot of people do a lot of things with their disability. You know, I have like I know a lot of people who were in college who had like amputees and stuff. My mom a professor, that's why. And I've met a lot of people who do that. But I also know people who have disabilities and stuff, but don't let it affect anybody that they do things. So, or the way that they function really at all, they just kind of want to keep it to themselves and then. Yeah.

Zoe [00:04:36] OK. Do you perceive yourself as disabled? Why?

Participant G [00:04:42] I wouldn't say like fully disabled to the point where I can't function, but I would say I am set back in an educational standpoint because of the fact that I have these disabilities that I cannot control. I mean, like I kind of do my own kind of like therapy for it by learning how to like reading a lot more and like writing a lot more to make sure that I'm able to do things, but but like as fully disabled no, but like I would say would partially kind of. So, yeah.

Zoe [00:05:17] Definitely. What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant G [00:05:20] Accessibility to me is important, but like if I'm talking about definition wise, it's being able to get like resources to help improve the environment center, but like for like an overall meaning like I think accessibility is important in general. I mean, like you should be able-- if you're at a disadvantage at any point, it doesn't matter if it's like learning disability, you know, physical disability or anything. I mean, like you should be able to get help or whatnot so.

Zoe [00:05:52] Definitely. What does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant G [00:06:01] Can I ask you? I'm blanking. Inclusivity means what again?

Zoe [00:06:10] Inclusivity is like an inclusive environment would be like accepting, accommodating, accessible. Yeah. So, like an inclusive group would be like open minded and willing to bring anyone in.

Participant G [00:06:28] Mhm. I think it means to me, I mean it makes me as a person feel a lot better, especially because I've noticed in places like especially where I grew up and whatnot, not a lot of funding, but, you know, for people with disabilities just in general. So, like the
inclusivity helps me feel like more, you know, like I'm not alone in this whole situation type of thing. So, it means a lot. And I definitely see it on campus, which is very nice to see.

Zoe [00:07:00] Good, good. OK so, now we're in the experiences section. So, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant G [00:07:12] Overall, it's been really, really good. I was very nervous going into it just because of previous experiences of dealing with it in my high school and whatnot, but Denison they were actually really on top of their things. I had sent the ARC Center and they responded to my emails right away and knew what I needed to do. And they were just like it's overall, it's been very it's been very good. All my professors have been very understanding, most of them, you know. I know they're all they were all really stressed out and busy this semester, but they still took the time out of their day to explain anything or go over anything that I messed up or yeah, anything like that. So overall, it's been it's been phenomenal, which, you know, I mean, I wasn't going to be like, oh, I don't think they're going to help me at all. But, you know, in a college, you kind of you want everyone to succeed. So, yeah.

Zoe [00:08:11] Good. Great. I'm glad to hear that. OK, what limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?

Participant G [00:08:25] I would say like the only thing like I'm having trouble with is that getting what things resources I need as a student have been difficult because. Yeah, I would say that because they as a center of things, whatever, they have limits on what you can and cannot ask for. And there's certain things like testing and and stuff that I'm just like they just wouldn't give it to me, like, you know, I was like, oh, can I get retake testing stuff? And they were like, no. And I was like oh, OK. Nice. Which, you know, was a little stressful for me cause I don't normally do well on the first go hand and stuff. But like, you know, I guess it's just something you have to learn how to get good at, I guess. But that was pretty much the only thing. But like, yeah, I really want to say that's the only thing. I mean, otherwise I haven't really had to ask for anything else. I'm a pretty high on the high function end of having a learning disability, so there's not much I can really ask for.

Zoe [00:09:35] Right. OK, what has been or is particularly accessible and disability inclusivity at Denison University?

Participant G [00:09:47] Getting the help that you need. There's like I think all the professors are really well like, you know, if you start to have issues, I know that they'll immediately point you in the correct direction of like, OK, well, here's what you need to do and here's who you need to see stuff which is which is good is helpful because it shows that they care as the university and whatnot. I mean, for me, as personal experience, I want to say just being able to have those connections face to face and stuff. And also, they check in a lot. They make sure that like during the beginning of the semester, that things were running smoothly and then at midterms, they make sure everything was fine. You know, like how are your classes? Things are going right. Great. And then at the end of the semester too, they make sure that, you know,
everything is fine. Any accommodations for finals or, you know, if I needed anything at all, which is helpful so.

Zoe [00:10:41] Definitely. OK. So, that-- now we're like halfway through. So, I just have an opportunity for a break if you want a break or we can just keep going so.

Participant G [00:10:54] We can keep going for right now.

Zoe [00:10:54] Keep going? OK. If you need a break any time, just let me know. OK, so this one has a list of four different options and you can speak to all or any of them, whichever ones apply to you. So, how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, administration, and students? And then the last option is medical or health appointments or procedures.

Participant G [00:11:22] While I cannot speak on mobility because I'm not physically disabled. Academic accommodations, pretty well. I mean, I, I'm so used to reaching out in the first place anyways, getting emails back and saying, hey, this is what you need to qualify for academic accommodations and things. And, you know, they're very clear on their point that you need to do this once a semester, which can be quite annoying, but I'm sure by the end of my senior year I should be able to roll through the system pretty well. Yeah, I mean, like the academic accommodations are fine. I mean, again, the only issue I had was not being like one of the four things that I needed. So, I would overall say pretty well. Communication between faculty, staff and administration, actually and with students is pretty overall been good. I mean, faculty totally understanding, willing to explain things over and over again. Staff has been really good too. TAs were really nice and whatnot. I also think I talked to at one point, like an assistant of something. And she was really kind. She was like, oh, let me I'll put you in this direction, you know, which was really good. I haven't really had to talk to administration about anything just simply because it's never gotten out of hand where I'm like, OK, nobody's listening to me. I'm going to go talk to somebody at a higher power. And students, students are-- they don't know what to do. They kind of, you know, I had a strange experience in my language class because most of the kids were like kind of confused. And I, again, I was also like one of two students who had to start the final early and everyone was a little bit confused on why I was there like half an hour earlier than everybody else. And I was like, you know what, it's fine. But I'm like, no judgmental things here or there not that I heard anyway. So, I would rate everything overall, I mean like pretty well. So, oh and then medical/health and appointments, I don't have any of those on campus as well either. So, that doesn't really apply to me.

Zoe [00:13:36] OK, great. Next one, what were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus and have these reactions changed over time? How so?

Participant G [00:13:50] I want to say I was genuinely surprised at how much they cared because with previous experiences it's been kind of hard to get people to kind of pay attention and be like, hey, I need to get these resources and things in order to succeed in the classroom and whatnot. So, it was definitely a big shock. I was impressed, but I was also slightly annoyed because they kept emailing me. But I guess in the end and then I mean, like in the end of it all, I
mean, like I was overall really happy. I mean they, again, it's such a welcoming environment and you don't feel like a total stranger or you like feel out of place because you know everybody else. There's something that's not right. I guess I say right in quotations. But, you know, everyone is super kind and super opening and stuff. And I think it's also because people with disabilities in general are more likely to be very more understanding and open just because they face themselves that sometimes you just can't explain so.

Zoe [00:15:01] Right, awesome. What did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant G [00:15:07] Well, it was important for me to be able to talk to my professors and stuff like actually genuinely talk to them. You know, I know sometimes some professors are kind of like standoffish and they want to help, but, you know, they don't know how to help. And so, when looking in to colleges in general, I was like, I need a place where I know that my professors and the faculty and know everyone I run into is actually genuinely going to care. So, that was a big thing. I also was really like looking in to see what type of accommodations they would offer. And because you, like for me anyways, I knew what my accommodations were and so I had a chance to ask them when I went in, when I went and interviewed at places on college campuses and asked them, OK, what kind of accommodations do you offer? Do you offer accommodations? Is it trickier to get them or is it a lot easier? And it was like a mixed reaction kind of here and there. But I think it showed to them that I was like hey, I need to make sure that if I'm going to go here, I'm going to I'm going to succeed in the best way possible so.

Zoe [00:16:18] Definitely. OK. What are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

Participant G [00:16:28] I want to say the consequences of having a disability, I think sometimes other classmates just don't understand you. That's like kind of a big consequence of it all. I mean, you try to be, well of course as like a freshman, all the freshmen just are so nervous all the time. I realized that this semester, you know, and so I you know, it's kind of hard to be like hey, I have this learning disability and stuff. And, you know, sometimes some people view it as being like a goody two shoes and sucking up to the teacher or the professor all the time. And then some people just kind of are like, hey, that's cool. OK, great, whatever. So I guess it's a consequence because it kind of puts you have this weird standoffish with your fellow peers in the classroom and whatnot. I would say really that's the biggest consequence. I mean, most faculty staff, I believe that they've all dealt with people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities and mental disabilities at some point in their career. So, I am pretty sure most of them well know how to handle the situation and know what to do. But definitely with the students, the students are just like, they just sometimes they don't know what to do. And, you know, I told two of them and they were like, oh OK. And I was like, it doesn't make me any any different than any of you guys. I just I have to process things a lot slower. So, yeah.

Zoe [00:18:03] Yeah. OK, what would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?
Participant G [00:18:11] Well, if I could have an ideal day, it would probably be a day where I would most likely have some sort of like testing because in a normal day, nothing like really affects me. I mean, I'm usually on top of my homework and things and most of professors answer my questions. But if it was for like testing wise, I would be able to have enough quiet. I need to be in like very quiet place, excuse me, because for me, I get easily distracted with testing and whatnot. So, being able to have enough time to finish a test where I can think about it and things. Also being able to possibly go up to somebody or like, you know, know somebody well enough to a point where, you know, I can say, hey, I have a learning disability, you know, that's what I will be late to lunch. And instead of them being very standoffish, them being like, oh, OK, that's cool. Well, I'll make sure to save you a seat or whatever, that would be my ideal day. Just being able to go into like a test or a quiz or anything and not feel like overwhelmed and, you know, also having that, like, social aspect of not feeling, you know, like the odd man out simply because I have some something that I can't control. So, yeah.

Zoe [00:19:31] Yeah, definitely. OK, what other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant G [00:19:43] I want to say being an athletic kid probably helped shape that because it I think it helped teach people that it doesn't matter who we all are as people, really. I was a competitive swimmer for a really long time and I actually was able to make correlations between like working in the environment, but then also being in an academic environment, but also being in an athletic environment. Because a lot of the people who I would like do sports and it wasn't just swimming, I would play basketball and soccer and like flag football and stuff, very Midwestern of me. And most of the people, you know, it was it they could recognize, they're like, oh, well, she's a good sport player and stuff. And it made me feel a little bit more like included in things because it wasn't people focusing on my academics and stuff, which is which was nice because, you know, I didn't feel like an odd man out. And then even if they did know that had some sort of learning disabilities, disability, they wouldn't look at me any different. And that was really nice. That kind of help shape my identity. I also think being a professor's kid helped a lot because I was kind of put in this environment where I was around a lot of smart adults as a kid. And, you know, they all gave me good advice on how to do things. And I think because of them, I've been able to succeed pretty well being remotely from home this first semester. But also just in general, as a college student, you know, I'm not intimidated or afraid to talk about my learning disability or go ask for help.

Zoe [00:21:30] So I'm also a professor's kid, so I know that experience. OK, so now we're on the support category. So, what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant G [00:21:47] It means a lot to me. I was in a remote productivity circle this semester, which was really helpful because it was students who I guess like learning disabilities or mental disabilities. I don't think there were any physical disabilities because there wasn't a lot of kids that were remote, but it meant a lot to me because I don't feel like an odd man out in the classroom and stuff because or in groups and whatnot, just because I knew that I wasn't the only one who was going through this, you know, which was really nice. I also found that a lot of my professors would be very supportive of me during this semester. And I think for me anyways, I,
I'm not saying like I need that support to get going and things, but I've definitely seen a lot of people with learning disabilities, they need validation and support because, you know, sometimes a lot of their work of being doing things like I remember, like turning in like I want to say like a discussion board. And my professor was like, this is really good. You know, getting that validation was like, OK, I'm I'm doing things on track. I'm getting there. That's good. You know, because sometimes you get yourself and you're just like, I don't I don't know if I'm doing this right or not, you know? I mean, that's that's typical for a lot of college students to be like, oh, do you have no idea what's going on either? Good, you know, I'm not the only one, but especially for those who have those issues, it's important to to receive that support and the validation because it also just feels nice. You know, you're just like whew, OK. I'm doing it.

Zoe [00:23:54] Definitely. OK, in what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a disabled student?

Participant G [00:24:05] Ways that I feel heard is simply I mean, like I know I did a lot and they make, I don't want to say they make you, but they tell you that you're supposed to go directly to your professors and stuff early on in the semester to tell them that you have accommodations and stuff. And I thought it was you know, I wasn't like surprised by it because, I mean, I would do that regardless of if I had the accommodations or not. I would it would go forward. So, I mean, being heard that was kind of nice because all my professors were alerted then and my advisor was alerted as well. Really, anybody else that I was kind of in contact with kind of knew what was going on. And but in ways, I don't feel heard, I mean, sometimes you don't-- I mean, besides some really remote connectivity circle, I've not really come across anybody else with a learning disability. I don't know if people are too shy to talk about it or like what's going on, but kind of not having that like support group of people that you can like recognize, that's probably not really, I don't feel really heard because, you know, I was so used to as a kid not talking about it because, you know, it's just like, oh, I'm I know I'm the only one who is dealing with this. I didn't find out later until high school that a lot of people actually had disabilities and stuff, which surprised me. But like college wise, it's kind of hard to find people and be like, oh, you also have like dyslexia, nice. I'm not the only one so.

Zoe [00:25:49] Yeah, yeah. OK, what does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

Participant G [00:26:00] I would say like as earlier, it's a really it means a lot because it's that whole thing of like getting your voices heard and, you know, getting enough people to recognize that there's like a large amount of people who believe in the advocacy and, you know, want people to all be on this equal platform and level. I don't think really you need to so much like advocate for yourself on campus simply because the ARC Center does a really, really good job of making sure that all the students have their current accommodations and whatnot and are in contact with. I'm pretty sure that they like keep files on all the students of like the disabilities and stuff to make sure that their professors are like, you know, kind of watching out and, you know, keeping in mind that, you know, the student has a learning disability. So, if it seems a little bit off than everybody else's, you know, it makes sense. So, yeah, I mean, like I feel that if the ARC Center wasn't a thing, I think it would be a lot more important to me for the advocacy of fighting for the accommodations, excuse me.
Zoe [00:27:09] Yeah, definitely. OK, where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Participant G [00:27:19] For advocacy, I find myself turning to ARC center, especially for professors sometimes sometimes they forget. And so normally I like gently remind them of like just remember, it's been kind of a hard semester. I'm also dealing with a learning disability, remember this. And sometimes, you know, I don't think I've had the experience where a professor was like, OK and? But, you know, I think if I had to go to somebody, it would probably ARC center and be like, this, is it right. I also think I'd probably go to the administration and, you know, and file, I don't want to say file a complaint. But, you know, like say hey, I'm trying to, you know, pass college. I mean, I'm trying to get through this and they're not really helping me. The colleges aren't really helping me. This needs to change. I can't be the only one in this. I would go for them to that. But support wise, my professors are really good support, you know. They give a lot of good feedback and bad feedback, which is actually good because, you know, you're able to evaluate what you did right and wrong. Actually, a lot of my friends for support, usually they proof read. I've done so much proof reading this semester. And when they proof read things, they'll be like oh, this is good. This is not good, you know. You need to change that. And you know, when like final grades came out, all everyone was so supportive and things. I mean, for me anyways, my grades are so important to me just because I'm dealing with learning disabilities and past experiences. And to see myself succeed in the first semester, especially being remote, you know. I think everyone was like, oh my god, yay! It was--so, it's really nice. Yeah, but I would go to those people for support and of course my parents and whatnot. But like, they're not at Denison. But my mom was a Denisonian, is a Denisonian, so.

Zoe [00:29:15] Oh, no way. That's so funny. That's awesome. OK, so I have a question about, this is not a formal question so that's why I'm not going to write it in the chat. At Aug-O, did you have information, was there information presented about ARC and any information about disability?

Participant G [00:29:40] Mhm.

Zoe [00:29:40] There was? How was that information?

Participant G [00:29:44] They briefly talked about it like it's like a brief mention. They're like, OK, yada yada ya. We have to kind of, I don't want to say that they had the kind of mention it, but I think it's required. Their like if you need help with certain things and then they kind of like briefly talked about it. They did talk about it in June-O as well. But it's you know, they didn't really like you know, I don't think because I was so young, I don't want to say young but like, you know, all the incoming freshman stuff, not a lot of them know, like, what to do just yet. They did mention it, but yeah. In Aug-O, they really talk about it, so.

Zoe [00:30:26] Yeah. OK. Thank you. You have like any specifics of what would be, what should be included at Aug-O about ARC or disability?
Participant G [00:30:40] I want to say that like for, for that I think they should spend like a good ten, fifteen minutes talking about it because I think that people are afraid to go and seek help. I think that's also just a thing that's like normal. Like I know people who refuse to go and get help no matter what. And I think there's a lot of stigma that it's like, oh, something's wrong with you. And I'm like, well no. It doesn't make any difference. So, I think having a good five, ten-minute talk about, like, it's OK to go ask for help, especially if you are not understanding something. And I would also probably talk about how I would mention that even if someone opens up and tells you, you're like hey, I got a learning disability and stuff. You know, try to be as open minded as possible. Don't be very kind of standoffish because it gives them the side of like, oh, I can't really tell anybody then. You know, not everyone's going to accept me. And on a college campus, especially as a young adult, I think acceptance is so, so important, especially at this age as well. I mean, being accepted into a community and to a place is so important because otherwise you can totally, totally mess somebody up. I'm lucky enough to know in my personal experience, it doesn't matter if like somebody doesn't accept me or not. I accept myself. So, I'm fine. But I know that's not the case other people so.


Participant G [00:32:21] It's alright!

Zoe [00:32:21] There we go. OK, now we're in the disability inclusivity and accessibility changes and this is our last section. So, the first one is, what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys the student, faculty, or staff with disabilities?

Participant G [00:33:46] What could improve is probably the more I want to say accepting, but more willing to, like for accommodations wise, I think that like being able to offer a kind of, I know they offer a lot of accommodations for different situations and things. And the groups that they hold together, they're pretty open and stuff. But I think being able to expand that a little bit more would be helpful, even if it's for someone who deals with anxiety, because like I know a lot of people with disabilities deal with a lot of mental health issues too. So, I think if you like, you stepped over you like kind of cross this boundary of like oh, we're going to include people with mental health issues as well, because I know that sometimes those people feel very alone. I think it would create a much more welcoming and opening environment and it would encourage people to, I would say, open up, because, you know, sometimes it's hard to get people to open
up. But I would say that would help, you know, get everyone a little bit more comfortable and relaxed because I know that going to college is like a really big thing and it can be really stressful. So, being able to go to a place where you feel welcomed and accepted and included would be really good. I don't think otherwise from anything from that should be changed. I mean, they do-- I know that I can tell that they've done a lot of research and they're doing a lot of research and they're making sure that they're up to date with everything. So, yeah.

Zoe [00:35:25] And what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?

Participant G [00:35:35] Most urgent? I would probably say I think that there needs to be a talk about this stigma, probably with with everything, especially around the word disability because I know a lot of people when they hear that word, they think of something right away and it's usually negative. It's not usually in a positive light. And I think actually like having the classes all sit down and going through this thing where they learn that it's OK not to be OK. It's OK to have a learning disability. And, you know, like, you know, you shouldn't look at anybody different just because, you know, they can't understand math or they don't they can't speak without stuttering or something like that. You know, I think that's my most urgent concern with it is that a lot of people, again, are so standoffish about it or they don't know what to do. And I think if you can educate people and not have like us, like people with learning disabilities, educate them because it gets kind of tiring. You just reiterate everything over and over again and, you know, you're just like I don't want to make it seem like I'm trying to get friends, but, you know, being able to talk to somebody and then not having to be like, oh, OK, you know, next. It's like no, I just want to like know so like you know if you see me mess up on something, it's not intentional. It's just, you know, you're just like I don't want to make it seem like I'm trying to get friends, but, you know, being able to talk to somebody and then not having to be like, oh, OK, you know, next. It's like no, I just want to like know so like you know if you see me mess up on something, it's not intentional. It's just, you know, how I am so.

Zoe [00:37:12] Definitely. OK, now this is the last one. So, is there anything you would like to share regarding Denison accessibility that has not been prompted?

Participant G [00:37:21] I don't think so. I mean, I think I've mentioned in the last question. I think they should be doing this whole thing about the stigma around it. But I think it would be quite helpful. And I also think that, you know, maybe going out and including people with mental health issues would help as well because I feel like most people with disabilities and like mental health issues are kind of in the same boat when it comes to certain things cause a lot of people see them at a disadvantage and they can't do everything right. And I think it would be good if not only to educate the whole Denison community about it, like faculty, staff and students, but I think it would be and also, I think it would attract more people to come to campus because it's like, hey, this college is known for being like really, really open and really, really understanding, accepting. I mean, like they challenge their students, but, you know, you're going to go there and you're not going to be judged for who you are. I think that would be something that would benefit the college itself. But I also think would benefit us later down the line because, you know, everyone always talks about how you take what you get with Denison and then you roll with it for the rest of your life and I think having that extra additional life skill would put you at a much, much more of an advantage when it comes to certain things. I mean, you know, Denisonians are everywhere. So, I'm sure that it can apply to everything so.
Zoe [00:38:54] Perfect, OK. Well, that's it for me.
Interview H

Zoe [00:00:00] So I'm going to be copying and pasting the questions into the chat box and then also saying them. So, the first one is have your self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns do you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant H [00:00:17] Oh, OK. I go by she/her/hers.

Zoe [00:00:25] OK. Our next one is how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, are you a student, faculty, or staff?

Participant H [00:00:39] I'm a first-year student.

Zoe [00:00:44] Perfect. OK, so now we're going into the definitions and terms section of our questions. So, the first one is how would you define disability?

Participant H [00:00:58] I would say something that someone lacks. It can be either mentally or physically that people see is below the normal or below baseline.

Zoe [00:01:14] Great. Okie dokie. What term should be used when referring to disability? And this will be the term that I use throughout the interview. And it also can be disability.

Participant H [00:01:27] I would say disability.

Zoe [00:01:28] OK, great. What do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant H [00:01:41] I think they see someone as like that needs like help or like they think of somebody that is less than.

Zoe [00:01:54] Mhm. This one is very similar, but it can be interpreted a bit differently. So, what do others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant H [00:02:01] They probably think of the specific things that they've seen before, like whether it's like a mental disability or physical. I think they like think that in terms of like what it is specifically.

Zoe [00:02:17] Do you see disability as an identity? Why?

Participant H [00:02:21] No because I don't think it defines somebody as like their whole person. It's just something that is part of them, as is a lot of other things for everybody else.

Zoe [00:02:34] Do you perceive yourself as disabled? Why?

Participant H [00:02:40] I wouldn't say so, no. I would say like I mean, it's kind of based on one person's specific idea of disabled. But I my personal belief is that I'm not.
Zoe [00:02:56] What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant H [00:03:02] It means like having the resources or tools of like being able to do something or understand something.

Zoe [00:03:16] What does disability inclusivity means to you?

Participant H [00:03:21] I would say everybody being treated is equal, despite either the unknown differences or the very obvious differences.

Zoe [00:03:34] OK, so now we're on to the experiences section of the interview. So what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant H [00:03:46] Well, I haven't specifically for me, and I haven't really like, I know of a few people. I don't know. I feel like I feel like I guess that in terms of like something that's very like I unseen to everybody else, like having a learning disability and ADHD is definitely something that's like a different experience to other students at Denison. But at the same time, it's also a very common thing for some. So, I think that it doesn't make a huge difference to me versus like the people who don't have that, like, I don't, I'm not very different compared to them I guess.

Zoe [00:04:38] Yeah. What limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility and or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?

Participant H [00:04:50] I don't think I've seen personally that have like I've had access to everything else that everybody does.

Zoe [00:04:57] Great. OK, good. What has happened and or is particularly accessible and disability inclusive at Denison?

Participant H [00:05:15] I mean, I would say like I don't have a specific one in mind, but I think that as a community, like everyone I mean, this is my first semester, but I have gotten so far is that like everybody really does seem to be super caring. And so, I think that even with like I think that no matter what it was, no matter how someone defined their disability, like everybody would be accepted into a certain club or certain class. That isn't really limited to just a certain group of people. I think everybody would be really open to everybody being part of it.

Zoe [00:05:51] OK, so this. Oh, we're also halfway through the questions. So, would you like a break? We can have a break or we can just keep going.

Participant H [00:05:59] I'm going, yeah.

Zoe [00:05:59] Sounds good. OK, so this one has four parts so you can speak to any of the ones that apply to you and you cannot speak to the ones that don't. So how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning mobility, academic accommodations, communication
between faculty, staff, administration, and students and the last one that you could speak to is medical or health appointments or procedures.

**Participant H [00:06:24]** OK, so for academic accommodations, I am part of ARC and I have like extra time on exams and sometimes prolonged, like I can get an extension on due dates for essays and stuff, which has been super helpful. And I had that in my junior and senior year of high school. For like the communication between faculty, I would say is definitely more of a close relationship than I've been with some of my other friends just because, like, I'm I mean, I've always been open with my teachers and professors anyways, but like, I like to keep an open line of communication with them just so that they know what's going on with me personally, like not just as a student, but like if I have had a rough day with anxiety or whatever it is like, that can really affect my work. And so, I definitely have like a good communication with professors.

**Zoe [00:07:27]** What were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? And have these reactions changed over time?

**Participant H [00:07:39]** I don't-- when I first got there, I think it was like I just had the feeling of it being like a very, like, loving community, I guess, and very inclusive. And I think that's stayed throughout my entire semester. And it's even been even more so. Like, I can see how, like, everybody is just a lot more caring. And it's also like I think it has to do with, like the small community that we have just because it's like everybody really does get to know each other really fast. And so, you kind of just get to know, like people on a not just-- like professors don't even get to know you on a student level, but like on a personal level. And I think that has a lot to do with it, too. So, everyone just seems to like look out for each other differently.

**Zoe [00:08:30]** Yeah, definitely. What did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

**Participant H [00:08:36]** I would say this is like somewhat of the last one. Like, I definitely looked for a smaller, tight community where everybody would be accepted and known as the person rather than just like a student at Denison or at the university. Like, I wanted to be able to see a person as a person and like have that close community sense.

**Zoe [00:09:03]** Mhm, definitely. What are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

**Participant H [00:09:10]** I mean, I don't see like I feel like there isn't one. I feel like there isn't like a consequence necessarily. I think for maybe like if it's an actual mobility disability, I feel like I mean, you couldn't be involved with like sports or whatever, but I feel like there's also another part to our Denison community where, like, it's not huge, hugely based around sports. So, like that person would be able to be part of like other things in general. But I don't think there's anything that's like a consequence.

**Zoe [00:09:55]** What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?
**Participant H [00:10:05]** Well, I do think that for how anybody defines disability, I feel like anybody would just want understanding and not even like not even understanding, because I guess for some people, I can't physically understand how that person defines their disability. But acceptance, I feel like and so like if there was a day when people just kind of like got to, if they wanted to share about how their experience either adjusted or just in their life with their disability had affected them and how other people can listen to their stories and kind of just like hear about it and kind of like educate themselves, I guess.

**Zoe [00:10:51]** What other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

**Participant H [00:11:04]** Well, I would say my family is definitely a huge part to that. Just because I've always been raised like you accept other people, no matter what, if they're a good person or a good person. And I would say like having people in my family with like my my cousins and stuff and my immediate family have had physical and mental disabilities. So, I'm definitely like, more-- I don't think prone, but like I'm definitely more aware, I think, than a lot of other students and I want to be there to like help help them understand and be part of a normal community, I guess.

**Zoe [00:11:51]** Mhm, definitely. What does disability-- oh, so now we're in the support category. So, what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

**Participant H [00:12:01]** I would say definitely acceptance, but also, I feel like when it comes to that, there's a lot of people that go like it's good to go out of your way and like understand other people's points of view. But I think also it's important not to ostracize the other people because that would just create more of a divide. And I've seen people do that like in my high school and just in life in general. And so, I think that's something like disability support should be understanding, but also like just treating somebody how you would treat anybody else.

**Zoe [00:12:42]** Yeah. In what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a disabled student?

**Participant H [00:12:49]** I definitely feel heard by having like I wouldn't even like-- well yeah, I feel heard in the sense of like they have a program that helps students like I do, like with just basic learning disabilities. But I also feel less heard from students in the sense of like a lot of them who don't have the problems I have to deal with are like maybe account that to be like, oh, well, you're just stupid or you just don't work as hard. But I definitely also have seen people like that, but I've also seen other people who are like you just you learn differently than I do and there's no difference to me.

**Zoe [00:13:42]** Right, right. What does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

**Participant H [00:13:55]** I would say, like not being not like ashamed, but like, well yeah, not be ashamed to say you're part of a program like ARC or you're not like or you have an IEP or whatever, you have extra time on exams like, I think not hiding the fact that you just have to do it
a different way than other people, because in that sense it doesn't outlaw anybody and it just kind of makes it part of your life.

**Zoe** [00:14:25] Right, yeah. So, who do you-- where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

**Participant H** [00:14:34] I definitely turn to the administration and like my professors. And they've always been like so far been like super nice about it and super accommodating and understanding to the sense of like they don't even ask. Like, if you don't want to get into it, you don't have to get into it. And they understand and they don't like question me or anything.

**Zoe** [00:14:57] Great. OK, so now, this is the last question. So, we're on disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty or staff with disabilities? And this is like on campus.

**Participant H** [00:15:14] I would say that it-- it definitely says like that everybody is equal, but and it says that I think that it conveys that everybody is equal and has equal opportunity for classes or for whatever it is.

**Zoe** [00:15:47] What should be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

**Participant H** [00:15:56] I think the support that they give is something that should remain unchanged. I think that the programs they have already there in place are really helpful. And I would say to be improved, I don't know, I haven't really seen anything specifically in my sense, yeah.

**Zoe** [00:16:25] OK, yeah! What is the most urgent accessibility and inclusivity concern you have?

**Participant H** [00:16:39] I don't think there is one.

**Zoe** [00:16:44] Is there anything you would like to share regarding Denison's accessibility that has been prompted?

**Participant H** [00:16:54] I don't think so. I think I think the one thing they haven’t, as a female student, I think there hasn't been a lot of talk on like I mean, I don't know if people would say that being a woman is a disability, but I mean, it kind of is in a sense, if you think about it. So, I think that there's part of Denison's that I would, like part of Denison that I would want them to improve on, I guess, is that they haven't been very like-- in the beginning of school there was like the June-O or August-O or whatever they call me. And they talked about like Title IX. And if you go to them for anything and whatever, but like, I don't think they don't promote it as like a safe or very accessible environment to go to. And I think that there's been experiences in my own life and a few of my girlfriends lives that, like, they could need a little bit more support in that. And it doesn't need to be like this big like, oh, my gosh, she's reporting to Title IX. Like
it just needs to be like a talked about issue I guess. So, I think that's something that now like thinking about it has come to mind.

**Zoe** [00:18:20] Yeah. What do you think that could, like an improvement of Title IX support, what do you think that would look like? Like in implementation?

**Participant H** [00:18:31] I would say, I mean there might be this already, I just haven't heard about it. But more accessibility. I know there's like counseling, but I would say, like and with Corona it's probably different, but like I think like an anonymous either like if it's like a group or like going to like one on one, like counseling sessions or something just to talk about anything. And you don't even need to say, get other people involved, like you just want to like plan or get anything out. I think it should be more accessible or like more promoted at least.

**Zoe** [00:19:08] And so maybe more like confidential people to talk to?

**Participant H** [00:19:12] Yeah.

**Zoe** [00:19:13] Yeah. Yeah there was yeah, it's really interesting that you bring that up because we had before you came because you're a first year, right?

**Participant H** [00:19:27] Mhm.

**Zoe** [00:19:28] Before you came to Denison, there used to be-- have you heard of SHARE? It's like sexual, sexual harassment-- I don't remember what it's what it stands for but it's like a sexual assault club on campus for it used to be for, they used to train students to be confidential informants. So, like people, if they experienced a sexual encounter that was, you know, harassment, they could come to a student to talk about it and learn about the resources that they could go to. But they would be confidential so they wouldn't have to report. But then Ohio made some kind of law that that's not OK for students to withhold that information as if students don't already withhold that information. And so now that's not an option anymore. So now the only confidential people you can talk to are yeah, the Whisler like counselors or religious people on campus, like clergy. I don't even know. So yeah. Yeah. It's very interesting that you brought that up.

**Participant H** [00:20:40] Yeah. I think there's a definitely a good amount of people that, like you said, everybody is going on withhold that information anyways. And like it should just be also seen as like I mean, I don't know if you've had experience with this or like just know it, but like sometimes it's more or most times it's more of a problem for the girl to come up and actually say it than it would be helping by coming out talking about it.

**Zoe** [00:21:07] Yep.

**Participant H** [00:21:07] So like, if there's ways to just talk about it in confidentiality without having to say the name and make this huge deal, because that would ruin her life more than it would help. So yeah.
Zoe [00:00:00] So I'm going to pull up the questions and I'll be putting them in the chat. So our first one is how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns do you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant I [00:00:17] I identify as trans masculine and then he/him and they/them pronouns.

Zoe [00:00:22] OK.

Participant I [00:00:22] So masculine stuff and neutral stuff.

Zoe [00:00:26] Yep! Perfect. The second one is how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, student, faculty, or staff?

Participant I [00:00:43] So I'm a staff member.

Zoe [00:00:44] Perfect.

Participant I [00:00:44] Do you need more on that? Like position and stuff?

Zoe [00:00:47] Nope, nope, that's all I need. OK, so now we're in the definitions and terms section. So how would you define disability?

Participant I [00:00:56] I would define disability as something related to one's abilities that is deviated from what society would consider the norm. So, whether that's something physical, mental, emotional, yeah.

Zoe [00:01:15] OK, perfect. What term should be used when referring to disability? And this will be the term I used throughout the interview and it can also be disability.

Participant I [00:01:27] I'm OK with the word disability also OK with like, yeah. There are so many different words out there and I'm just like, yeah, let's just use the one that you're using.

Zoe [00:01:39] Yeah, perfect. Sounds good. What do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant I [00:01:45] Probably physical things. So, like anything like ADA spots, like wheelchairs, things like that, not anything that's like not physical or like just things that you just immediately assume that you know what it is like. So, an immediate assumption that you know what disability means and what it means for other people and how they navigate their lives, I don't think that-- I think that people don't think about the impacts that that has and how spaces are. So, I think it's more like I also think it's kind of like a negative connotation. So, thinking down upon people who have disabilities or feeling sorry for them without really having any other context for, like, who that person is.
Zoe [00:02:32] Yeah, OK. This one is super similar, but some people interpret it differently, so. Yeah. What do others think about when they hear the term disability. If it's the same, it's okay.

Participant I [00:02:45] Very similar things-- negative connotations. I do think that there is a, there are movements that I think have brought more light to the fact that disabilities are diverse and can mean a lot of different things. And it's more than just someone sitting in a wheelchair. I would say, like the mainstream paradigm of thought that would still be physical, physical stuff.

Zoe [00:03:10] Yeah, yeah. Do you see disability as an identity? Why?

Participant I [00:03:13] I think, yes. Yes, I do, but it depends on I think that the degree to which that identity is visible varies for people and also the degree to which someone might identify with their own disability may vary. So, I think that because it can have such an impact on how someone interacts with the world and ultimately it is an identity. And so those who are able bodied, I also see that as an identity. So, yes.

Zoe [00:03:57] Do you perceive yourself as disabled? Why?

Participant I [00:04:02] Yes. But in that in the sense that, you know, it's not a visible identity, just like my transness sometimes isn't a visible identity. A lot of people assume that I'm a cisman just because I take testosterone, so they're like, OK, so he's cis. But you know, it's kind of hard for me sometimes because I don't know. Like you think so much, I think so much, like sometimes I'm like, OK, physical disability is like-- I have friends with muscular dystrophy. And I'm like, OK, so they use a wheelchair full time or part time. And that poses very different challenges than having depression or anxiety, which are listed as disabilities when you go to apply for jobs and they're like, oh, do you have any disabilities? So, I felt like there's that one there. And I also have ADHD, which isn't technically considered a disability, but it is a difference. It does change how I interact with the world, so I view that as something related to disability in that sense. So, yes.

Zoe [00:05:09] Definitely. What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant I [00:05:14] So I think about that in a couple of different ways. I think about the physical accessibility to space. But I also think that it's really just having like just the ability to interact with a space, whether that's physically, emotionally or mentally. And so being able to engage fully as others are or having the opportunity to do that. So, like if you can't get into a room, how do you engage in that room? So, it's not accessible, but also if you're unable to voice your concerns or voice your opinions, whatever, in a room because of the emotional or mental things and needs that aren't being met in that space, it's also not accessible in that way. So that would why accessibility is the opportunity to engage.

Zoe [00:06:12] Yeah! What does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant I [00:06:21] Being welcomed in a space, not be like-- folks being understanding and open to the fact that you might need different things from space or community or an environment that others might not need and, you know, taking as many proactive steps to make that possible.
But it's not, you need to anticipate every single need, especially if abled body folks operating with the lens that, you know, like operating from an able-bodied lens where they're not necessarily thinking about certain things, but being willing to adapt. Not make a big deal out of things and just be like, oh, OK, so we'll do it this way because that's going to work for you. And it's not a big deal for us to change things up.

**Zoe** [00:07:13] Mhm. OK, great! So now we're in the experiences section. So, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

**Participant I** [00:07:24] I mean it's been decent. I've only been here about a year and a half, so I'm a short-term staff member. In terms of like the staff side of health insurance and things like that, I would say that Denison does a really good job of providing for its employees in that way. So, the care is there. I would say that it's something we just don't talk about this. I mean, I work in Residential Communities and so we're very much feelings folks. And the realm that I work in, like we talk about it, like we do a lot of self-reflection. But I would say, like it's not necessarily like something that you just openly talk about all the time, in a way that I think would actually be productive for most students, staff, and faculty.

**Zoe** [00:08:30] Mhm. OK, what limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility and or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?

**Participant I** [00:08:44] So often with the anxiety and the ADHD, working with other folks, sometimes it's more like person to person stuff. And so, I often am just very upfront with folks and I say like, hey I have ADHD and anxiety and this is how I sometimes interact. And it's not about you. Like, this is just how I work and like, how can we like figure this out? When working on teams and stuff, because sometimes I can come across a certain way, hyper fixate on things that might really annoy other people. And so, kind of trying to build that space of inclusion almost for myself up front, rather than just letting people assume that like I'm neurotypical and do everything the same way that they do and simply wait for the third party. So, like someone sent an email and like it was a very good-- I did need of visual representations of things. And so, some folks are very helpful in that. So, I got like the same type of information communicated multiple times, but one of the times was communicated with a visual representation. And so, I think it's sometimes, like I think sometimes that's one strength that I've seen in terms of like how I've seen inclusion for folks who may need to process information differently is the way that information communicated can be like a multifaceted. So, there's multiple ways for people to digest information.

**Zoe** [00:10:35] Yeah, yeah. OK, what has been and or is particularly accessible and disability inclusive at Denison?

**Participant I** [00:10:42] So I would say communication. Although the one thing that I'm thinking about here is you're probably gonna ask me what's not, so I'll leave that. So, I would say communication with the caveat that like maybe closed captioning and things like that. I've seen some of that videos and things like that. For me, that's particularly helpful and not hard of hearing, but I need that.
Zoe [00:11:13] I can do that on this too, if you want. Do you want closed captions on this, because I can?

Participant I [00:11:18] Oh, no I'm good. Like videos, I need closed captions. Conversations, I'm good.

Zoe [00:11:25] OK, so we are halfway through. Would you like a break or would you like to just keep going?

Participant I [00:11:30] I'm good.

Zoe [00:11:32] OK, sounds good. Do you have anything to say about that last question?

Participant I [00:11:34] Also that people are willing to work with you if you communicate. So, I think there's an openness to problem solving that is-- but it's also very individualistic in that like, oh, you need this, like, OK, let's work on that and get that figured out. But I think there's a bit of a negative side to that in that there's not super concrete policy or procedures always in place for supporting folks so that, you know, oh, well, this is going on. This is what we can do here. Oh, we already have this in place.

Zoe [00:12:20] Yeah. So, this question has a list of four different options. You can speak to any of the ones that apply to you and ignore the other one. So how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning-- and then we have four options so mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, administration and students, and then mental or health appointments or procedures?

Participant I [00:12:45] So mobility, it doesn't necessarily apply to my abilities, but we're on a hill and working in the residence halls. There are some buildings that do not have elevators. And like I'm a bit overweight, like I've gotten in better shape since living here and walking my dog around here. But I have like I don't know how one would navigate this space thinking like with any mobility restrictions. I just don't see it as possible to do it on a daily basis. I mean I plan out when I'm going to walk down the hill and it's usually to walk my dog. And that is a choice that I make, but for other people like if they to go down the hill to the Eisner center on a daily basis and there's a mobility thing going on for them, even if it's just a temporary disability. What do you do? Academic accommodations doesn't really apply to me because I'm staff. Communication overall, I think pretty good, particularly like in closer relationships with other staff. Yeah, I mean, I don't know as much on the faculty side, so I can't really speak from that. I only know from like student perspectives that are shared and I can't, you know, it's all hearsay. And then medical health appointments and procedures, I mean from from the outside, you know, the health insurance is a very good job of covering a lot. But since I don't you know, I don't go to the Whisler center or the Wellness Center. But I would say like the health insurance coverage is very comprehensive. I think the one thing is you have to pick the right plan, which is something that HR legally is not allowed to counsel you on, but if you do have like long term disability or anything that would require regular health stuff, if you pick the correct plan, then you're like set. But if you pick the wrong plan, then you've kind of screwed yourself over financially.
Zoe [00:14:59] Yeah, that makes sense. OK, what were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? And have these reactions changed over time? How so?

Participant I [00:15:15] I'm neutral. I don't think they have changed over time. The only reaction I would say negative is to the mobility aspect. And that it's more for other folks who or just thinking about prospective students or current students, and that one has just become more negative just because I don't see anything happening in terms of any changes other than like in new buildings, obviously, but that's also a legal requirement that in new buildings with multiple floors have elevators so.

Zoe [00:15:53] Yeah, not asking a lot.

Participant I [00:15:59] Yeah, it's kinda like OK, well you did that. That's great. Except what about, like, these old buildings? What do you do about those? I know that they're doing stuff. It's just it takes a lot of time. And also, like the elevator is the first thing you put in the building. So that's part of the reason, my assumption is that that's part of the reason that the parking garage elevator, which was added externally, does not work as well, because when you add elevators on, they tend not to work as well as once they're internal to the building.

Zoe [00:16:28] OK, OK. Interesting.

Participant I [00:16:29] Yeah, just the mobility stuff is kinda negative.

Zoe [00:16:33] Yeah, yeah. What did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant I [00:16:42] I would say dedicated staff, although this is a really small campus so it's a little different. I can from Ohio State where they have an entire department. And I would visit disability services from time to time. They had a center that was specifically for students who use the resources and they have their own printing money, their own printing lab and then their own study space, as well as an entire testing center. So, there were some rooms where you could take tests without distractions. And honestly, I don't-- you don't even have to, like you could have depression and they would let you take a test in that room and give you extended time and things like that if it was a test that you knew you needed it for. There was a set procedure, so I'd say looking at procedures and policies and accommodations. There were a lot, wow. Like they have a lot in place, so I would say, looking at things like that. And while we are a small campus, you know, having just one person be in charge of dealing with accommodations and helping with accommodations on a variety of realms, like on a variety of topics beyond just academics like that raises some red flags for me as to how accessible the campus is and how much time that person can dedicate to that if they have a dual role. Like if they're basically serving in a dual role.

Zoe [00:18:20] Right. Right. Yeah. What are the consequences for having a disability at Denison in particular?
**Participant I** [00:18:33] I would say if you don't know how to advocate for yourself, it can be pretty, pretty negative. And that's one thing that worries me about students, is that this is the time of life where you learn to be independent and advocate for yourself. And if you do not-- like the reason that I have a job is because I want to advocate for students and I want to help students. And if that role was not necessary, I would not have a job. So, you know, if you can't advocate for yourself, I think the consequences are you might leave school, you might have to transfer. And so, if you don't have that adequate support and either ability to advocate for yourself or someone else advocating for you and knowing what they're advocating for, they also need to be knowledgeable about what it is that, you know, is going on. If it's just a faculty member who has absolutely no idea how the residence halls work or how academic accommodations work, they're not going to be that much help other than maybe providing emotional support. And so, I'd say the consequences are possibly leaving school, getting worse grades, mental health concerns, and just like not having the same experience that your your peers have. From a non-student standpoint, a lack of sense of belonging within your staff and then not necessarily knowing who to go to.

**Zoe** [00:20:08] Yeah, definitely. OK, what would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?

**Participant I** [00:20:25] I think any kind of space that allows people to just exist authentically in who they are, but without like a push to be like tell us all about their disabilities, recognizing that there are folks on campus who have disabilities, faculty, students, and normalizing that. You know, for the faculty and staff that have those and that are willing to speak to it. I think that that could be very powerful, especially faculty and other folks with maybe advanced degrees that students are interested in pursuing. You know, it shows that it's possible and having folks talk about what their departments are doing to make Denison a more inclusive space, maybe some speakers, things like that.

**Zoe** [00:21:16] Yeah, yeah. What other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

**Participant I** [00:21:29] That one's a deep one. So probably gender identity for a big part of it just because I do engage with a lot of medical providers, just a lot. And so being very like, I don't know, aware of like health insurance benefits of things like that, have made me more able to advocate for myself when I need certain things. And also, just provide me with the self-knowledge of like, OK, this shouldn't be happening. This medication is not right for me. This shouldn't be like, this should not be happening. So, I'm going to advocate for myself in this situation or like, I'm kinda going on a little bit of a tangent. Yeah, I would just say mostly gender identity.

**Zoe** [00:22:26] Yeah, definitely. So now we're going to go in through the support category. So, what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

**Participant I** [00:22:42] Making it very clear like who in HR there to support you. And I think yeah, just more so like communication about what resources are there and then just making sure that departments are knowledgeable about what the best practices are for supporting folks and
what does disability looks like. And I think about how we have Safe Zone training and faculty and staff gets trained on that. And what would like the equivalent look like for faculty and staff?

Zoe [00:23:20] Yeah, yeah. In what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a disabled staff member?

Participant I [00:23:32] I think sometimes when I bring up my disability, I think sometimes people are like, oh, you're just saying that to get attention or something like that. And it's not about that. It's about it's a bit about validation, but it's also about just making sure that people are aware of how I'm entering a space. And so, I think sometimes it's just brushed away. So that sometimes when I don't feel heard. But then sometimes, you know like, I have some colleagues that will listen to me ramble and I'll be like, woah, I was rambling. And I'm like, yeah, you were, but that's OK. Like we get what you meant. Or asking for clarification and not just going like, OK, so he's just rambling on and on and we're just gonna kind of zone out here and not listen to what he's saying because he's just going on. Instead, you know like maybe pausing me and asking me for clarification because they know that I need that.

Zoe [00:24:35] Right, right. What does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

Participant I [00:24:50] I think it, it means like, I think of it as like a lot, like from, you know, my work with students. So, I guess having someone who can be in your corner like to help you advocate for yourself. And that could also be for faculty and staff. Like while I'm very comfortable advocating for myself, some other students, faculty, and staff might not be. And they also need to know where to go. So, knowing where to go and have someone who is supportive and just very aware of the different varieties of types of disabilities that exist who can help support you, make the space for accessible.

Zoe [00:25:43] Yeah. Yeah. Where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Participant I [00:25:51] I'd say like direct, like my level colleagues and my supervisor.

Zoe [00:25:55] OK. OK, so now we're going into disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty or staff with disabilities?

Participant I [00:26:15] I would say that it's a secondary consideration or a tertiary consideration, just an afterthought, honestly, or something to react to, not something to be proactive about, but rather something that when it comes up when we have a student or when we have a staff member who has a mobility concern, we'll figure it out versus we want to attract everyone who can come here. Whereas I could just see a prospective student rolling up here, getting out in a wheelchair and going, heck no! There are stairs everywhere. Like, this will not be a good time. And then leaving. Same for a staff member, you come to visit us for an interview and one, you're not going to see anyone like you, which it's a tiny campus so maybe not, but like- - it's just like, how? How? And then there's also just, I think with the culture of business and this
comes across a lot for students, faculty, staff; there's a bit of elitism in that. And it doesn't allow for anything other than perfection. And is disability less than perfect in the general, like mainstream, dominant society that is ableist? Of course, it's not perfect and that, you know, is gross. But yeah. So, I think that just it's also just super unhealthy to be that busy and so like having students push themselves to the absolute limit. And then what about when a student with a disability comes in? What does that limit look like for them? And what does that, what point does that bring them to?

Zoe [00:28:01] Mhm, yeah. What should be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

Participant I [00:28:15] I think having more dedicated resources to it. I think the flexibility should remain unchanged, but I think that flexibility needs to be more institutionalized so that, you know if, you know if it's related to housing. Like, it's good that we have such flexible housing options and people who are willing to work on solutions and things like that. But do people know about that? Or does someone know about it who can communicate to someone that that is an option? Same goes for academic stuff. Like, we have folks who do this work. But do people know that that's who you go to?

Zoe [00:29:02] Right, right. OK, here is our last one. So, what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?

Participant I [00:29:16] For myself or other people?

Zoe [00:29:18] Anything! You or both.

Participant I [00:29:21] I think like just the lack of structure, like the lack of institutional structure. If I can add another one.

Zoe [00:29:30] Yeah, please, please add another.

Participant I [00:29:31] I mean, I think that is the most important one in terms of our physical infrastructure, but I think that's also one of the ones that is the most challenging to change like that. Whereas the creation of a new position, office, or a structure to support students and maybe work towards that mobility stuff? I think that that's more feasible. It won't happen like that, but it's easier to create a position that can work on that than just try to solve that without the structure and the support.

Zoe [00:30:05] What do you think that position would look like?

Participant I [00:30:08] Probably some kind of administrator similar to, I'm basically imagining, I mean I can't refer to an exact person. But the person who currently works on disability stuff with academics, who also oversees an entire department, like that type of stuff. But add physical infrastructure, just more concrete, more more widespread work. Could add in programming, things like that. I mean, like a day of, like, disability inclusivity. Just increasing, I think the visibility, while also, you know, working towards procedural and policy changes. I
mean if there are policy changes that-- you know honestly like as you started bringing stuff up, I was like I don't even know what our policies are. Like, oh god. At Ohio State, I know what they were, and I was a student.

Zoe [00:31:12] Yeah, yeah, that's such a good point. OK, so is there anything you would like to share regarding Denison's accessibility that hasn't been prompted?
Interview J

Zoe: [00:00:01] So, I'm going to be copying and pasting the questions into the chat as well. So, how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns do you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant J: [00:00:19] I identify as a woman and I use she/her pronouns.

Zoe: [00:00:27] Perfect. OK, and the next one is, how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, are you a student, faculty, or staff?

Participant J: [00:00:37] I am a student.

Zoe: [00:00:40] Perfect. OK so, now we're going into these definitions and terms section. So, the first one is, how would you define disability?

Participant J: [00:00:52] Well, legally, I know it's like if there's something that's preventing you from, I don't know, living your life like fully. Like there's preventative, some preventative measure from you like being able to carry out everyday tasks, essentially. That's kind of the way I gauge the legal definition.

Zoe: [00:01:18] Yep, perfect. What term should be used when referring to disability? And this is the term I'll use throughout the interview and it can also be disability.

Participant J: [00:01:30] Do you mean like referring to saying like disabled person versus person with a disability?

Zoe: [00:01:38] Yeah. Or if there's-- that in addition too if there's another term that you would prefer to use rather than disability.

Participant J: [00:01:47] I think a person with a disability.

Zoe: [00:01:49] OK, perfect. Awesome. Our next one is, what do others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant J: [00:02:01] Most people think of disability as being-- well, first of all, physical or like if it's, like they think of severe disability or very visible disabilities is usually what people think of, I think.

Zoe: [00:02:20] This one is pretty much the same, but some people interpret it differently. So, what do you think others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant J: [00:02:29] I think it depends on who you're talking to. Usually someone living with a disability is aware of disabilities or, you know, a wide variety versus someone who is maybe not as familiar might be referring to the first definition, or not definition, but the first description.

Zoe: [00:02:51] Yeah, yeah. Do you do see disability as an identity. Why?
Participant J: [00:02:58] Yeah, I do because I think it kind of, well not like in a-- I think some people think of it as being like a negative part of your identity, but I don't really see it that way. I think it's just part of who you are and how you live. And that's that it really. It's not a negative or positive. It's just how it is.

Zoe: [00:03:25] Yeah, definitely. Do you perceive yourself as disabled and why?

Participant J: [00:03:31] I don't really consider myself disabled. I mean, at least legally, I wouldn't be considered it and but it's enough that it causes it like-- so, I mean, I guess as an overall person, maybe not, but it really affects more of my academic ways. So, in terms of like academia and stuff, it's definitely more prevalent. So, not really, but in academia, it's definitely I kind of see a difference.

Zoe: [00:04:06] Yeah, for sure. What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant J: [00:04:13] Basically, it means, not that you can really level the playing field, but essentially like, you know, some people might need different opportunities in order to get to the same place, which is kind of silly in a way because you're kind of defining this version of success that you think that everyone should get to where it really looks different for everyone. But in general, it's just like making it so that someone can essentially access the same things that others can.

Zoe: [00:04:49] Yeah, for sure. What does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant J: [00:04:57] I think it means for one, having accessibility, but also being aware of disabilities as well. Not just kind of saying oh, this is accessible, but maybe kind of understanding it a little bit better. And maybe understanding why there are certain accessible things put into place versus just kind of seeing it there. Or maybe not even seeing it at all.

Zoe: [00:05:26] Yeah, yeah. OK so, this next section is experiences. So, the first one is, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant J: [00:05:38] It's actually been, for the most part, pretty positive. I've had a really important like supportive experience actually through the Academic Resource Center. That has been really important to-- so, essentially my experience has been really positive because I've been part of productivity circles, which is a support group run by the Academic Resource Center for people with diagnosed or undiagnosed ADHD or anxiety or kind of everything in between. And I've been doing that since my freshman year and I've built really close relationships with facilitators and as well as the students in that group. And that has been really, really important for my success in academia as well as my self-confidence because I've seen a lot of other people run into the same things that I have, especially when, you know, if you kind of try to explain like the difficulties you're having, someone else who hasn't had that type of experience, doesn't understand, or they will try to offer advice, but, you know, they mean well, but it doesn't really help. So, being able to talk to other students about the same things has been really great. And I've made some really great friendships through that so.

Zoe: [00:07:09] That's wonderful. What limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility and/or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?
Participant J: [00:07:27] So part of, so I also have academic accommodations, which has been really, really great. And one of those things is extended testing time. So, in college versus high school, I know you're the way you can get accommodations is essentially different. So, like when you're in high school, they legally have to give you accommodations if you need it. This is my understanding. I hope I'm not saying something that is completely wrong. I'm not really sure, but I think this is how it goes. So, basically like, at least going into a small school usually they will give you whatever accommodations you have that are reasonable that you had in high school. Like through, you know, an IEP or a 504. And usually that will translate into college. So, that's been really pretty easy. I just essentially gave the Academic Resource Center, you know, my packet. Here is my information, like can we get this all set up for college and then it's been fine. But if, for example, like I said, I needed extended time, which I know is really hard to get and if I did not have it in high school, I'm not really sure if I could have something that I could have gotten in college. So, it's been good and easy for me, but that's because I had it in place before and I cannot necessarily say that that's going to be the same. But at the same time, like, I also chose to go to a small school because I knew I could get my accommodations whereas, like I mean, accommodations in general in college are not guaranteed and they would definitely not happen if I went to like Ohio State. Like just forget it. Some other limitations, I haven't always had professors respect my accommodations, which not like outright I'm not going to let you have your accommodation. It's more like I've had one professor in particular who wasn't respecting my testing accommodations. I really needed extended time and they were like oh yeah, you know what, I'll just extend it for everyone. That's not the point. Or like, I have small group quiet testing as well and like they would just invite, you know, as many people as they wanted to my quiet small testing. So, it wasn't really, I didn't really end up needing it, which was OK, but it was just pretty like frustrating. And I know they really were meaning well, but they just didn't quite get it. So.

Zoe: [00:10:20] Yeah, yeah. OK, what has been and/or is particularly accessible and disability inclusivity at Denison?

Participant J: [00:10:31] For the most part, I've had professors who've been pretty flexible and understanding if, you know, maybe I'm having a particularly difficult experience doing something or like for one example is I have a really hard time writing and it usually takes me a long time to do. And I get stuck and it's this whole thing so for the most part time, my professors can be pretty flexible on, you know, working with me to get through that and all that. And so, I would say that's more of an accessible class and I kind of have that flexibility. But I've also had professors who have been, you know, no, that's it. Sorry you got a zero on that paper. So, it's not really being, it's not saying, you know, they're not directly, you know, trying to do anything. It's just that's their policy and I have to respect that. And I really try, but sometimes it just can't happen. So, for I usually be pretty open with my professors. I mean, I obviously don't give them all of my details but, you know, I'll be open to that and they don't really care. I don't know what to do with this information.

Zoe: [00:12:04] OK. So, we're halfway through. So, we have, this is just a good opportunity for a break if you want one. But we can all just keep going. So, it's totally up to you.

Participant J: [00:12:15] I am OK to go right now.
Zoe: [00:12:15] OK, sweet. So, we're still in the experiences section. So, this one has some options for what you can answer to. So, whichever ones are applicable, those are the ones you can answer to and the ones that aren't applicable to you, you can just ignore. So, how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, administration and students, and the last one is medical or health appointments or procedures?

Participant J: [00:12:49] So, for academic accommodations, I kinda talked about that for a little bit. Which is it was pretty easy process to get my accommodations to go in college, but it is a little bit annoying to have to refill out the form every semester, especially like when I'm like they're going to be like basically the same. And also, like with my ADHD, I tend to forget stuff like this, but yeah. So, accommodations have been pretty easy. Usually I'll try and meet with a professor about it and just tell them. And I will have to schedule my test ahead of time and all that. In terms of other stuff, academic accommodations. I think that's-- I kind of mostly went over my experience with that. Communication, I think communication has been pretty good. I have a close relationship with someone in the ARC and if I was having an issue with communication, they would happily like act as a mediator between me and a faculty member or if like a faculty member was not back getting back to me about it or or something or like they would actually be that. So, I would say the communication has been pretty well, pretty good, and they're actually really good. I had to take some time off from school like last, two years ago, just because I was having some personal stuff going on for and I took off about a week and a half and they really helped me communicate with my professors that I was going to be taking time off and so I didn't really have to worry about that, which is really good so. Yeah so, I guess health appointments and like the Wellness Center so pretty good. I would say one thing that's hard, I don't really need it now, but I think the hard part is the one-- they are more like therapists and social workers, but before if you kind of hadn't seen someone kind of regularly, it is really hard to kind of get into see one or if you hadn't started making an appointment early and that was hard. If you needed to like once a week versus like every other week, that's kind of impossible. Like I totally understand. Like, you know, they want to be able to have it for all students, but at the same time, you know, two weeks might not be effective for what you need at that time.

Zoe: [00:16:27] OK, what did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant J: [00:16:36] So I did when visiting, I did look at the academic resource centers when I was applying to college. And I had gone and met with ARC, I think during admitted students weekend and then again over the summer just to make sure everything was set up, but that was a really important part of why I chose Denison. I mean, it wasn't the whole choice, obviously. But like there's definitely a good connection going on. And so, yeah, that was-- so, I guess what I looked for was that they did have a strong Academic Resource Center and that like you could, it was an office that you could actually kind of just go in and be like, hey, can we talk real quick? Or, you know, sure we can talk tomorrow or whatever. Like one that wasn't like impossible to get an appointment with, if that make sense. Oh, hey, I'm having this issue and I--oh sorry, I can meet you two weeks. So, when I was a little bit more laid back and not like super formal and like, bring your documents all the time, like documents, papers, yeah.
Zoe: [00:18:03] OK. What are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

Participant J: [00:18:13] I don't know if there's so much consequences other than like, I mean obviously there's there's stigma around. One thing that I found at least freshman and sophomore year is that I was really hesitant to talk about ADHD, especially because I did not want to mention medication. Cause I was really afraid that people stealing my medication. So, that's kind of one. I was just kind of afraid of people asking me for medication or taking it or I don' know, talking about. So, I guess there's there's a stigma. And I didn't really like people talking about it like the ADHD medications in the college setting way. So, actually there was another part of and why I picked Denison was like the culture, like I knew people weren't-- it wasn't as bad as like, you know, people taking Adderall all the time just to get through their classes. For me, it's a different thing. It's not just so I can stay up all night. It's so that I can actually function as a person. So, I guess I didn't want to talk about it because I was afraid about talking about medication and all that. It's been fine now so I don't really care. I guess more, I don't know if it's really specifically Denison's campus other that just, you know, there's more stigma around, you know, ADHD or if-- especially like in a really involved campus or really high achieving campus, it's really hard to talk about failure. Not that I was ever a failure, but like you know, it can be pretty embarrassing to talk about like I just can't get this paper in or I got a D on this test because I was, I don't know, I could not study for it, or something. So, that's kind of a hard part, you feel it can kinda take into your self-esteem a little bit when it's a really high achieving campus. Maybe your success in class looks a lot different, like maybe a B is really great for you and everyone else is talking about like, I need an A+ and their like OK.

Zoe: [00:20:50] That really is how it is.

Participant J: [00:20:55] It is, yeah so. That's why productivity circles have been really important because, you know, we kind of all talk about like I have not gotten myself to do my laundry in a month and I have no underwear and you're like, yeah me too. I can't-- so so, that's a hard part I think is like being at a really high achieving environment when you feel like you kind of have to do things a little bit differently. And maybe that's not how other people do it and they kind of-- luckily like I'll be honest. So, I would say everyone in my major department, students and faculty have been really great about it and have not made me feel weird about it or anything like that, or it's-- I have felt that way in other places so.

Zoe: [00:22:09] What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?

Participant J: [00:22:20] I would say probably kinda having my last, you know, kind of how this last semester went. I think as an upperclassman, there's a lot more flexibility in your time and your schedule and maybe when you do things and that's really beneficial to me. I can kind of work with my own personal schedule, just the way I work. And so, I guess having a lot of flexibility is really great and be able to do stuff on my own and is good. So, I guess an ideal day would just be like, you know, I have my classes, but I kind of have a bit more flexibility about when I get to work on projects or when I need to work on papers or, you know. And kind of having the flexibility to kinda do that. So, just and actually also having a routine is really good for me. It's really hard when things get changed up a lot. So, flexibility but also a routine. So,
you know, maybe I have flexibility on when I can do stuff, but you know, for example, I always get up at the same time and then have my one class at this time. And then maybe I'll work on something for like 12 to five or whatever, and it maybe depends on what I'm working on, but kind of a bit more, if that makes sense.

Zoe: [00:24:01] I totally get it. I totally get it. Yeah, for sure. OK, what other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant J: [00:24:13] One thing that I think is really interesting about productivity circle is that it has been primarily female identifying people in that group, which is really unique because there's a lot of stigma with ADHD in women. Like it actually took me a really long time to get diagnosed. Like I would say maybe like five or six years to get diagnosed and because I'm a girl and I was able to kind of mask my symptoms essentially. And kind of once you figured that out, it can be a lot of things more clear and you are able to work through that. So, like the fact that the group has been always been really interesting because a lot of the symptoms manifest themselves differently. So, that's just been really cool and really interesting and has been really. Yeah. Been really great, actually so.

Zoe: [00:25:11] Good, great. OK, so now we're into the support category. So, what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant J: [00:25:24] One would be, for example, accommodations would definitely be a needs of support, but also like having support like emotional support. So, you know, that could be through Wellness Center and having therapy or, you know, for example, the support group like productivity circle. So, like I guess having it be not only like the things on paper, but also kind of the emotional support both from faculty and administrators, but also with students so.

Zoe: [00:26:04] Yeah, definitely. In what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a disabled student?

Participant J: [00:26:10] So I've had some professors who are really kind of understanding and willing to work with me and be flexible and, you know, maybe I need to read more. I do something or I need help figuring out something and they've been really cool about that or I've had other professors who are just been, like they don't really get it. I've had professors suddenly be a lot more accommodating for the same exact issues I've always had but only because of pandemic yeah. So, I've had yeah, and I've had another professor who means well, does not really understand what I need and was offering other students to come and join my small group session or giving everyone extended time or telling me that I am I can come take my test to this room at this time and it's the entire class.

Zoe: [00:27:51] Yeah, that's not helpful.

Participant J: [00:27:52] So, I guess and it's not always like being heard isn't always like hey, I'm willing to give you extra time on this thing or whatever. It's more like hey, I hear you and, you know, maybe here are some strategies we can try and do to help make this work. Doesn't necessarily mean giving extra time to do this. It's more just like hey, I get what you're-- I understand and I see that you're you're trying and that you're not trying to just blow stuff off. So,
it's not always about like I'm going to modify everything for you or anything. It's just like if I see you and I see that you're trying and stuff like.

**Zoe:** [00:28:38] Yeah. What does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

**Participant J:** [00:28:44] That's a good question. I would say probably the first part being like having students be advocates is being just more understanding of or at least having more knowledge on disability, especially disabilities on Denison's campus and maybe not necessarily saying all the time, like we need all students having ideas for things we can improve. But it was just kind of coming to a starting point where there's more understanding. And I mean, I know like Denison, you know, tries to be accessible, but you can see that it is pretty ableist, to put it lightly. And college is a lot like that. And so, I guess just at least having a basic understanding of kind of the opportunities that you're having on campus that might not be suited for everyone who's trying to go to college essentially.

**Zoe:** [00:29:59] Yeah, yeah. Where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

**Participant J:** [00:30:08] ARC is usually mine I go to.

**Zoe:** [00:30:12] Yeah, for sure. OK so, now we're on to our last section, which is disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty, or staff with disabilities?

**Participant J:** [00:30:31] In terms of current inclusivity, I feel like people don't talk about disability very much on campus, like at all. I feel like I'm in my own little bubble where I do talk about it a lot with my productivity circle buddies. But like I don't think it's talked about very much that I see. Yeah. So, I just think the current state is there's no really connect to it, if make sense.

**Zoe:** [00:31:06] Yeah. For sure. So, what should be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

**Participant J:** [00:31:19] I think this is definitely hard to do, but I think there needs to be a little bit at least some change in the college culture or the Denison culture, essentially, where there's this really insane like you have to be really high achieving, and you have to be doing all these things and it's not OK to take a break. I think people are understanding right now that there is a pandemic going on, but it's on unfortunate that it took a pandemic to do that.

**Zoe:** [00:31:49] Yeah, definitely!

**Participant J:** [00:31:53] So, I think people are starting to understand right now, but before I think it was really hard for other students to kind of understand it's OK to, you know, if you have a problem or maybe something that, you know, maybe you need to address or need some, find something that's more accessible to you or, you know, that can help you or asking for help, essentially, because there is I found that when you do ask for help at Denison, there is a lot there are people that are willing to help you. So, that's been a really positive experience, but it's not
always explicit I think. Like, you know, people are like hey, we have an Academic Resource Center, we have a Wellness Center, we have all these things. But and they are pretty well advertised, but I think sometimes students don't quite understand that like maybe those programs would be beneficial sometimes. You know, like there's a lot of really, really great programs that I think it's Denison does with ARC and the Wellness Center. And I but I don't think that maybe those programs are for them and that maybe they would be useful so.

**Zoe:** [00:33:09] How do you think like would be a good way-- you said there is advertising, but how could maybe the advertising change to, so that students do know that it would be useful to them?

**Participant J:** [00:33:22] So, I think one thing with the Academic Resource Center, which is just not it's not for Denison's Academic Resource Center, but just academic resource centers in general, is people think oh, if I'm in an academic resource center like I'm in trouble. Like I'm failing classes or I, you know, I'm about to drop out or something. Like they don't see it as a, I don't know, like a real resource instead of it just being kind of like a last resort kind of thing or like I'm, you know, in big trouble. So, I think those boot camps, which I think are really great ideas, I think people think because they're from ARC, that you know, they have to be in trouble to go to those boot camps. Or like the Wellness Center does like these really cool group therapy things and I think people think like oh you know, that's not me. I'm not quite in the danger zone of whatever is going on to access this program, if that makes sense. That's not what they are aimed for, you know, it's for everyone, regardless of whatever your situation is. So, I'm not sure how you would convey that, but. Other things that could be improved versus unchanged. Yeah, I think that would be the biggest thing is like understanding you can use campus resources without being in dire need of whatever.

**Zoe:** [00:35:38] So, what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?

**Participant J:** [00:35:47] I think the hardest thing would be probably not my biggest concern and probably should not be for myself, but for the freshman. I think with the pandemic and classes being remote and online, I feel like you're not going to get the same-- like you know, as upperclassmen, we've gotten really pretty good exposure to all the different programs they have on campus. You know, even though we might think oh, I don't need to the ARC boot camps or whatever, we are at least kind of aware what they are and what kind of the intention is, even if we are not utilizing them. It's my concern with the freshman that they just have no idea what that is, nor do they realize that they can do it. I've noticed with the freshman in the productivity circle, you know, I'm showing them these things on campus like hey, you can use this or this spot in the library is really great because it's really like not distracting. It's really quiet. And they'll be like oh, I don't know that was there or I've never been in the library. So, it's just more of my concern like, how is it that possible? All of your classes are supposed to take you. But like, it's more of my certain as like freshmen that they're not going to get the same-- you know, if they find that they do need help or they do need or something is not accessible to them, that they don't know who to talk to or how to figure it out like at all. And they're kind of afraid to because they're not interacting on campus as much. So, it's kind of scary. And also, like, you can't just kind of walk into I mean, I guess you kinda could, but you can't just walk into ARC anymore and be like hi, I need this or whatever, like they might not be there. And it's kind of awkward to write
an email about something. So, it's more of like my concern that like accessibility for freshmen who have not been on campus very long is going to be long or difficult. And the other thing I think is, at least for me, I was really, really concerned about having remote classes. I do not do well at all with those classes. They are just kind of a disaster for me. I need to have that in person experience to like even to function essentially in a class. So, that was kind of my biggest worry over the summer was like, are we going to have in-person classes because I can't learn at all. So, I guess that would be my other concern is like, you know, especially for freshmen like are they going to, can they have those same in-person class experiences? Especially like when it's really, really hard to have remote classes feel accessible and so.

Zoe: [00:39:00] Definitely. OK, so the last one is just if there's anything you'd like to share about Denison's accessibility that I have not prompted?

Participant J: [00:39:11] No, other than like I think we, I like I think the weird part is now since our classes are looking a lot different, I don't really have any academic accommodations anymore. I still have them, but I don't quite use them because like most of my exams have been take home exams so they've been over five days and they take whatever, like 15 hours and you have that time. So, that's enormous, but like so I don't really have this extra time anymore, but like I also don't want to make my exam longer, nor would without really doing anything. So, it's like kind of the academic accommodations don't quite match what might be needed in a regular classroom. So, I think that would be something for like Denison to think about for freshmen and sophomores is kind of how do they keep those kind of accommodations and things in place. Without kind of, I think at this point, a lot of it is kind of put on the professors on like how to manage that. So, I think almost there should be a little bit more influence from I think Denison's administration on how to manage that versus kinda just placing it on the professors to kind of figure it out, if that makes sense.

Zoe: [00:41:09] Yeah, definitely. Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. What do you think admin could do to like to help faculty? Like what resources could they give, or would it be like education about, you know, like what would that look like?

Participant J: [00:41:28] Yeah, I would say education for professors. Also, I think maybe if a student is having for example, like, you know, if we had to go for the remote again next semester for some reason, maybe instead of-- I mean this would be a lot of work for ARC, but like if a student is having a really hard time with remote learning and they can't, you know, focus or they're not getting their work done on time, like kind of having ARC be like the mediator in that conversation. So, it's not kind of just the professor trying to figure out how do I modify student assignments? Whereas because at the same time, like I mean, I obviously I'm really good at turning things in late, but like you can't give me an extreme amount of time or I'll just never do it. Whereas a professor who's not necessarily trained in academic accommodations might just be like yeah, take as much time as you want and then it will just kinda be like a snowball effect for that student. So, kinda having like ARC being a mediator especially might be a better situation. Saying like if a student's really struggling in class. Just because I think like faculty aren't quite trained in what to do in that type of situation so.
Interview K

**Zoe** [00:00:08] So, the first one that I have is, how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns do you prefer to use for yourself?

**Participant K** [00:00:19] I identify as a woman and my pronouns are she/her.

**Zoe** [00:00:21] Perfect. OK, our next one is, how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, are you a student, a faculty, or a staff member?

**Participant K** [00:00:33] Student.

**Zoe** [00:00:34] Perfect. OK so, this is our terms and definitions section of our question. So, the first one is how would you define disability?

**Participant K** [00:00:47] I would probably first define it as a difference in the ability of a person that disturbs their ability to function within like normal life, I guess, or or within society.

**Zoe** [00:00:58] OK! Perfect. What term should be used when referring to disability. And this is what I'll use throughout the interview and the term can also be disability, if that's the best one for you.

**Participant K** [00:01:21] I'm OK with disability. As we get into more finite details, sometimes I sometimes I could definitely see different like different ability or other ways of describing and that don't really have to do with sort of stuff like dis- preface of ability, but like that's something we can talk about. And in general, you can use the word.

**Zoe** [00:01:45] OK, perfect. Which one do you generally use just out of curiosity?

**Participant K** [00:01:54] Disability usually and like probably like 30 percent of the time, I say different ability, but I'll usually say it like disability and different abilities, or I'll be like learning differences or I'll be like differently abled. Yeah.

**Zoe** [00:02:10] Perfect. So, what do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

**Participant K** [00:02:21] They think about weakness and struggle, I think, but also challenge, which isn't like kind of and and like different perspectives.

**Zoe** [00:02:36] This question is very similar, but some people interpret it a bit different. So, what do others think about when they hear the term disability?

**Participant K** [00:02:49] Disabled people and then a lot of the stuff I said before, but since I'm still thinking on it, I also think of maybe physically disabled people specifically.

**Zoe** [00:02:59] Yeah. Do see disability as an identity and why?
Participant K [00:03:07] I see it as part of an identity, but not the entire identity or as shaping identity. Somebody's individuality stands above disability, but it plays a role.

Zoe [00:03:26] Do you perceive yourself as disabled? Why?

Participant K [00:03:33] I've never actually thought about it that way before. I would say in a very, in very logical terms, yes because I have dysgraphia which is categorized as a disability. And I also have ADHD which isn't. And I don't normally think of myself as disabled, though.

Zoe [00:03:54] Yeah. What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant K [00:04:05] Accessibility means to me that people's differences are acknowledged and accounted for in an inclusive way. Sure, we can go with that. It's kind of hard to define. Any ease of access is another really basic. Yeah.

Zoe [00:04:34] Yeah. Jumping back to the previous question, I just had a thought. So, you said dysgraphia is labeled as a disability. If-- I'm just wondering why, what is the thought process behind not identifying as disabled but still having that disability?

Participant K [00:05:00] It's kind of complicated, I would say part of it is seeing people with more-- so, my diagnosis was in high school, so it's also like I lived a decent chunk of life. So, part of it is growing up not with that identity, the dysgraphia diagnosis, that is. Another part of it is seeing other people with more, more like externally apparent disabilities that you can see or disabilities that get treated more differently than mine are. And thus, like when you go out into the world and into society, their disability is more visible. So not having one that's as visible and then also living in my body and my mind for my entire life. So, it's just normal to me and myself. And then also because I think about and feel like I'm affected much more by my ADHD, but it doesn't qualify as a disability. And it's also a complicated thing because it's named as a disorder, but it kind of looks more like a syndrome when you get into the details of it. And it it creates problems, but is it the same as different learning disabilities like dyslexia and Down's syndrome and a whole list of things? So, in some of those are seen more as very concrete or as a more severe disability. And so, looking at ADHD that way, plus the fact that it's not defined as a disability, I don't see it that way. And I'm not sure if it was that that would change it a whole lot. It's just it has to do with interpretation for me.

Zoe [00:07:14] Yeah, yeah. That makes sense. And when you say it's not defined as a disability, does that mean like medically?

Participant K [00:07:22] Mhm.

Zoe [00:07:22] So, what does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant K [00:07:28] Disability inclusivity means to me realizing that people with disabilities can work in and participate in a lot or like all of the same things that people without disabilities do. And then doing that.
Zoe [00:07:50] Great. So, this next section is going to be experiences. So, our first one in this section is, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant K [00:08:06] It has been very good overall. A little bit-- there's been a little bit of things that maybe fell through, but overall my experience has been very good. It's included the Academic Resource Center and accommodations that I sometimes apply for and sometimes don't. It's included a lot of challenges, managing my learning differences on my own and setting up and initiating getting help when it and like sometimes questioning things. But it's also included a deeper understanding of myself and self-assertion and meeting other people with learning differences and people with disabilities. So, for example, I get accommodations most semesters, but not every single one in this past semester because, oh yeah. The accommodations are available and then what's there is kind of-- the clearest thing I can qualify for is extra time on tests. And a lot of the other things are just harder to quantify and harder to manage, like dealing with late assignments and so, I guess some things like that. So, the best thing I can target is tests and then the rest I just work on it and it goes pretty well. But this past semester, because I didn't have as many timed tests, I didn't apply for accommodations. And then I ran into challenges and hadn't talked to any of my professors until then about my struggles. So, that was a challenge. Just kind of that there's help for certain things and there are other things that it's harder to reach. And I'm sure that's the case for different for people dealing with different things than what I'm dealing with. But besides that, it's been a good experience. It's been easier than some of my past experiences. And it's been one of the first times I've arrived somewhere and across the board really been taken, not taken seriously, but like I mean, that's the best way I can describe it. But wherever I somewhere and across the board, I'm respected and and expected to be able to do things at a high level, which is really awesome.

Zoe [00:10:50] So, what limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility and/or inclusivity issues and your university related experiences?

Participant K [00:11:00] University related experiences, I'd say very few. And as a student who's out of state taking I take medication for my ADHD, which I like, I don't know if it's OK to call, but it's a disability because it's not categorized as one, which is why I prefer to say learning differences. But I think, this is a segue or a diversion, but I think kind of the same people as individuals first idea that I mentioned applies to both, but I'm trying to think of my dysgraphia has had any limitations pop up. I mean, not not in a huge way. I think sometimes I'll just realize, oh, I really can't write fast. And but the only other the only thing I was thinking of was getting medication and timing it correctly and following insurance restrictions for controlled substances and navigating all of that on my own, which usually goes pretty well, but has had a lot of hiccups. And as I transitioned to being the one in charge of my medication instead of my parents.

Zoe [00:12:27] Right, right. Yeah. Also, when when we're talking when I ask about disability or whatever, feel free to talk about either of those ADHD or it doesn't it doesn't matter. I'm going for a very broad definition of disability so you can feel free to talk about whatever you want. OK so, what has been and/or is particularly accessible and disability inclusivity at Denison University?
Participant K [00:13:07] Talking to professors is one that's very good and that's a challenge for me, so it's nice when whatever little thing I do gets positive response and it's nice when professors set up ways to meet with them. And you just so they kind of go half of the way. The way I mean, the way the schedule is set up a little bit, but it's different classes on different days. And to a smaller degree, the ability to do things your own way and be accepted and kind of like listen to your needs and at least if you're not understood, be considered instead of like, what the heck are you doing? Is very nice. I had that in two classes and I've had that in the productivity circle and I have no idea if that's going to help me or not want to get out in the real world, but it's nice.

Zoe [00:14:25] Yeah, definitely. OK, so we're halfway through. So, if you want to break, this would be a good opportunity, but we can also just keep on going. So, it's totally up to you.

 Participant K [00:14:37] I'll just have a sip of water and we can keep going.

Zoe [00:14:42] OK! Sounds good.

Participant K [00:14:42] Are you good?

Zoe [00:14:42] Yes, I'm good. Thanks for asking.

Participant K [00:14:44] OK, awesome. And you're a senior, right?

Zoe [00:14:48] I am. Yeah, mhm.

Participant K [00:14:50] You remembered to hit record, right?

Zoe [00:14:52] Yes, I did. I did, yes.

Participant K [00:14:53] OK, good.

Zoe [00:14:53] Thank you. So, this next question has like four different options. So, you can not speak to the ones that don't apply to you and then speak to the ones that do.

Participant K [00:15:07] OK.

Zoe [00:15:08] So, how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, administration students? And then the last one is medical or health appointments or procedures?

Participant K [00:15:25] We had accessibility?

Zoe [00:15:30] Mobility--.

Participant K [00:15:32] Mobility.
Zoe [00:15:33] Yeah, but it's about accessibility. Yes, you're correct. And they are in the chat too. So, I have them written out.

Participant K [00:15:39] OK. I don't have a I don't have really any accessibility problems and I don't think about it very much except when I go down to South Quad and I realize it's kind of a weird way to get there if you're in a wheelchair.

Zoe [00:15:55] Yeah, yeah.

Participant K [00:15:56] Yeah. And I know I think they a ramp or something somewhere, but I don't remember. So yeah, I've had someone point. I also had somebody this year mention that Denison does a good job of accounting for food allergies, but that's a really important factor in college and independent life experience for people with severe allergies and that it's super important in their ability to like leave their the place where they live and stuff like that. So, most people don't have really severe allergies, but that's something that doesn't get talked about a lot. So, that's a thing. And then you said medical and academic resources?

Zoe [00:16:57] Academic accommodations communication between basically anyone. So, faculty, staff, administration and students. And then the last one was medical or health appointments or procedures.

Participant K [00:17:08] OK so, academic accommodations, the program at Denison is really simple, but it puts responsibility on the students, which is good. But it also means that you can, you know, get in your own way.

Zoe [00:17:23] Right. Right.

Participant K [00:17:25] I think that, I think that it's a pretty good program and set up that they have there. They always try to help. And in my experience, sometimes it actually is helpful. They also have the, they have like time and time management worksheets and calendars and schedules and all of that accommodations, time management stuff. If you know where to get it, it's super easy to get. And it's it's not that complicated. Obviously, you want to get if you want to be more effective, you have to talk to professors more and you have to look into it more. But it's pretty good. As far as accommodations that are available, it's not really a Denison or college exclusive thing that accommodations that make sense in a school and that are easy to implement and are easy to like, are easily identified and confirmed as needed by a student. There are kind of, in my experience, some accommodations that are very easy to say, like, oh, this much extra time for these things or a meeting every time this kind of assignment is issued to plan working on it this way. And but even that second one's a little bit trickier to kind of plan and students disabilities aren't fully addressed by that. But I don't think they're put at a disadvantaged by having those accommodations and not having I mean, you could be put at a disadvantage by having those accommodations and not having others. But I think having the ones that are that the school is most able to identify you needing and then format that in a way that then can be adapted to a class and then give you those accommodations is an advantage or is, like helps include and bring better access and everything. So, that's academic accommodations. I mean, so there's a slight obstacle to getting them into doing it yourself and planning that and staying on track with it. But
with that overcome, they're pretty good. And then medical is there's kind of like really good and then some like not as good. I've had pretty good experiences with the counseling and medical services at school. Yeah, I managed a mix up with my medication this semester with the help of Whisler, which I hadn't done before, and they were really quick and easy to work with, considering it's something that's kind of got a lot of red tape and controlled substance and you have to time it right and stuff like that. I know that like representation and diversity in the counseling services is not what students want it to be. And I know that in the past couple of years it's improved some, but it's not where it's not meeting everybody's needs. It's not meeting the needs of a large population of students.

Zoe [00:21:44] And whose needs do you think are not being met?

Participant K [00:21:45] Hmm?

Zoe [00:21:47] Whose needs do you think are not being met without representation?

Participant K [00:21:50] I've mostly spoken with black students who feel that their needs are met by the counseling department or whatever you call it, and have spoken with administrators and not seen results yet.

Zoe [00:22:08] OK.

Participant K [00:22:08] And there is one more. We had medical, we had academic accommodations, we had mobility.

Zoe [00:22:15] And communication between faculty, staff, administration, students.

Participant K [00:22:25] Oh! With disability specific things, and communication's pretty good. What like the things that do get communicated, I think people pay attention to them and my professors have been attentive and administrators in the Resource Center and in Whisler have also been attentive and stay aware and give suggestions and stay communicating about things. So, it's a matter of everybody keeping that up and adding more things to the conversation. Yeah, I'm not thinking I thought I had something else to say, but I'm not thinking of anything more so.

Zoe [00:23:15] Yeah, that's fine. I was going to ask something. Oh! For academic accommodations, you said it was kind of like on your, you know, your responsibility to have those, because I know it's a semester by semester process. Is that something that you think is a positive thing? Should that keep going or are there changes to that process that you think should be made?

Participant K [00:23:39] I feel neutral about it. I think the only change that would be difficult to argue against is improving student awareness of that resource. Yeah, like there's nothing so bad about it being an every semester thing that should be changed, even if it presents a small challenge. That being said, it can and does present a small challenge for students. But I just don't think that it's enough to warrant an across the board like, well, now we've got to have it every year for four years. We'll update it. But the baseline stays the same. I think maybe I mean,
updating it with a baseline staying the same is a possibility. But I think they really are acknowledging the fact that students' needs are changing while they're at Denison and they would rather not have the default be having the same thing from like freshman year follow that student.

Zoe [00:24:47] Right.

Participant K [00:24:49] Yeah, I'll just leave it at it's a neutral thing. It's not definitely good or definitely bad.

Zoe [00:24:53] Definitely. OK, perfect. So, what were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? And have these reactions changed over time? How so?

Participant K [00:25:10] OK, my first reactions were that they had a lot of useful resources like tutoring and productivity circle that sounded like, that sounded promising and might work and I knew class sizes were small and I thought that would mean mentorship would happen easily and I would get to work on building my comfort, talking to professors. And then and I really had this idea, like I was like, oh, my gosh, productivity circle is going to be like such a vibe. And I'll show up and everyone will have had really similar experiences to me. We'll be able to bond over that and then we'll share strategies and talk about our experiences. And it'll be like, really, it'll feel like we have this community and we understand each other and that'll be really nice. And there's definitely some shared experiences where everyone's like, oh, I feel more relaxed in this environment to talk about some challenges that I'm having. But when it when I did go to productivity circle, which I've also the whole time I'm a senior in the whole time I've been attending, I've had very few semesters where my class schedule doesn't interfere with it. So I come a little bit late. Then I also sometimes get to that point in the day and I'm like, I want to spend an hour listening to people and talking or do I want to get started on homework? Right. And so I usually do that. But I didn't feel as like super vibrant as I imagined it, but I met some people that were helpful for me to know and that I've hung out with outside of that. And I've definitely benefited from the bits of mindfulness that they put in there and having some people that say, oh, I'm really struggling with this right now and it's a-- I don't think you're really going to get judged really hard if you say that in another space. But knowing that everybody's dealing with those things makes everyone feel a little bit more comfortable sharing. And then as far as the other things, I realize you kind of have to do some yourself to get communication going with professors and especially to get like a quality relationship or have their advice and mentorship. But my gosh, I've definitely benefited from the small class sizes. And it's a little bit each professor where if, you know, they notice something or you take the first step and they're like, well, then you to share more to work with them on something that you're doing. But so, yeah, but I've also found that like the some of the resources don't work for me and some of them do. And I think that's probably true for most people. And I was just like, oh, this will definitely help. And it's like, some of them don't work for me. I don't know. I've found that there's a lot less like pushback when it comes to accommodations than I faced in grade school, which especially in my high school, which is very which in my view is a good thing. Yeah, I'll leave it at that. I guess it's been a good experience for me, but I don't think that that means that, you know, everything's great.
Zoe [00:29:07] Right. For sure, for sure. So, what did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility? Which you kind of mentioned in your last question. So you don't have to repeat what you said, but if there's more stuff.

Participant K [00:29:25] I like that question. I looked for small class sizes. I looked for residential or mostly residential campus. I looked for a small general student body and I looked for programs in leadership and mentorship, research and career stuff. And then I looked some at the Academic Resource Center type offices at different schools. I kind of looked for like an attitude or a program at each, at schools that would help students along if they had some idea for a project or something. So, like I, I visited Denison and I thought, wow, it seems like people are really willing to help students out here. I visited College of Wooster and I visited their resource center. And it seems very robust too and they have a research program the senior year that's built in. So, there's definitely a lot of assistance there. And that's kind of it. I mostly focused on knowing that I wanted small, residential, and small class size.

Zoe [00:30:49] So, what are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

Participant K [00:31:10] It would mean navigating the Academic Resource Center and the and possibly counseling or the medical center for different medications or counseling services or therapy. And I mean, if you have a physical disability, it means the structure of every single building and the campus, but specifically to Denison. So, all of those are Denison specific. And then whatever the way the school does their academic accommodations or their kind of treatment of like you show up and you say, oh, I have this challenge or I'm really struggling with this or I have this diagnosis. So, in Denison's case it is, all you disclose is your accommodation and then it's emailed to your professors each semester if you choose to disclose it. And then it's your job to say, OK so, I requested for time and a half on tests or for this kind of assignment or whatever, or to use my laptop in class because I have this or because, you know, whatever and here are some symptoms that I deal with, you know. And it also means that you'll talk to specific people in the Resource Center office. And that you would talk to the Denison professors about that. Yeah.

Zoe [00:32:53] Great. What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?

Participant K [00:33:02] Fairly similar to my normal day, but talking to my professor more or having more of a schedule and then not worrying, and I don't know if this is an answer to the question, but not worrying so much about social interactions and stuff like that and what other students think of me in class and outside of class, but mostly in class. Or maybe not necessarily like not worrying about it, but having an easier time dealing with it, dealing with that anxiety about how other people might receive me. And yeah. Oh, and also receiving other people for who they are and like probably learning more about them, the people that I don't know quite as well or don't interact with as much. But just knowing more about them on a baseline.

Zoe [00:34:18] Mhm, wonderful. What other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility.
**Participant K [00:34:27]** What other aspects of my identity? I think being a girl has, being an artistic and creative person has. Oh my gosh, being a student in like advanced programs really has a lot, not I mean not like, oh, it's a very dominant shaper of my identity, but more like it influences and combines with disability and learning difference a lot. And race some as well. So, being a girl has influenced it as my differences are interpreted within a slightly different lens of like how people are used to girls acting or expect girls to think and act. And it has also, in such a way that I maybe don't meet those standards. But it also has played a role in as I've changed like, I can talk-- I'm trying to do research on basically this question this coming semester so I can talk a lot about this. But another thing is that with diagnosis and then taking medication, my attitude and stuff being more positive, but I also became kind of more quiet and I don't know if that would have been received the same way if I were a boy. I don't think anyone said why you're such a quiet girl or like so glad you're a girl that's quiet or something. But maybe I wouldn't have been asked why I was so serious as much. Or maybe I wouldn't have been told I was hyper as often if I were a boy.

**Zoe [00:36:42]** Yeah, yeah.

**Participant K [00:36:46]** But then so I could talk about that a lot.

**Zoe [00:36:49]** Yeah, talk about as much as you want.

**Participant K [00:36:54]** OK so, another thing is like the way I like looked at kinda girls and guys and gender roles as a young kid, I was like, I want to be like a boy and I don't like those girls, which wasn't very nice of me to think. But so, I tried to be like an edgy eight-year-old and stuff. Oh, and then also like kind of occasionally being like very bubbly and, oh what else I had? I just sort of like, oh! Back to when I was a girl, I was self-conscious about my handwriting for some time cause it's very messy. And I thought students would always admire the girls with really cute handwriting. And I thought professors would always think they were smarter and grade you better. So one time on a math test with a professor, a teacher in like middle school that didn't really, she didn't really like dislike me that much, but she was kind of like I don't think she thought a whole lot of me. And I've always had to work really hard in math to do well. So, I felt kind of intimidated by the class. And I thought, well, this teacher is kind of like biased. Maybe if I work really hard on having perfect handwriting, she'll be better. So, I spent that whole test writing like the explain your answer part with really cute handwriting and I it changed the way I write my Ws now. So, that's a thing. So, that's one. Yeah, I don't know. I don't think like being a girl directly influenced like my sort of identity, ADHD experience. But gender roles definitely influence the way it was seen, but it's not like everybody saw me as like, let's read these behaviors as a girl doing it. I think they kind of did so automatically or just saw the behavior and so did I. So, I don't know. But as a student who was very skilled, I mean, once I actually learned to read slightly late, I was very skilled at reading and writing and then not skilled at math and had a diagnosis of this disorder, but also was starting an advanced program. You get-- I need to make sure that I talk about this in on the topic of disability, but I'm thinking of just the way those programs like make everybody feel weird and like I think they make people overthink things. So, I had like substitute teachers tell classrooms, oh I thought you guys, like when we were like not
behaving yourselves very well. She's like, you're the advanced class, though. Like you're supposed to be really good and polite and stuff.

**Zoe [00:40:36]** Interesting.

**Participant K [00:40:38]** And then it like I went from having an identity as a weird kid or a bad kid, which was painful, but also nice because I thought a lot of the things that other kids did were lame or they didn't think about it very much before they did it to being sometimes seen as serious or to being like a good student or to being like goody goody. When on the inside I was like, no, I still have this, like I'm still me, which has those goody goody aspects, but I have this identity of the kid who was always out in the hall and it feels like nobody sees that. So, that connects in part to being what I recently learned, is called twice exceptional. Have you heard of it?

**Zoe [00:41:36]** No, I haven't.

**Participant K [00:41:38]** That's it's like it's in education is where I heard it. And like so, in schools when a student has a learning disability or disorder and is also in advanced programing or tests really high, they're twice exceptional. When I discovered the term, I kind of wasn't happy with it. I don't know. It's just weird. I feel I felt like I can't say I have a learning disability because that's like almost disrespectful to the people that have like real learning disabilities. Now I have a real learning disability and it's categorized as a disability. So, whoopie. And so that combined with how well different parts of it work for me. And also like when this sounds kind of like complaining because it doesn't acknowledge that, I don't know, there are people with learning differences that don't test really high, but when you, or have or have other academic strengths, but when you have like a learning difference or challenge and getting accommodations is very can be very tricky and can feel very weird, even if it's not that tricky, because the people involved in administration for that like question why you need it and then you might question it. And some people just may not believe that they should be granted to students in advanced class and that student should either get out of the class because they can't do it or should be forced to take the class without the accommodations. And like the ultimate goal is to have things be as integrated as possible in a way that benefits like people across the board the most without infringing on stuff a lot. So, obviously the ultimate goal would probably be for that student to not need accommodation, but accommodation, at least at that time, in the student's life might be what's needed for the forced integration possible in that situation. So, like that's weird because you might even do pretty well without accommodation. But if somebody were to, like, read the timed essay that you just wrote, they're like, why is the letter U missing from half of these words? Or, wow, you really didn't you you only wrote half of it or you still managed to get a really high score? And another thing is, like maybe a lot of kids without diagnoses like that are also only writing half the essay. But that kid like you don't know that. You don't ever get to know their test. That would be a really interesting statistical analysis. I always thought about, like, what do the proctors think and see? Should I write them a letter in this standardized test? Yeah, like as twice exceptional. You'll get people that are like, oh my gosh, you're never going to make it in this class and, you know, the student shouldn't be here. They can't do it whatever whatever their problem. And you're going to get people that are like, oh my gosh this kid's the next whatever, you know, famous academic and I personally haven't felt comfortable hearing either of those things and I'm like, I just want to be like a neither.
Zoe [00:45:23] Yeah, yeah.

Participant K [00:45:23] Being in advanced programing is weird. How does it affect my identity? Yeah. And then race hasn't really affected it for me in a very salient way. But I know that, oh my gosh, socioeconomic standing does the big time because that's what allowed my parents to pay attention and take care of my differences and do the same for my brother through that process and like allowed me to take medication and to change schools. And having those just like having like depending on the district you're in, if you're a white person, people might care about you more. So, they might notice, they might see your behavior differently. But definitely socioeconomically. I attended a school that I mean, maybe if I attended a school that didn't have as much money as an elementary schooler, they would have just disciplined me or like suspended me or something like that. And I wouldn't things would have gotten worse faster and then changed or they wouldn't have changed. So, yeah that's one, I'd say that affects it more than race. But it depends on the specific case. Like, I'm sure there's there are people out there who race makes a bigger difference in their specific story than socioeconomic status does. I can't believe I forgot that one until just now. That's huge. That's it. Those are intersectionality thingy’s.

Zoe [00:47:28] Yes. Thank you. That's definitely needed in my research. So, I'm glad that you could expand a lot on that.

Participant K [00:47:37] OK, yay!

Zoe [00:47:37] So, we are not going into the support category. So, the first question this one is, what does disability support means to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant K [00:47:50] People who will be there when you ask for it basically. Set up a meeting with somebody or yeah.

Zoe [00:47:58] Yeah, great. In what ways do you feel, heard and not heard as a disabled student?

Participant K [00:48:10] I have found it difficult to talk about experiences like being misunderstood. I don't know, like I really want to talk about times, I mean I don't want to fix it, but I want to talk about times I was misunderstood in my past and partially because I'm like, yeah, just because I don't know, they don't like it doesn't mean it's not cool. And then part of me is just cause like that shit hurted. And people don't really want to talk about that that much. But, what was the question again?

Zoe [00:48:55] In what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a disabled student?

Participant K [00:48:10] OK so, I kind of feel not heard that way, but that's not why I'm here at school, so that's not a huge problem for me. I feel heard when professors grant accommodations and check in like during a test that's taking a really long time with how I'm doing and how far along I am. And when they respond to my when I say like, I'm having a problem and then let me tell you about this challenge I have or when I say I have accommodations, just grant me
accommodations or asking to hear more about it, other ways I feel heard. I'd say like some fellow students and, you know, I usually don't talk about it just like, oh, well, let's talk about my ADHD or my dysgraphia or whatever. But like with friends, like sometimes when I talk about like, oh, I feel like uncomfortable because I feel like everybody thought it was weird at this time. And I attach that in part to like this diagnosis that I have. And that makes me scared to talk to people now and or like I've had friends-- I straight up had these two friends who both graduated now. My freshman year, they saw me with one of their friends ripping up like one of those coffee, coffee, thingys at a table. And they're like, let's go see that girl who's talking to so and so. She's ripping something up. She probably has ADHD.

Zoe [00:50:59] No way!

Participant K [00:50:59] I did! And they both do too.

Zoe [00:51:03] That's so funny. I rip, I am also known to rip like everything in front of me, so it's funny, but anyways. Yes, I'm always fiddling with something. That's so funny.

Participant K [00:51:16] Oh yeah. I think times that I feel like I wish I was heard are just as much, if not more struggling to express myself than not actually being heard. And I don't know, I feel like professors are generally listening as they would listen to any other student and that feels nice. Yeah. I don't think I have anything more to say on that one.

Zoe [00:51:47] OK, yeah! Wonderful. What does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

Participant K [00:51:57] I think it means, related to my experiences as a Denison I haven't thought about very much. Giving like-- trying to understand people as individuals first rather than as, like their ability, status or whatever, and that might look like, I don't know. I'm not 100 percent sure what that would look like. That might look like not assuming that somebody is going to complete their assignment a certain way that you're studying with or that somebody has the same expectations as you or the same framework as you when you're going into an interaction or you're like at a performance or a party or something. I mean, it also means like talking about it with other students and like having my friends tell me, oh, well, you know, people with food allergies and his about that and taking, taking the time to look at the campus and look at your experience and wonder what it would be like for somebody else and then talk about that. Yeah.

Zoe [00:53:51] Yeah, for sure. So, this is the last on their support category. So, where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Participant K [00:54:08] I'd say the Resource Center and myself mostly and then my professors as well, when it comes to kind of a case by case and individual situation. Yeah.

Zoe [00:54:24] Yeah, great. OK so, this is our last section, which is disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So the first one and this is, what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to student, faculty, or staff with disabilities?
Participant K [00:54:47] That I mean, I don't think I can speak super strongly for people with physical disabilities because I don't deal with that personally or with very many people that deal with that personally. But I think the impression, I guess, is of openness and support, but not always understanding. And sometimes that can probably be uncomfortable. But I wouldn't rule out that there aren't with certain mobility things or like I was talking about with the counseling services, areas where people see a slight disregard or a clear disregard. But for the most part I would say support and openness, sometimes with understanding, sometimes without.

Zoe [00:56:01] Great. OK, what should be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

Participant K [00:56:11] I think awareness should be improved of resources and maybe maybe of needs. Like I don't know how you do that, but I feel like there are students here that face this disability. That would be interesting to know, but kind of weird because it's like along with other things that get called out about students, how would that be interpreted and and make different students feel and have different attention things? And like how students feel is important, but I think it's more important what kind of the what the like institutional and and the process-y changes are that would come from that. Like if it changes the way people interact, that's important to pay attention to. Yeah, that would be one thing to possibly do. I think making students aware of and comfortable using resources and mostly just like really aware of the resources could be improved. I never felt like I had a hard time finding them or like I was like they were hidden from me. They're on the basement of Higley, which is kind of hard to find.

Zoe [00:57:41] Yeah, it is.

Participant K [00:57:41] Like, I knew when I came to Denison how to get to the hub of resources and stuff and then having like a black counselor in the counseling staff. And I'm not as certain about mobility and physical disabilities and even like pain and autoimmune stuff. I think the Academic Resource Center is able to help with some of that. And I, I don't really know. So, I think maybe improved awareness to students that have those needs about resources available to them and then possibly improved awareness of students without those needs. But I am rather wary of focusing too much on the differences and on the needs that people have, because if you go down the wrong way, then that really emphasizes the challenge they face and their weakness and things like that, which then will make it more challenging, I think or make, you know, that way at least when they go out to interact with other people, which would suck. And also because I think that it's very important to see people as individuals first. And that's what the ultimate goal of advocacy and inclusivity is.

Zoe [00:59:25] Mhm, yeah. OK so, what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?

Participant K [00:59:33] Counseling.

Zoe [00:59:38] OK, yeah.
Participant K [00:59:38] Yeah. I don't think we had a male counselor when I was a freshman and now we do, which yay. So, more in that direction.

Zoe [00:59:49] OK, great. And our last question is just if there is anything you would like to share that I have not prompted about Denison accessibility.

Participant K [01:00:11] I don't think so. Mental health is a weird like, I don't know, Venn diagram thing into this conversation that I know has some parts that are relevant, but I can't really speak about that. But yeah, that's it.
Zoe [00:00:22] OK so, how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns do you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant L [00:00:29] I like she/hers and I identify as a cisgender woman.

Zoe [00:00:36] Perfect. Okie dokie. How would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, are you a student, faculty, or staff?

Participant L [00:00:47] Student.

Zoe [00:00:47] Perfect. OK so, our first section then is definitions and terms. So, the first question in this is, how would you define disability?

Participant L [00:01:01] That's complicated.

Zoe [00:01:03] It is, yeah.

Participant L [00:01:03] I would say personally, disability is referring to an experience that people have. I think that ultimately, it's something people have to like self-identify cause I think that people can have the same experience and view it differently. And I think that it's a way of experiencing things. Something about how you are is not necessarily how society was designed for, if that makes sense. So, I think that also there's a very, very wide range of people's experiences with disability and people's relationships with the term disability. And I think that I only can bring my own perspective of that. But I think that there's a very broad understanding based on what people’s disabilities are and how they view them. I think that it's important to understand that it's a very flexible term.

Zoe [00:01:57] For sure. So, what term should be used in referring to disability? And this will be the term I use throughout and the term can also be disability.

Participant L [00:02:12] Yeah, I'm good with like disability, disabled. All that works like person with a disability. I'm not too picky.

Zoe [00:02:19] OK, great. Thank you. What do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant L [00:02:29] I think that generally people have a lot of ableist understandings of what disability means. I think generally the response to people like that aren't necessarily visibly disabled saying that they have a disability is almost seen as like self-deprecating to identify that way or like some sort of negative thing that people have so many negative understandings of what that means. And I think that affects those people that don't identify as disabled and also people that potentially could have experiences where they may or may not identify as disabled and are valid in whichever way they want to understand their experience. But I think that people
could also struggle with like internalized ableism, I think that generally people have a lot of preconceived notions and view it as almost like less than in a way.

Zoe [00:03:26] So, this next question is very similar, but some people interpret it a bit differently. So, what do others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant L [00:03:44] I think I can't really know, and I think it also depends on who that person is that's hearing it. I know that my experience of hearing someone identify that way compared to maybe someone else's could be very different, depending on one's own experience with people with disabilities and their own experience as whether or not they identify as disabled. So, I think I really can't know what others do think. I think that we all kind of live in a world of what we think others think.

Zoe [00:04:10] Yeah. Do you see disability as an identity and why?

Participant L [00:04:17] Absolutely. Completely. I think it's so important. I think it's a way of articulating an experience and obviously so many different experiences. But I think that there is some commonalities and by recognizing it as an identity, it also creates space for community, which I think is really important. And without recognizing it as identity, you take away people's opportunities to articulate how they are and also find their community or other people that might have a shared experience. And I think it's also the way of disability and like using that as an identity, you can recognize a shared commonality with other people with disabilities. Even if your experience as a person with a disability is completely different, you still can identify with having something in common in that experience. And so, I think that to sum it up, absolutely it's an identity. And I think that a lot of good comes out of using that as an identity.

Zoe [00:05:21] Do you perceive yourself as disabled and why?

Participant L [00:05:26] I think it's complicated. I think it is a constant struggle of wondering what really constitutes a disability. And there's a lot of societal messages about what a disability is and lots of preconceived notions about disabilities being something that's visible. So, as someone who doesn't have physical disability, that definitely shapes my own perception of self and I think leads to a lot of questions about, oh well am I disabled enough? And I think that it's important to decide for oneself what that means, but also to not feel like you have to be enough of anything to identify as something, because ultimately that's a self-defined category.

Zoe [00:06:28] For sure. What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant L [00:06:44] Frustration in the short version. I think that a lot of disability is an experience of inaccessibility, and so accessibility in a way means being thought of and recognized because if something is accessible, generally speaking, it's because someone actually put some thought into thinking about people's ability to access something. And so, you know, it's nice to think that like, oh my experience is something that matters to someone else or was worth thinking about. And my inclusion is something that is desired enough to make this space accessible to me. I think that it can be really powerful, like accessibility in general can be really powerful. And so, it's just kind of like being able to struggle less or like have, not like a typical
experience, but to have some of that ease or like not as much of an uphill battle that probably people who are abled in one way or another like would have.

Zoe [00:08:13] Yeah. What does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant L [00:08:20] An intersectional approach to disability is, I think, fundamentally at the core of that. My experience of disability is very, very different from other people who have disabilities for a million and two reasons. One is just that disability is such a wide experience and people have, you know, invisible versus physical disabilities. That's a very different experience. Many people have disabilities that just change the way that they view the world or how their brains work. That's a very different experience of disability, but also recognizing how so many barriers of disability come from other facets of someone's identity and that, like my identity, my racial identity or like my class privilege drastically affect my experience of disability and the struggle or access to medical care that people could experience from other facets of their identity or not having like a lot of testimonial injustice for a lot of minorities. And so, I think it's about understanding how all of these facets come together and also not grouping disability as one experience, actually, including a lot of different voices of people's experience of disability and also representing that, because that gives people the space to question if they actually might see themselves as belonging that way or identifying that way.

Zoe [00:09:53] Can you expand on testimonial injustice?

Participant L [00:09:56] Yeah. I mean, basically, it kind of refers to how people are not taken-- their testimony, their ability to speak to their own experiences is not taken seriously. And so, people are discredited or are, their views of their own experience are not listened to. And I think that, for example, within the autistic community, that's a really big issue where a lot of people who are autistic talk about their experience or what they need. And then people in their lives, for example, like parents or something like that, are treated as having a better sense of what they might need or what their experience is or what it means to be autistic than people who actually are autistic. And that is a pattern for so many people with disabilities that their own experiences of their lives, their experience, like their own experiences, are not at the forefront. That other people's external perceptions of what someone's life is like or their experience is more valid than someone's own self reporting. And that's the case for people with disabilities, but it's also the case for racial and ethnic minorities. It's the case for queer people. It's the case for women. It's the case for so many people in a lot of different ways and a lot of different scales.

Zoe [00:11:15] Yeah, great. Thank you. OK, so now we're onto the experiences section of our questions. So, the first one is, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant L [00:11:40] There's a lot to unpack in that question. I don't even know where to begin, but my own experience with disability and how I've been affected by disability has changed a lot in my time at Denison. So, I would say that my experience with disability as a freshman student compared to my experience with disability now in my interactions in institutions are very different. I think that there has been a wide array of experiences or like moments. I think there's been a lot of moments of feeling unsupported and feeling frustrated. I'm
also hearing other people with disabilities and being angry because of how I see them not getting supported. And that's really frustrating. I think that there's also a lot of invisibility with disability on campus and people say, oh, there's no disabled people on campus, but that’s not true.

Zoe [00:12:33] There are!

Participant L [00:12:33] I think that there is kind of a lack of reality that, hey there's actually probably a pretty significant disability community on campus, but it's not really recognized as a community. We're not necessarily given a direct pool for resources. Things are kind of grouped into, for example, like mental health and physical health and housing accommodations, academic accommodations. There's not really one center for everything, which I think makes it harder because disability often doesn't just affect one part of someone's life. And I think that there are times where I wasn't really sure how to self-advocate or how to navigate systems with disability. And I also recognize that a lot of the times I've been very successful in getting accommodations is because of a lot of privileges I do have. And I think that for people that don't have those resources and don't have that same privilege, I think that it's really important to also make space for their own experience of what disability is like at Denison, and that those experiences really need to be highlighted because I think that there are times where I've experienced accessibility, but I know other people have not in the same exact way that I did. So, I don't necessarily think that there's a blanket experience, but I did generally have decent accessibility in terms of housing. I found that there is some flexibility there that really helped me. And I've had good experiences with the Academic Resource Center. And as I learned to discuss disability with my professors, that has gotten better. But I've also heard from professors that there's not necessarily a lot of training on how to respond to students with disabilities. And I wish that there would be more of that because I think that it's definitely hard to tell somebody that you need accommodations or have a disability, and I think that it can be hard for people to hear that if they don't know how to respond appropriately. And they might have very good intentions, but if people don't know how to respond to that or don't have education on disabilities, then you're kind of putting two people in a difficult situation. And it's harder than it would really need to be. So, I think more training could potentially facilitate more interactions and I think a more intersectional approach and like generally just more like a hub for resources would really make that better. Yeah, it's been fluctuating and there's definitely been moments of feeling like invalidated or kind of doubting how I would be able to continue because of disability and feeling like a lack of accessibility or accommodation. Yeah, yeah.

Zoe [00:15:35] How-- what would a hub for resources look like?

Participant L [00:15:42] Well, I think I only have, you know, my own idea of what that would be. I think one starting spot would be like a website. I think that's like fairly easy because you could just link all of the different resources together and have points of contact. But I think having a space that is specifically for people with disabilities, both a physical space for people with disabilities, but also an office for people with disabilities, because we have the Academic Resource Center, which is a wonderful resource for academic support. We have the health center, which is one kind of support. But again, like experience of disability isn't like all of these separate things. It's a whole experience of combined things. And there's not really structures in place to advocate and work with people in navigating these systems. And I think that also
disability is exhausting in many ways. And it's hard enough to just like deal with that. I feel like it's good to make things as accessible as possible because and I think that kind of creating a place of advocacy and almost like a liaison in a way for people with disabilities would help us navigate the systems and know what is actually possible for us on this campus so that we can get the resources that might be available, but we wouldn't know about and make things just as good as they can be. But I think it's hard to know what could be possible because things aren't really centralized.

**Zoe [00:17:10]** Yeah, yeah. I, I've been thinking about this a lot. And I'm this is this is like the one idea that I've had floating around my head is like we have, you know, like the gender and sexuality like, like person or office. But and there's other like multicultural and like other other specific offices surrounding diversity. But there lacks that one about disability. Is that kind of what you mean by like this hub of resources to advocate for people with disabilities on campus, like kind of an office like that that's like focused on disability? That's what's been going on in my head. So, I'm just wondering if that would be the same.

**Participant L [00:17:53]** Yeah, I think that would be a really big part of it would be an office and like dedicated employees who are their job is to help students with disabilities and help them navigate all the different structures and also potentially coordinate programs that are available like directly to students with disabilities, to like meet other students with disabilities or to discuss experiences or to create an avenue for people to continue to advocate for what they might need and connect with others and organize, but also programs that could potentially work with faculty or potentially work with educating abled students, things like that. And there's just not really a place of advocacy within the institution specifically designed for people with disabilities that is also not just about like what are your medical needs or like what are your academic accommodations, but really a much more inclusive approach.

**Zoe [00:18:50]** Yes, exactly. OK, thank you. Okie dokie. Next question is, what has been and/or is particularly accessible and disability inclusive at Denison?

**Participant L [00:19:06]** I think I first want to start this answer with my experience of what's accessible is highly affected by the privileges that I have. And so, I know that my experiences of things being accessible are not the same as other people's experiences being accessible. I've personally found that I've had a pretty effective time working with housing. I know multiple students that have disabilities that affect their housing, who have not had any success getting what they need, so. But personally, I was able to get a lot of what I needed from the housing office. Is there room for improvement? Yes, but that has been pretty good. Also, the Academic Resource Center has been very helpful for me working with them. I have felt like I've gotten accommodations that I needed. They've been flexible. They've provided testing spaces and really worked with me. I feel like I've also-- they have been friendly and tried to be supportive, which has been good. And I've found that generally my responses from professors when I advocate for myself have been very good. I think that it can be sometimes hard to have those conversations, but I feel like generally my own experience has been that teachers really want to be responsive and want to be supportive and want to give accommodations and work with students to provide what they can. So, I think generally those have all been really pretty good and pretty accessible.
Zoe [00:20:42] For the housing accommodations that you said there are some that are some people have experience inaccessibility. What could be implemented or what changes need to be done so that people experience more accessibility in that specific situation?

Participant L [00:21:00] I think that one of the main things is recognizing mental health as if that were disability. And I think that that's huge in how that affects people's housing. I think that that's huge because I think that it makes it harder for people to advocate if their disability is not taken as seriously as someone else's. I also think that a lot of what I might have had success is that I had accommodations for housing before I came on campus freshman year. And I think that students who then realize who maybe don't know how to navigate the system thinks something could work and then realize it doesn't work for them and might need new accommodations. I think that the university might feel as well, “You are able to go X many months or X many semesters without this accommodation. So clearly you don't really need it.” And I think that that is wildly unfair and is testimonial injustice. Maybe we could listen to them and believe them and say they need it. But I think that I think that my experience of going in with some familiarity of institutions, being able to advocate for myself, having the documentation to do that and the ability to do that was really huge. And my success in getting those accommodations for myself set up. And I think that I my own experience with people that have not had the same accessibility has largely been people that have realized that they need accommodations after already being on campus.

Zoe [00:22:35] Right. Right. So, we're halfway through. So, this would be a good time for a break, if you want one. But we can also just keep on going. It's totally up do you.

Participant L [00:22:45] I'll have some water.

Zoe [00:22:54] So, this next question and of course, you can have a break at any point. Just let me know. So, this next question has some options so you can speak to any of the ones that you that are relevant to your experiences and then you cannot speak to the ones that aren't relevant. So just kind of pick and choose whichever ones you want to speak to. So, how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, administration, and students and then medical or health appointments or procedures?

Participant L [00:23:33] OK, I guess I'll just go down the list, one at a time and we'll see how it goes. OK, so mobility. I currently don't have mobility issues. That doesn't really affect me. I've had some mobility issues on campus that have affected me. I was able to get housing accommodation to be housed close to the academic quad because of that. I generally didn't really need that accommodation for housing after freshman year. And I think I got that accommodation because I was very clear and said this is what I need and they were like, OK. And so that was good. But generally, that hasn't been a very big part of my experience since then. Academic accommodations, on the other hand, have been continually a very large part of my experience. And I would say, can I identify people that have been helpful?

Zoe [00:24:30] Don't identify by name.
Participant L [00:24:34] OK. People at the Academic Resource Center have been helpful and supportive and work to, I think, cheer me on and help me and I think have been generally very encouraging. I've had positive relationships there. And then I think that I guess this kind of ties in with the communication part. But I think that they've kind of helped to some extent, but advocacy, I think that it could be potentially useful for students, especially since they may not have as much experience with self-advocacy or be concerned about doing that in a college setting, because you know college can be kind of intimidating to no fault of their own, but just the nature of the system. And so, I think that potentially some sort of template for students for like how to have these conversations could be useful and also potentially like for faculty, like a guide to like what questions can you ask? What questions can't you ask? How do you appropriately listen and be respectful? Because I think that my own experiences have been that professors have very good intentions, really want help. That has been really good and positive, but sometimes like don't know how to best do that. I think that would help everyone feel more confident in those conversations to have more instruction and guidance. Also, I have changed my academic accommodations some and didn't have too much difficulty doing that. I think that might also be because I've built some relationships with the Academic Resource Center also again, definitely have benefited from other privileges in terms of coming in with documentation of disability and being able to advocate for myself in that way. And I think that for students that might not have the same documentation or experience, that could be a more of a barrier. But I do know of a student with a disability who was able to access testing on campus that might have otherwise not been available to them. And I think that potentially making that more known, that testing could be available to students who might wonder if they have a learning disability or another kind of disability would be really helpful, because I think that there is a lot of students that don't necessarily have the privilege or have the access, whether that's due to cultural differences in views of mental health or the cost of accessing medical care or insurance or whatever it is. I think that making known what kinds of testing and potentially like diagnostic stuff is available to students would be really good for students that might feel that they're struggling and have no idea that any of that is available.

Zoe [00:27:20] Do you know what what is available for testing?

Participant L [00:27:24] Honestly, no. I just know that someone was able to set up an appointment, but I have no idea generally what the scope is of what's available to students. And that's coming from someone who has had plenty of years of experience navigating this stuff on campus. So, I'm sure that there's a lot of people who have no idea.

Zoe [00:27:52] Yeah, definitely.

Participant L [00:27:53] Oh yeah, there's more questions. OK, let's see. Communication between faculty, staff, administration, and students. To be blunt, representation of one's disability matters. And I would say 80 percent of getting what you need is the marketing, which is like not the best system because all disabilities are like valid and should get accommodations. So, I shouldn't have to discuss my disability in a certain way to get what I need, but like that's reality. And when I talk about it in one way versus talking about it another way, it drastically affects what people view as appropriate or how much people are willing to accommodate. And so, I think like that's totally unfair and very sad, but also the reality, and I've experienced that in
advocating with some offices, including like housing and stuff like that. Also getting like housing accommodations for early move-in and things like that, just a little more clarity there. Just saying. But let's see, I would say also communication with faculty is like generally pretty good. I think that there's fear of like you don't really know what someone's prejudices are, biases. So, disclosing is can be nerve wracking or, you know, you don't really know if that affects someone's perception of your competency as a student. And I think that that is not great. And again, I think training on how faculty could respond would probably be pretty good because then that might address some of that like anxiety and create more like assuring environment. And then communication between students is a very interesting one. I would say is not very much communication between students. There's not really many of them seem that are centered around disability, which is a disappointment. There's not really much space or effort on campus or bring students with disabilities together or communicate about. I feel like I just kind of coincidentally bumped into a lot of people and then like someone discloses and then someone else is like, oh hey, cool, I found you. And there's not like a good way of meeting other people that might have that experience or bringing people together. And I also think that there's not a lot of stuff available to students on like understanding disability in general and especially for abled students. I think there's a lot of like, as a young person too, there's a lot of like societal understandings of what disability is versus like people's own understanding of what disability is. And I think that advertising a more wide lens of what disability can mean and also just trying to fight ableism would be really useful for a lot of people. I don't really see much recognizing ableism as a real thing, like a real issue that affects people's experiences. And I don't really see a lot of like-- for example, there's tons of career workshops. I personally haven't seen anything for students with disabilities trying to navigate the workforce. I've had comments made to me about how I could have potentially very limited career options because of disability and that isn't in a way that was like I found that relatively appropriate. But there's not really resources to support thinking through one's career goals, through the lens of one's experience of disability and what their needs might be and how they could pick a job that would be conducive to their strengths and give them the accommodations and flexibility that they might need. That's just like a resource that doesn't exist and I wish it. And I think that there really isn't a support structure. It's not there. There's some things. There's a little bit of mental health here and there. And it's like stuff I think for like I think there's student meet-ups for queer students. And I don't really know much about how successful or what the issues there might be, but I think there's just not really any sort of programs like that for students with disabilities. And I wish there was more effort to make a community and make know ableism is real and present and give students resources to combat that and educate the wider student body and stuff like that.

Zoe [00:32:53] Yep, yep.

Participant L [00:32:57] Oh, there's another still. OK, medical/health appointments or procedures. People having to wait for counseling, to me I think that is important, not my own experience, but like I think is something that needs to be recognized by administration. Yeah, just generally I guess my like more summed up answer to that is that I find that the medical care at Denison is inadequate potentially to the extent of negligence. And it's not-- it needs improvement.
Zoe [00:34:24] OK, OK. Yeah. So, in terms of, like concrete changes, what what concrete changes would need to be implemented at the health center to not have those experiences be experienced anymore?

Participant L [00:34:43] I would say that they need to bring in an expert and like create a space for students to actually write in anonymously with their experiences of access to health care so that they can take a more comprehensive look. Because obviously I have my experience, I have the experience of my friends, but that is a pretty small percentage of students and also not representative of the entire student body at all. So, I think like getting really taking it seriously enough to actually get a professional and create a forum for people to voice their issues is really the first step towards complete change and improvement. I think also hiring more counselors is a pretty clear change that needs to happen. And I think that I mean, frankly, just like checking people's medical charts is like important and recognizing that like being really clear that even though it's a population of young people, people have preexisting conditions, people have conflicting issues. And then also, again like taking people's testimony seriously. If someone is saying something is wrong with them, like believing them. And I think that is really huge. And then also like I've also had really good experiences of getting like medical documentation and that that's been made fairly easy for me and a lot of times, which has been super, super helpful. There was one time or like the health center was especially helpful in making sure that they backed me up and supported me in terms of like medical documentation with dealing with a particularly difficult teacher. And I was very appreciative. So, I do think that there's also a lot of examples of people there being really great and accommodating, helpful. But I think that there's also some areas that there needs to be improvement and reevaluation.

Zoe [00:37:03] Right. So, when you say, like, have a professional, a professional of like what what medical professional do you think is needed at Whisler?

Participant L [00:37:25] I think that Denison needs to hire not just someone with an MD in science expertise, but somebody with expertise and actually healthcare ethics and access to care from like and has actual perspective and has like that kind of training as well, not just someone who is used to hospital administration or something like that, but someone who actually has like diversity, equity, and inclusion training. And to, who can think about like health care equity and justice and has that kind of expertise that they can bring to the table.

Zoe [00:38:06] Yeah. Sorry, I'm writing it down. OK, perfect. Thank you so much. OK next question is, what were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus and have these reactions changed over time? How so?

Participant L [00:38:29] I'm thinking on this one. The first thing that came to my mind is not my own experience, but someone else's where their first day on campus, they were basically told that they, that the university could not accommodate them and that they would potentially they would need to figure out their own medical care needs and basically were like completely on day one just told, like, you're on your own. We can't really support your condition. And like, that was that. So, that was the first thing that came to my mind, which is just heartbreaking that that was someone's experience. And I think that that was different than my own experience. Personally, I
felt like things that are relatively accessible. When I came, I was nervous, but I thought it was like pretty good. I would say that I mean, I think that hindsight is 20/20 and at the time, I think that I felt a lot of moments of feeling like there-- and I think that how brutal and real that was is even more apparent now, in a way. But I think that my first year, I definitely experienced a lot like inaccessibility and a lot of feeling like I had no idea how to navigate systems. I couldn't get what I needed and that I was struggling because I didn't feel like things were accessible and that if I knew how to get the support I needed that I could have had a much better time. Both like in terms of just being less like psychologically drained from trying to navigate that, but also in terms of like the health being better, my academics being better, I think, in terms of like feeling more confident. In my experience of things being so inaccessible was frustrating and disheartening and left me not so sure that I really had a place on campus and that sucked to put it bluntly. But then I think over time I've, my own experience of disability in general changed a lot and that definitely affected the accommodations that I need and therefore the extent to which I felt unaccommodating because I just needed less.

Zoe [00:42:12] What did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant L [00:42:26] I mean, I guess an Academic Resource Center was like one of the main things, and then housing was another thing. But I think that, like, a lot of my accessibility came from social support and that was a big deal for me. So, I think that I didn't really know exactly what I needed. And I think that, you know, if I was to do that again, I think I could say like better what I would be looking for. But I think besides like academic accommodations, Academic Resource Center and the possibility of housing accommodations, I wasn't so sure. I do think maybe the residential component was promising, like knowing that I would be near other people in your classes. I think like that was useful.

Zoe [00:43:34] Mhm, year. So, what are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

Participant L [00:43:44] Well, that one depends a lot on what your disability is and where you are. I guess, not like I mean I guess literally, but really like in terms of your interaction on campus, probably a lot of like what department you're in and studying. I think that I've had experiences with people who have in some departments or some faculty that it's very clear they want to be very accommodating, that they think about students with disabilities, that that is very included in their curriculum and their syllabi, that's apparent. I've had other times where I am like I don't even know how to explain the extent of my experiences to you and you're clearly not getting it. And like that's not particularly pleasant. But I think that a lot of ableist policies vary significantly by department. I was very frustrated that there was not more done in terms of attendance policies. Attendance and lateness policies are extraordinarily ableist and the fact that there is not like requirements for like sick days like absent days, regardless of that, maybe don't require documentation to make it more accessible to people because like there's been times where like I'm like, well, I feel like garbage, but don't feel like I can miss this class or, you know, well, based on what the syllabus says, I can't miss this kind of thing. And so, I need to go. I think that a lot of times people use things like attendance as a proxy for how much someone cares about what they're doing. And that is just clearly not the case. As someone who has had an
experience where, like I care a lot and have not been able to show up, like those two things are not related for a lot of people. And it is extraordinarily ableist to think that they are. And so, I want to see the university do more because a huge consequence is I think of my own experience is like shame and embarrassment, is harmed relationship with professors because of not knowing how to communicate and because of navigating systems where, like things that you have to do because you have a disability are considered disrespectful or shameful or not being a good student. And so, it's hard to then feel confident, feel that you have a place in the classroom. So, I think that like the shame and the worse relationships with professors is an issue. I also think that being in a class, and especially if you have a disability where actually going to show up, other students definitely have opinions on or make judgments on your abilities of the student, I think, based on things that they might see, such as like participation or whether or not you weren't the only student with extended time or like a computer accommodation in the classroom. People are going make assumptions and like that's not fun either. So, I feel like you kind of wonder, oh am I judged because a professor has no laptop policy that they outline, go over three times in the first day of class that you cannot have a laptop unless you have an accommodation. And then there you are with your laptop. Great, now everyone knows I'm disabled. Like, that's not fun. And is it really so bad for other people to have their own computers out? But I think there's things where you're kind of forced to disclose in a way that maybe aren't intentional, they have that effect. And then you have to deal with the social stigma of like being someone who has accommodations or being someone who's like different in a way which isn't fun. And also, one thing that I've run into is that I need letters of recommendations for things and I'm afraid because I don't know what people's prejudices are relating to my need for accommodations and if that will affect the way that they're going to write about me in a letter of recommendation. I don't want my like, the perception of me or my abilities to be determined by the fact that I have accommodations that level the playing field for me, that makes things accessible for me. And I also think that there is social consequences to having to a disability. It can be like isolating, especially because there's not really a community. And also, like sometimes it can really affect what someone is capable of and I think that can really put barriers in place socially. And I think that's very difficult as well. And I think that so I think that people don't always know how to navigate or react and people have a lot of stigmas. And so, it can be really complicated and creates barrier to feeling seen. And, you know, like I think one thing is you just have no idea like how people are going to react. When you have to disclose to somebody, you have to think about how that person is going to react and if that's someone you can disclose to. So, I think that makes it a lot more complicated socially to navigate and people that just don't have to think about that. And so, I think it's a lot of time and it's a lot of work like that isn't necessarily considered like getting support or getting medical care or like filling out the forms, having conversations, or the fact that a three-hour exam is potentially for a four and a half hour exam. And like then I might need a separate accommodation if I don't want to stay for four and a half hours straight to get an exam. So, I'm going to have to work on other people's schedules and and my own class schedules to work that out. So, there is like so much time and so much energy that goes into getting accommodations and getting the things that you need. And then it's like, you know, I think that that can be really draining as well. And I think also, just like the lack of community I think is, for the disability community, I think is tough. And I think that by bringing people with disabilities together, people can feel not so alone in their experiences.
Zoe [00:51:32] Yeah, yeah. So, with the disability community, what do you think would be steps to develop a community? Because obviously there's the people, but what would be the steps to build that community?

Participant L [00:51:52] I think that it's kind of complicated again because like I think if you have an event and it's like, if you're disabled, show up to this event like.

Zoe [00:52:04] Yeah.

Participant L [00:52:06] OK, people might not want to go.

Zoe [00:52:08] Right, right.

Participant L [00:52:09] I think that there's a lot of people that aren't really so sure about that might have experiences of inaccessibility, but not necessarily label themselves as people with disabilities who might still have like very similar experiences of like marginalization that I personally could relate to or someone else who does identify as disabled could relate to. I think it kind of needs to be multifaceted because it would be good to have something that is explicitly labeled as like disability, but then also clearly advertises that that is a space for people with a wide range of disabilities. I think that would be really important. And that advertises that invisible disabilities are disability disabilities, that neurodivergence is a disability, that psychological disorders are disabilities, that people are welcome in spaces for disabled people. And I think like making that really clear would really help people see that as a space. I have like stumbled upon people with common experiences because you kind of notice, like, oh, that person actually speaks really well about disabilities or they brought up a disability issue in a conversation. And like frankly, people that don't have people in their lives with disabilities or don't identify as disabled generally don't think about those things. So, I think that even having events that are about disability would also bring people together in a way and, you know, having events that has like a reception after or like in a Q and A and things like that, where there's some space to actually interact with other people that have gone could potentially also forge a sense of community where you don't necessarily have to out yourself as someone with a disability to go and to meet other people that have interest in like the disability community because even if not everyone there has a disability, I think that's a good way to find allies as well. So, I think that that can create a space where disability is talked about and considered and then there are people that are interested or identify with that bring themselves to that space if it is well advertised. And you can kind of meet people that way as well. I think that could help create space in the community.

Zoe [00:54:40] Yeah, definitely. And then I'm just going to go back to a point you said earlier about the attendance policies, late policies being ableist, which I completely agree with you. What do you think a non ableist attendance policy or late policy would look like?

Participant L [00:55:01] None.

Zoe [00:55:01] None. OK.
Participant L [00:55:04] I mean, I think selling professors on that is not going to be easy. So, I think that taking a intermediate, you know, watered down ableist approach is still significantly better than what is what we have now. And I think like kind of like I'll take what I can get it. But I think that like late policies and and absence policies conflate ability to show up with care and effort and like that is ableist. That like connection is ableist and therefore grading people based on their ability to show up to something like could be ableist. And I think like professors will respond with, well, what about students that don't care. since that like, come to class and want people to participate and it's like, yes. And people will hopefully want to participate and frankly like people are getting things out of the class. Presumably, if they're showing up to class, they should be learning something. So, wouldn't that be reflected in their grade in other ways? Like them caring should be reflected in other ways, not just the ability to show up. And I think like it's really frustrating because I think that the majority of the time it takes such a toll on people with disabilities, like such a toll and it's just so unfair. And I think like, what if we can just alleviate people's distress by just not having attendance policies and like lateness policies and making things more accessible? Because isn't it better if someone shows up a few minutes late than they can't show up at all? And like, isn't it better that people aren't necessarily made to feel like they're not a good student or that they're going to do poorly in a class because they have difficulty showing up for that class? Like, don't we want people to have a chance. And so I think like it's upsetting to see the toll that it can take on people to think like I'm really not doing well today and I feel terrible, whatever it is. But I have to show up to this because what is anyone getting out of that? Like I have shown up to classes and I'm like physically there, but I'm not there. Like there was no point. I would have gotten more out of taking a nap. There was no point being there. And like my literal challenge of the class was like not passing out. Like that was the only thing I was thinking about the entire class, like don't pass out, don't pass out and then try to get back to your dorm, like in a way that isn't so obvious that you were like not functioning. Like what does that do for anybody because, like, I'm not getting anything good out of that. I don't think anyone in the class is getting anything good out of that. I don't think the professor is getting anything good out of that. So, why can't we just trust people to make their decisions about where they need to be and what they need to be doing?

Zoe [00:58:06] Yep. Yeah, thank you. OK.

Participant L [00:58:13] I have a lot of feelings on that.

Zoe [00:58:13] And I'm glad! I'm glad you're feeling them because because I need them. I want to hear them.

Participant L [00:58:17] I could talk about this for like a year. I was really glad to see that you're doing this because I think there is so much room for improvement. I'm really glad that you're taking the time to do this and I hope that the university wants to make an effort because ultimately their willingness or interest in changing to be pretty significant determinant of what changes can come from this.

Zoe [00:58:51] Yeah, I will say I've had some offices reach out to me to want to hear about my project, but without me reaching out to them. So, that's that's a good first step. But I am also
going to be bringing in a student, hopefully an underclassman after I graduate, to hold to continue the activist portion of this project. So, there's hope. There's hope, but yeah who knows.

**Participant L** [00:59:18] That is really exciting that like departments do care. And I do think, like at least my experience with faculty like people care, but it's just not really there. And it's like not easy to implement change, but I think it's really a really good step and I'm glad that there are respective parties.

**Zoe** [00:59:42] Yeah. I am so glad that some people have reached out. It's been yeah, I get so excited when I get an email that someone wants to like hear about it. I'm like oh my god yeah, I'll totally tell you all about it. OK, so our next question is what other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

**Participant L** [01:06:05] All of the them. That seems to be how it works, right? I mean we are all shaped by all elements of our identity and like I might identify with some of them strongly in the sense that, like, we experience marginalization through some of them. And therefore, I think we are more aware of how those shaped experiences. But we really like all parts of our identity shape our experience. And so obviously my race definitely shapes my experience of disability. I think that I probably get listened to more because I'm white and I'm also, I think my gender I mean being cis like that immediately generally I'm taken more seriously than people who are non-binary or trans. And so that shapes my experience. And the nature of my disability shapes my experience, like I'm not physically disabled. So that has a tremendous effect on how I'm treated. I'm treated as able until people find out otherwise. And that is like a pretty big deal. And then I would say personally I don't think my, I'm sure it has like I don't I think that any ethnic or religious identity has shaped my experiences so much. So, I would say that probably is one of the least influential parts of my identity. And then, yeah, I think, like being a woman is kind of a double-edged sword in the sense that like, I think in some ways for women saying like, I need something and like advocating things about emotions, it's like a little bit more accepted. And so, I think, like, women are generally not believed. And like generally we have to prove ourselves a bit more in academic settings. But I also think that specifically within the context of some disabilities, like women are given a little bit more leeway in our society to express vulnerability. And I think that in terms of advocating for oneself, in seeking like disability conditions, I think that can sometimes make it maybe feel more accessible. I think you'd have to talk to like men who are disabled. I mean definitely like class privilege is a huge, huge, huge, huge, huge, huge factor because like so many people don't have access to diagnostic things and medical care or potentially only rely on Denison. They can't get medical care outside of Denison. And so, like, my ability to access treatment beyond Denison is huge. Like having health insurance is huge. Being like a citizen and not having to worry about like that is a pretty big deal as well. And I think like, so I think that my access to a lot of medical care, but also like, is like that's kind of like we can't say so like having a disability and not having to have a job on campus versus having a disability and having to have a job on campus. Disability is like a job, like it's exhausting. It's a lot and things take a lot more time, but we don't get compensated for that. So, people need support for their financial support as part of their financial aid, and they need that money that is going to take up a lot of time and probably be even more exhausting for a lot of people with disabilities that in would be for abled people and like add another whole responsibility on top of that or people not knowing like if they can access accommodations. And
also coming from a background that is like, I guess, where my disability has been for the most part, treated as like legitimate or real, has definitely like helped in terms of advocating, I think. And so, for people that might come from backgrounds where they're very discredited, it could be harder to advocate as well. So, I mean yeah, and some really like absolutely everything affects it. And I think that probably my opinion is that the factor I would say that probably shapes my experience of disability the most is how much less I'm affected by certain elements of disability because of class privilege. And I'm aware that. That's huge. And I think like there's so many ways in which people that don't have that same privilege would be really, have it so much harder.

**Zoe [01:11:07]** Mhm, yeah. OK, so now we're going into our support category of questions. So, what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

**Participant L [01:11:29]** What do you mean by campus experiences?

**Zoe [01:11:31]** Like your just general experiences on campus, like at Denison.

**Participant L [01:11:39]** I think the more I mean, I guess it's not really a question, but like to feel supported would mean a more holistic approach than I think the one that currently exists, I think that would really and specifically like having a place that is for people with disabilities. Like a place that actively works with and advocates for people in multiple facets of navigating the systems for students with disabilities. Like that would definitely make me feel more supported, which is not the question, but is. It came to mind. And then I would say, like, it's kind of hard to explain what disability support means to me relating to my experiences because I have both experiences of feeling very supported and feeling completely unsupported. And so, they kind of both come to mind. And I can't really like, I'm not really sure how to like extend.

**Zoe [01:12:46]** OK, so what does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

**Participant L [01:12:56]** A lot of self-advocacy. It would be nice for a little other advocacy, but here we are. I mean, I've had the experience of going to a meeting that was supposed to be about supporting people that have like a similar experience of disability to my own and being told you don't have a disability like you are not disabled. And by a health professional, like being told like it's not like a disability, like you're just differently abled and wanting to scream! Like wanting to absolutely scream at how messed up and delegitimizing that feels. it takes time to develop a sense of self advocacy and self-assurance about one's disability and to feel comfortable being like, hey medical professional, your understanding of this is wrong. I'm like, I'm not going to accept your categorization of my experiences. That is not easy. That takes a lot of work. And like frankly, it's something that I'm still working on and it's been a while. Like that is not easy. And seeing other people influenced by that miscategorization or labeling of someone's experiences was like really upsetting. And I was like, this is not a space for me cause I clearly didn't feel supported in my understanding of my own experiences in labeling by someone that doesn't share that experience. I think so much of advocacy is like developing one’s own assurance and like sticking with that. And I wish that there is more community like advocacy coming from like not just like me and hearing like I hear other people's frustrations as well that are in the community.
There doesn't feel like there's a whole lot of disability advocacy coming from other avenues. It just kind of feels like a whole bunch of frustrated disabled people and not a lot of avenue for that. And I think that it can be intimidating at times, but I think that it also is a lot of fighting ableism both external and internal, which is constant and unpleasant. And I think it's both correcting other people's perceptions and then also reassuring yourself in your own. And I think that like it comes up in so many different ways. I think in my own experience of disability advocacy, relating to my experience at Denison, a lot of it is on me. It's a powerful but a burden.

Zoe [01:18:36] Yeah, yeah. So, where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Participant L [01:18:42] Very much depends. Support, generally, like friends is a big one. I think other people that get the experiences and I find people that have like the same struggles as me that has been the most supportive. It's wonderful when I advocate for resources and like get them. That is a great feeling. That is support and that is like in a way a form of advocacy because it's actually taking what I'm saying like seriously and doing something about it, which is great. But the feeling that is the most like supportive or like, almost like calming, is finding people that have the same or comparable experiences, talking to each other about them, and then not feeling like alone in that experience and feeling understood because like people that don't have that experience, it's just like hard to explain, articulate. And when like I've met people that have had the same condition or similar experiences or experience marginalization from the university in similar ways and deal with like similar struggles and those have been by far the most powerful, and I think that's part of why I feel so strongly that I would be really beneficial to develop our community because like it's kind of luck and like intuition that has helped me develop a group of people in my life that have experienced somewhat similar experiences to mine. That feeling of being understood and that connection is so, so, so powerful and so like important I think there's no replacement for community and that kind of connection.

Zoe [01:22:04] Yeah, for sure. OK, so this is our last section, which is disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, the first question is, sorry what were you going to say?

Participant L [01:22:14] I said, oh yay! Not that it's the last one because I'd be down for like twice as many questions, but just that it's a good topic.

Zoe [01:22:21] Yeah, yeah. So, the first one is what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys the student, faculty, or staff with disabilities?

Participant L [01:22:36] It's kind of demeaning to the extent. Everything in my life is different because of a disability, not just that I need more time on an exam. I think that there is kind of like a very flat understanding of like a three-dimensional issue. People might need a whole multitude of different things that aren't necessarily like extended time, private testing space, like air conditioners and a room. I think those are kind of the four main one's people know about or like use of a computer. I think those are like the few that people know about, but like people need completely different accommodations that like aren't necessarily those five or six. And the university is not communicating that those could be available or that accommodations can be like brainstormed about and like discussed and one's need or hardships can be like listened to. And
I'm like, what is possible can come from a discussion of what someone might need rather than just like, here's six things we offer, like pick your menu. I think discussion is a much more a much better approach because it's like based in actually listening to people's experiences and then doing things to help alleviate their struggling because it starts the process of listening and like thinking through together what is possible to help that. So, I think that would be like a kind of better approach. And I think like generally I mean, both from the experiences I've seen other people have and some of my own experiences, it does feel at times like either we can't really accommodate you, like this is a you problem and like kind of like, oh, there's something wrong with you for like not being able to do something.

Zoe [01:25:27] Mhm, definitely. So, what should be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

Participant L [01:25:37] Where to start? OK well, one would be mental health days, less documentation required for absence or lateness or accommodations, I think that disability diagnosis testing needs to be readily available and free to students and then advertised as such so that students can get that if they want. And then I think that I think that appointments, like medical care appointments, counseling appointments need to be readily available. There can't be just one walk-in appointment once a week or something like that. There needs to be frequent, readily available access to these services. That just isn't currently there. I think I probably said this, but like attendance policies, they got to go. Tardiness has to go. There needs to be training for professors and also students on disability, definitions of disability, how to be an ally for people with disabilities or professors, how to respond to conversations about accommodation. And like, I think that would be really useful. And then, I think like the mental health days thing is like a good mental health is like a good step. And personally, I've worked out like in some ways a system like the health center for, I have sometimes like a reoccurring issue because I have documentation of that, if that is the reason why I can't go to class, I can call them, I'll get documentation for that. And so, for people with disabilities, people with chronically occurring health issues like that should be known that you can have that on your record and you can call and then you don't have to go through all these hoops to actually get like an absence health note or whatever that is. I think that would be like really useful. Making that known to people because I think that's like not really known. And also clarifying that like the definition of chronic condition is like needs to be a broader. And like I think people have preconceived notions about like what that means, but expanding that to include more things you might not like know about. And also, just again, reaffirming and communicating with the community that mental health is important, that it's valid, that it's a real medical condition and can be a disability and that that needs to be taken just as seriously as anything else. I think that's huge as well, because I think that also, for example, I think students with mental health disabilities face even more stigma in a lot of ways that I think it can make advocacy really, really hard for some people. And so, I think that there needs to be institutional backing for that to give those students support and give them like more power behind their own advocacy by knowing that they're going to be backed up and get accommodations. That they are entitled to that just like anyone else. So, I think that is huge. And then, what else? I think, again, communicating like accommodations and what is possible and framing it as a discussion having a conversation with students. What is working for you? What is not working for you? What can we change and make better? Because like I've had a housing accommodation that I don't think anyone knows it could possibly exist because I
specifically asked for it. But like, I'm sure there's other students that would benefit from accommodations that aren't necessarily like the first thing on a list. Even just knowing what accommodations could be possible or have been done before so that people can be like, oh, that could be useful to me. Like, I don't think students know what is possible at all and how would I be able to know what I would benefit from if I don't even see what could be done. I have yet to see a situation where someone has been over accommodated. That doesn't seem to be a risk. So, like making it more known what is possible and also having like conversations that are really set up to be about like what are your experiences? What has been a struggle? What could potentially help? And then like providing support and coordination with different departments to make that happen and recognizing that everyone's experiences are unique. Everyone is probably going to need different things and like letting that be a discourse not just like a transaction would be, I think, much more powerful. And then I think after all of that, I think that one thing that is really good is that professors do really seem to care like that has been clear. I think that there's a lot of times in which people don't necessarily realize, oh that's ableist. The amount of times I've heard things like second class or like people have pretty preconceived ideas about, like, you know, whatever it is, like attendance policies or something, and not necessarily realize that those are ableist. Like it happens all the time. I think people just don't really get it a lot of the time. So, like communicating that more can be good, but I do think that people have good intentions and like want to be supportive in the vast majority of cases and that has been clear to me in a lot of my interactions, and I really appreciated that. And then I think the existence of the housing accommodations and the existence of the Academic Resource Center is really good. I like a lot of the things that the Academic Research Center does, I like the program that they have, for the most part. And I like, like they have quiet test center accommodations and they have like you can kind of like sign up for those and they even have like snacks and like fidget toys and sound machine. It really put some work into making that like really good for students. And I really like the work that they're doing there. And I think that there is like a lot of the times, I think that a lot of good intentions. And I think that like creating avenues for those to actually translate into things is really good because I think like I think that people want to know how to do better, like would be interested in, you know, supporting people with disabilities. I also, I kind of wonder, like, I only have a student perspective, so I don't really know what I'm faculty's experiences and staff experiences are like it all. And I'd be interested in knowing more about that. I don't think that students are really made aware of that. I think too with the current situation with COVID, like a lot of people with experience of disabilities like exacerbated ones because if you have like an immune condition, for example, and now all of a sudden you have to like not leave your house, that makes everything in your life more hectic. Or if you have executive function and now everything's on a new platform, like that makes things much more hectic. If you have like difficulty reading social cues and now things are on Zoom, you might not be able to see like your students' or your professors' facial expressions. That makes things more difficult. There's so many ways in which people's experiences of disability are made more difficult because of the current situation. And I think that even communication about like between students and faculty about that more and also maybe even making it more of a two-way street because I haven't seen a lot of like representation of people with disabilities like very openly in the administration. And I think that that can be really powerful, especially because people with disabilities are treated like not as able, you know. And so, then there's not a lot of representation and people that are maybe like positions of influence or, you know, really successful and capable and like high achieving. And I think that seeing that representation could be really important for students with disabilities.
So, I feel like opening those lines of communication and again, I think creating more community would also create more pathways to facilitate interaction between between students and staff and faculty. I feel like there is more potential to facilitate communications, I think that could really benefit a lot of people. And I also hope that professors are able to get like empathy and support as well for what they need, and I think that there's not a lot of communication about what it is that they might need or anything like that. So, I think also as a student, like wanting to be supportive, it's good to have more information out there. That's a whole lot, but yeah.

Zoe [01:35:52] No, I want a whole lot. So, thank you.

Participant L [01:35:59] Then you're at the right place.

Zoe [01:35:59] So, this is our second to last one. So, what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?


Zoe [01:36:06] You're fine.

Participant L [01:36:13] Most urgent? Well, I think I would like to see more community. I would like to see that opened up. But I think when I think about what's the most urgent, the thing that comes to mind is mental health because there are so many students on this campus that are struggling and we've had multiple students commit suicide during my time at Denison. It is extraordinarily tragic. We need more support. It's very upsetting. And I think that a lot of students do not have the access to the support they need or are not able to get the support they need. And as much as I would love to see a lot of other changes made, this is literally a matter of life and death and it needs to be taken seriously as one. And I think that's very, very, very like dismissive of students that struggle to not take that seriously and to not put those things in place. I think that that saying that their health is not the university's problem if they're not making enough changes, if they're not making so that counseling is like very easily accessible, if they're not making it so that mental health is clearly treated as a disability and that accommodations can be given for mental health, whether those are academic or housing. And I think that I think that there needs to be more so much more put in place for that and so much more made accessible for that because I think that it is extraordinarily hurtful for so many students. I think that it contributes to fatalities and I think that students deserve so much better. And I think also, what does it say to students that either have mental health problems or know people that have mental health problems to see the university not supporting them in the way that they need it? Like what does that communicate about how those people are valued? It's not good. And so, to me, that is what is absolutely the most urgent.

Zoe [01:38:30] Mhm, yeah. Thank you. So, our last one is if there's anything you would like to share about Denison accessibility that hasn't been prompted by me.

Participant L [01:38:51] I think the cover a lot of ground, but I also think like a couple of things that might come to mind is like accessibility beginning in admissions and like actively, clearly communicating the things that are available to students with disabilities and trying to connect
accepted students those resources and also like advertising Denison and promoting Denison as a place that is inclusive to people with disabilities, which I'm not so sure to extent that they are, given that a lot of spaces are not handicapped accessible, and there's other ways in which we clearly need some improvement. But I think, like even setting that tone is important and like makes it a more inclusive space and makes it clear that people with disabilities belong in this community. I think that's really important and I think that that needs to be followed through like every step of the way through like career resources and making that available for helping students find placement or navigating disability offices for grad school or whatever that is to make sure that students are supported from their process of picking a college to their process of picking a job like that they got the support they need through that whole process. I think that's really important and I think also that I think just like there needs more education, which I know we talked about. But like we need a more developed sense of like disability. And I would also like to see some more like classes and programing on disability because I've managed to find some classes that cover things related to disability, but there's not like a dedicated area to study at all. And I'm like, I think there really could be and I think there really should be, especially when we're developing things such as like global health, disability is a huge part of that. There needs to be some sort of like a concentration, especially for people in, I mean, really I think every major is relevant to disability, but for whether that's people in biology or premes track or whether that's people in psychology or whether that's people doing like women and gender studies or queer studies. I think that there's so many ways in which-- even econ like it's very relevant. I think like a very like either a department or a very interdisciplinary space for concentration or whatever that is, where people can actually study that and learn more about that and I think also by having a department, then that creates more room for events and fostering a community as well. So, I think that creating a department of disability studies would be really great. And I wish that that was already in place. I think I could have gotten a lot out of that. I've just kind of like found courses that I stumbled upon where it's like, oh, this mentions kind of in the course description that it talks about things that might be like disability adjacent. That's cool, but it would be great if there was like a real space for that as an academic pursuit because it is extremely relevant and is extremely visible to many people.

**Zoe** [01:42:14] Yeah, yeah. That was my whole like, course selection process for this next semester. I had so many opening. I was like, so what is like possibly about disability that I could take? So, it was interesting.

**Participant L** [01:44:22] I'm all for a disabilities studies department. That would be great.

**Zoe** [01:44:26] I know! I'm like I'm ultimately glad I went to Denison, but I think a disability studies-- if I went to a school where disability studies was a major like no doubt that's what my major would be so, but unfortunately.
Zoe [00:00:06] So, the first one is, how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant M [00:00:15] So, female and she/her/hers.

Zoe [00:00:20] OK, the next one is how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, student, faculty, or staff?

Participant M [00:00:33] Student.

Zoe [00:00:34] OK. So now we're getting into the section of terms and definitions. So, our first question in this category is, how would you define the term disability?

Participant M [00:00:49] I guess I would say someone who is mentally or physically differently abled from the considered to be the norm.

Zoe [00:01:03] Mhm, yeah. Perfect. So, what term should be used when referring to disability? This term can be disability and it's the term that I'll use throughout this interview.

Participant M [00:01:15] I think yeah, I think disability or differently abled.

Zoe [00:01:18] OK, great! What do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant M [00:01:29] Well, I mean, I have had someone call me a retard before so, I guess that will be one of them. Stupid, yeah, but I guess it's mostly like mental. I haven't really encountered physical disabilities. So, I wouldn't really know about that.

Zoe [00:01:54] Right, right. So, this one is a very similar question, but some people interpret it differently. So, what do others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant M [00:02:07] Well, yeah, I'm saying it's like a generational difference. I feel like the older generations are less adaptive to people with disabilities. And like I feel like for them it wasn't really a thing. It wasn't really seen as an actual science. So, like they are more likely to be the ones who like are like oh, stupid or lazy or an excuse. But I feel like our generation especially is like more attentive to it. But I would still say it's like it a mix with some people like, you know, like they'd like oh, you're talking fine. You know, and it's like that's got nothing to do with it. But yeah, I'd say it's like mixed. People are sometimes like indifferent to it and sometimes are like, you're making up excuses or sometimes they're just like oh, so that means you're dumb.

Zoe [00:03:04] Mhm. Do you see disability as an identity and why?
Participant M [00:03:09] I personally do not. Yeah I personally do not because I feel like an average functioning human. I could see how some other people could see it as an identity if it's really like, impairs with their daily life kind of thing. But personally, no.

Zoe [00:03:34] OK. Do you perceive yourself as disabled and why?

Participant M [00:03:43] I wouldn't say I see myself as disabled, but I would say that I do have learning disabilities because I was diagnosed with them and it shows in my world.

Zoe [00:03:53] Right, right. Makes sense. I'm copying and pasting this one. So, our next one is, what does accessibility mean to you?

Participant M [00:04:09] I think it ties into the whole equality versus equity kind of thing. And I think accessibility is not necessarily like giving you a leg up compared to other people. I think it's just putting you on the same platform, which once again I know there a lot of people who don't really see that. But, you know, I guess it is someone who gets extra time on the same assignment. It's kind of equally out the playing field. It's not like giving us an advantage. So yeah, I think accessibility just means putting you on the same level as everyone else. Just, you know, getting the same equal opportunities.

Zoe [00:04:50] Yeah, definitely. OK, what does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant M [00:04:59] I guess being inclusive of disabled people. Let me think of another way to phrase that. I guess accepting it. Yeah, like being accepting of like not seeing it as a differentiating factor and not seeing someone who has a disability as being disabled person, if that makes sense. Like you can be your own person and have a disability. That doesn't mean you're a disabled person. But again, that's coming from me, without any major impairments.

Zoe [00:05:33] Of course. OK, so now we're into the experiences section of our questions. So, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant M [00:05:46] I'd say on Denison's campus, like really normal. I don't think it's ever really come up except, you know, like yes, I sit separately for exams and stuff, but it's you know, no one's ever made a big deal of it. It's just kind of accepted. And I think that's also ties into the whole cultural thing because like in India, I feel like people are less adaptive, not adaptive, but less accepting of it. And like when I was in school, it was so much more obvious because I think school themselves made it obvious. Like my brother also has a learning disabilities and he's also been called out. I had a professor once call me out. Like she's like, this is not your work. Redo it in front of me kind of thing because she like couldn't believe that a disabled person could produce decent level work. But I have not experienced any of that at Denison, and I would say yeah, I feel Denison's really accommodating. Can I say the ARC?

Zoe [00:06:52] Yep, you can! Yep.
Participant M [00:06:54] OK. So yeah, I think the ARC is really helpful. They have so many systems in place, you know, like the whole tutoring thing. They like check in on us. So, I think at Denison, it's been pretty decent. Pretty good.

Zoe [00:07:11] Great, great. That's great to hear. What limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility and/or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?

Participant M [00:07:23] Yes, once again, I would say I don't think I've experienced issues due to accessibility or inclusivity. I think, yeah, I think in terms of accessibility, once again, the university has never questioned anything, and they've given me like the usual provisions, not provisions. I forgot what the term is. But the usual accommodations that that, you know, like that I would usually get. So, in terms of accessibility, I would not say much. Once again, this is all mental. Physical is a different story when I was on crutches and I could not walk around the campus because it was not accessible physically for people, but I don't feel like I have the experience to speak to that. And inclusivity, I, I don't think that the issue with it. I don't know if it's like the people that surround myself with, but in terms of like faculty and stuff, I think I've definitely had the equal amount of opportunities and like I've never felt discriminated against.

Zoe [00:08:35] Great. What has been and/or is particularly accessible and disability inclusivity at Denison?

Participant M [00:08:53] Well once again, yeah, the ARC. Like the the help of like classes, making sure that extra time, grammatical errors, stuff like that. Whisler is really good at providing medicine. Like it was easy for me to transfer my prescriptions. Like that was not an issue. They yeah, they, like if you have a prescription, they have pretty regularly worked with medicine. Yeah.

Zoe [00:09:24] OK, so we are halfway through. So, this would be a good place for a break if you want a break. We can also just keep on trucking through so it's up to you.

Participant M [00:09:32] We can go.

Zoe [00:09:35] OK, sounds good. So, this one has multiple parts to it and some of them might not speak on your experiences and some of them might. So, you can pick and choose which ones you feel like speak to your experiences the most. So, how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning, and then there's four options. So, mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, administration and students? And then the last one is, medical or health appointments or procedures.

Participant M [00:10:07] So, mobility, I told you about my experience on crutches, I think. And I remember Whisler like they have a ramp thing, but it's like all the way around and that door is pretty much locked so it's like how am I going to go into the healthcare center. When I have an injury, it's like the accessibility ramp is like closed off. So, mobility I'd say is awful on campus. I've had friends who have had serious injuries and they've managed to move, like they had to move. First of all, they had to move to an entirely different dorm, which I feel like shouldn't be
the case. Yeah, it's not good. And then like when you call Campus Safety, they take like 25 minutes and then you're late to your classes. So yeah.

Zoe [00:10:58] If they even come.

Participant M [00:10:59] If they even show up, like after calling five times. Yeah because I've been on crutches two times on campus actually now that I think about it and it was hell.

Zoe [00:11:09] I bet.

Participant M [00:11:09] Yeah. So, I say mobility like actually like pretty poor on campus, which is kind of surprising. And also, the fact that they like the little scooter things, but like other people don't get it. And once again, like I'm sure if you need a wheelchair or something, not sure, but I would hope they would provide it. But if someone who had a broken foot and had to be on crutches like, that's all that got. Crutches and like the campus safety list and they don't even show up so. Yeah, so mobility is not great. Academic accommodations, I think I've said like everything I have to say about that. So, I'd say that's pretty decent, at least for me. I do know of like other people who've like tried to get accommodations while on campus and haven't been successful, but I don't really know what happened there. So, I feel like I can't speak for their experiences, but for me it's like been like pretty much the same as possible. So, like all that transferred seamlessly. They just like needed my documents. And then communication between faculty, staff, administration, students. I'd say like once again, yeah that's pretty all right. I mean, I think I've only had an issue with like a faculty member once. But other than that, I think they're all like super supportive. I don't think I've ever really spoken to any faculty about it. I think like ARC just had to send out the e-mail and they're like yeah, we encourage you to speak to them, but like I don't. And yeah, and I think students like I've not had a problem. But also, I don't think I've ever really like-- I don't think it's something you just like write up in like casual conversation. So, I mean, I guess like my friends are aware of it, but yeah. And then medical/health appointments or procedures. Yeah, I mean, I've, I've like been on the same medications. Like I don't really have to change it and every once in a while, I have to check in with Whisler. But yeah, like I probably did have to wait for the appointment. I don't recall, but like it's not been a bother for me. I wasn't changing anything.

Zoe [00:13:43] Right, right. So, you said you don't really communicate with faculty often about your diagnosis or your disability. Do you think it would be-- is there anything that's like stopping you from doing that or is there just generally not an interest in doing so?

Participant M [00:14:08] Yeah, I feel like it's like I feel like I wouldn't know what to speak to them about, since like the emails are sent out. So, I mean I feel like, I know they don't specify what, why you need like the accommodations or whatever. They don't specify the like the disability. But, I mean, other than that, like everything in there, like what you need and stuff. And then like, as I said, they encourage you to speak to faculty, but I just wouldn't know what to say to them. Like I wouldn't want to go to them and be like yeah, I'm asking for a free hand out, you know, that kind of thing.
Zoe [00:14:43] That makes sense. OK, great. So, our next one is, what were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? And have these reactions changed over time? How so?

[00:15:04] I would say I didn't even think about it. I think it was like my parents handled all of that. So, I didn't really think about it. I mean, like I coming to a new country, like that was definitely not in the top five list and yeah, I'd say my reactions haven't really changed over time because, you know, we just have to submit like the one thing where we fill out and they look at our files and then, they like send out the email. I did have a negative reaction one time with a professor. And also, there's one more with another professor. And at that was my major and I know. It's not like I was discriminated against. I was just called out for stuff and I was like, why are you calling me out kind of thing? It's like I was upset about it. Yeah.

Zoe [00:16:24] Yeah. OK, what did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant M [00:16:40] You know, once again, I think that would be something that's more significant if, you know, are differently abled physically. I think like accessibility would be a lot more important. Like you'd want to make sure that you can easily get around from place to place. But for me, that's like not, it wasn't like a criteria. It's not something that we heard of. I guess like maybe it was like we were going to be like oh, depending on where I decide to go, where I get in kind of thing, we'll take it from there. But in like applying to places, it's definitely not something that we thought about. But that said, I had some high dreams of applying to places. And my parents were like, you need to be realistic. You need to make sure that you, you know, can handle it because you'll be on your own kind of thing. So, I think in terms of that, we definitely looked at places where like the course load wouldn't be extremely overwhelming. And I think Denison had to look a good balance of that. like it was like it's like academically rigorous. But it's not, it's not like crazy and unhandleable.

Zoe [00:17:51] What are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

Participant M [00:18:10] Once again, I don't think mentally disabled people, I don't think there are consequences. I think they do a good job of that. Physically, it's just really hard to get around like we're on a hill and they do nothing for it. So, yeah.

Zoe [00:18:33] For sure. What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?

Participant M [00:18:41] I think pretty much how it is right now, I guess. Just not, I guess. So, so this goes back to when I had the black eye and stuff. Yeah so, I think I was on crutches then as well. I was yeah, I think so. And I would get like looks and stuff with that. I think that was probably mostly because of the black eye. But I guess an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility would just be like, just really like, no weird looks. And I would say that is pretty much how it is like now. But I do know like I mean, I do like there are some individuals in our school who don't like blend in seamlessly. Like, they have certain aspects of them that like do
stick out. I mean, once again, as I said, I feel like it doesn't really apply to me, but-- sorry, there's like a bike outside.

Zoe [00:19:52] You're fine, you're fine.

Participant M [00:19:54] I forgot what I was saying. Oh yeah. I feel it for me, it's fine right now, but I feel like for certain other people, it would definitely, a little more accessibility would go a long way. But that's I don't think that Denison specific, that's like a societal problem, you know. So yeah, I guess at Denison it would just really to be one with everyone else.

Zoe [00:20:24] What other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant M [00:20:43] I'm not sure. I don't know if there-- I feel like to me I see like, I don't necessarily see my different identities coming together. I will say this though. I know this isn't an identity per se, but it's kind of like a demographic of income. I think we're privileged enough to like afford the help that we need, it not like we need help. But like, for example, tutors and stuff like that, you know, like just health and like medications and stuff like that that makes things easier. Yeah, I guess so like just having a certain sense of like economic stability and privilege to make life as easy as possible in those terms. That has helped, but I don't know if there is anything else that has like shaped it. I think that's been the experience in enough itself.

Zoe [00:21:47] Yeah, for sure. That's totally fine. OK, so now we're onto the support category of questions. So, what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant M [00:22:01] Yeah, I guess for Denison to continue what they're doing. Once again, this is mentally, not physically. Yeah. To continue giving the support that they do in terms of accommodations and encouraging faculty to have an open mind. You know, to offer assistance if need be, having the ARC for support is definitely helpful. ARC makes you feel like ease, like makes you feel like there isn't anything wrong. I'm not saying there is, but there are some people who like, yeah, judge you about it, I guess. So, ARC makes you feel really comfortable, always there to help out. And then yeah, Denison has tutoring and they have all that. So, I think in terms of mental disability support, they're already doing a pretty good job. I guess maybe one thing that they can improve potentially is counseling services. I know this isn't tied directly to disability support, but like I feel like sometimes you need like, if you need to someone, I feel like they don't really have, but in terms of like counseling services, they don't really have someone who like gets disabled people. Not to say that they're harsh or anything. It's just like I've had a few experiences where I feel like she's like chalkingsome of my stuff up to my disability, which is like not what I'm trying to say, if that makes sense.

Zoe [00:24:08] No, that does make sense.

Participant M [00:24:08] OK. And then physical disability I mean, they definitely need to do a lot more support. I would say like, you know, people with a disability like preference in their rides would be something and then just having more of those scooters, they seem so much more
convenient. So, I'd say, that would be a huge plus. And just, I don't know, like I guess they can't restructure the school. So, I know what was supposed to do about all the hills, but yeah.


Participant M [00:24:41] Yeah no, I remember when I was on crutches, like even Slayter was like such an uphill. And you don't like feel it when you're walking around, like, sure, you feel like south quad and stuff, but even like Knapp to the library, it's like a massive uphill that you don't usually think of. Like if there's someone who's like struggling, like it is not easy.

Zoe [00:25:08] Yeah, yeah. For sure. In what ways you feel heard and not heard as a student with a disability?

Participant M [00:25:20] Yeah once again, I definitely feel heard by the ARC. They've got it together, I think. And like as I said, they're really supportive and open to it, which I appreciate. I'd say not heard, I know I said that I don't have any problems with students and I don't, but it's like every once in a while, I feel like there are people who doubt me. And they're like oh, why do you have this accommodation? So, I guess lie in terms of that I feel, not not heard, but I feel like, I don't know. I feel like, I'm not sure. Because like I really don't want to be like that person asking for free handouts. But it helps.

Zoe [00:26:16] Yeah, for sure! There's nothing wrong in accommodations. Absolutely nothing wrong. They’re there for a reason.

Participant M [00:26:25] All right.

Zoe [00:26:27] What does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

Participant M [00:26:35] People to support you when you need the support, whether it's like classes or when you're just feeling like extra hyper or whatever. But once again, like as I said, like not people being like oh my god, why are you being like that? Or like people invalidating it. Like why, why do you sit separately for exams and stuff like that. So yeah, I would say advocacy just yeah, just having someone else back you up in it. Not to say that you can't be an advocate for yourself, you totally can. But yeah, I would also say being able to get the information to the right people. Like sometimes if you go to someone, and I'm not saying I've had this experience, but I'm saying that it's possible you can go to someone, you know, they can't really do much about it. Like getting the information where it needs to go, when people need help and actually listening, cause I do know like Denison, Denison does a lot for us. I don't want to shit talk them, but, you know, there are times when students have like requests and it’s just kind of ignored. So, like actually listening with an open mind.

Zoe [00:27:46] Yep. For sure. Where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?
Participant M [00:27:56] I would turn to my parents and my friends not at Denison. I would say that's, yeah, I don't think I've ever really, and my roommates at Denison. But I don't think I've ever really gone to anyone else for support. Mostly my parents, cause they get me really well.

Zoe [00:28:20] Of course. OK, so our last section is disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, our first one in this section is, what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty, or staff with disabilities?

Participant M [00:28:57] So, is the question, what does it convey to those who have disabilities?

Zoe [00:29:05] Correct, yep. Mhm.

Participant M [00:29:05] OK, so, yeah, I mean, I would say that it conveys that Denison is for the most part an open and accepting campus. I mean sure, you have the occasional issue, but that's life. Yeah, I would say that it shows that Denison is like willing to listen sometimes. And and yeah, that they're, I mean I would hope that they're open to suggestions. I cannot say that with certainty, but I think for the most part, they are definitely supportive. Like I feel like, like I don't feel like I've been deprived of anything because of my disabilities. And actually, I feel like I've accomplished so much more than like anyone at school would have ever thought. So, I think Denison did a good job with that.

Zoe [00:30:08] Great! So, what could be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

Participant M [00:30:47] The ARC, I think that's really good in terms of being inclusive and accessible for disabilities. I do know initially, I don't really know what happened. This was way back when, like as I said my parents dealt with it. But I do know, initially there was like a little challenge of getting my medication approved, but that's all fine now. So, I'd say that is good. In terms of something being improved. And I feel like I mean, mentally, I'd say nothing. Like physically, I feel like I've mentioned it.

Zoe [00:31:37] Yep! For sure. So, what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?

Participant M [00:31:50] I wouldn't say I have an urgent concern. Like as a senior who has gone through it all very much seamlessly, I wouldn't say anything.

Zoe [00:32:01] Great! That's wonderful. OK, so our last one is, is there anything you would like to share regarding Denison accessibility that has not been prompted?

Participant M [00:32:11] Not that I can think of. I think we covered everything. You did a good job with questions, Zoe.
Zoe [00:00:00] I'm going to be copying and pasting the questions into the chat box, as well as to just saying them out loud so you can refer to the chat box if you didn't hear me well, or just want to read over it again. So, the first question is, how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant O [00:00:24] Woman. She/her.

Zoe [00:00:25] Perfect, OK. Our next question is, how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community. So, student, faculty, or staff?

Participant O [00:00:42] I'm a student.

Zoe [00:00:42] OK, so those are the two initial questions. Now we're going to get into definitions and terms. So, this is that's the section of these next questions. So, the first question of this section is how would you define disability?

Participant O [00:00:58] That's a hard question.

Zoe [00:00:59] It is a hard question. That's why I put it in there.

Participant O [00:01:03] OK, well, I suppose disability is the go to definition is usually it's a you know, it's what happens when when when, you know, a structure is designed to to limit someone who has an impairment’s use of it. So, I guess I'll just go with that one.

Zoe [00:01:32] Yeah, I really like that definition. OK, our next one. What term should be used when referring to disability? And this will be the term that I use throughout the interview. And it can also be disability.

Participant O [00:01:45] Disability's fine.

Zoe [00:01:49] OK, great. What do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant O [00:01:55] Probably like wheelchairs, that sort of thing.

Zoe [00:02:00] Yeah. OK, this is a very similar question, but some people interpret it a bit differently. So, what do others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant O [00:02:11] Well, how should I know? I've never actually asked anyone.

Zoe [00:02:15] Yeah, if you don't have an answer that's totally fine.

Participant O [00:02:18] Yeah.
Zoe [00:02:18] OK, do you see disability as an identity and why?

Participant O [00:02:30] I think it can be part of your identity, I suppose. It's not a major part of the identity for me. Or maybe it is, but I think it kind of depends on the person. And a big part of that is going to end up how how visible it is, because if it affects how others treat you on a day to day basis, even if they don't know you very well, then I think it's you can't help but have it be a bigger part of your identity.

Zoe [00:03:01] Yeah, that makes a lot of sense.

Participant O [00:03:04] But I'm just guessing about what other people feel, so.

Zoe [00:03:07] So do you identify with like do you see disability as an identity? Oh, I guess wait. That's my next question. I already say that. Do you perceive yourself as disabled? Why?

Participant O [00:03:22] I guess I mean, I have I have one at the ARC on file. And I mean, I guess, I mean it's annoying to be stopped from doing stuff, but it's not it's such a part of my my everyday life that I wouldn't really I don't really think of myself as disabled because I don't know. It doesn't feel like it's changing anything for me.

Zoe [00:04:01] Yeah, for sure. What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant O [00:04:10] Making things available. You know, not not depriving someone of an option to participate in based on something they can't control.

Zoe [00:04:33] What does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant O [00:04:39] You know, basically just not intentionally designing activities that leave people out? Or I suppose we can do that thoughtlessly too. But I think a lot of the thoughtlessness is a lot more intentional than people realize.

Zoe [00:05:00] Perfect. OK, so now we're on to the experiences section of our questions. So, this first question in this is what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant O [00:05:18] It's been pretty good, I'd say. I mean, I imagine if I had, like, a leg impairment, that would be a really big problem on Denison's campus. But I think short of anything that would interfere with your ability to walk, at least for me, and they seem to they seem to have a pretty good, good system going at the ARC, although maybe not the right school if you need help walking. Seems like a scary prospect of going down that hill.

Zoe [00:06:06] I would say so.

Participant O [00:06:10] But no, I mean, most teachers are accommodating. Some some professors are a little bit more like jerks. But I also don't really need that much in terms of accommodations. It's more like occasional absences and I rarely use them. So, there hasn't I
haven't given many teachers an opportunity to be jerks about it basically anyway. So, it's hard to say.

Zoe [00:06:36] Do you want to speak more on your experiences of professors being jerks?

Participant O [00:06:42] Oh, you know, for reasons that I think are kind of understandable. They want they have like an attitude about it. Like if you're asking, oh, I actually need to eat snacks in class because of a disability, so to speak. And they're kind of like, seriously, which kind of makes sense. Like I mean, I guess if I was a professor and somebody was telling a student was like, actually, you can't stop me from eating an apple, I would be like, this feels like a weird power trip. But for the most part, they've been cool.

Zoe [00:07:30] What limitations, if any, have you experienced due to disability accessibility and/or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences? It's a mouth full of a question.

Participant O [00:07:47] Nothing really at Denison. I went to a different school for my first year of college, which was a bit of a different story. But Denison, my experience has been good. I can't really speak to other people's experiences.

Zoe [00:08:11] Mhm, great! OK. What has been and/or is particularly accessible and disability inclusivity Denison? And if at any point you want to compare your experience to, you know, maybe what you experienced at your other university, that's OK to do here too, as well.

Participant O [00:08:30] Can you give me a minute? I need to open up the door for my cat. All right, so they--accessible and disability inclusive. With regard to, it's really hard for me to say because the disabilities that I have registered at ARC, they're like they're not things that typically interfere with academic work except to the extent that I have doctor’s appointments. And sometimes it can be hard to to manage to get an appointment that doesn't conflict with class. So, for me it's been fine for for-- I can imagine some other problems that other people might have, like the idea that that, you know, when it comes to getting rides to places, you know, campus safety takes forever to show up. So, if you break your foot or something, like my friends haven't been able to get to class on time or something like that or that wheelchair elevator that they got, the little basement thing at Slayter, which I mean it's nice that they can, people can have access to that dirty dinky room. But maybe you can work out a way to go up and down the hill in a wheelchair without dying. It seems like seems like a more pressing issue with accessibility. Those are my experiences. One thing that annoyed me was that this a service that I don't know how to get captions on zoom. I know how to do it on Google Meet. So, I was always surprised that professors would choose Zoom if people can't hear, but I don't know. I may just be bad at computers.

Zoe [00:11:07] No, it is very challenging. I will tell you that because I tried to figure that out for these. If you want captions because I can do captions on zoom.

Participant O [00:11:14] No, I don't need captions. I just.
Zoe [00:11:17] Well, if you have interest in learning how to in a free way, free, but a little bit of a confusing way to get captions on Zoom let me know and I can email you a video of how to do it.

Participant O [00:11:28] I'm good.

Zoe [00:11:30] OK!

Participant O [00:11:31] But it was it was just I was I was grumping about, you know, you got to grump about everything or you'll die.

Zoe [00:11:44] Definitely. OK, great. Do you have anything else to say about that question?

Participant O [00:11:50] No.

Zoe [00:11:50] OK, so we're halfway through. Do you want to break now or do you want to just keep going?

Participant O [00:11:55] I'm good.

Zoe [00:11:56] OK, so this next question has four parts and you can speak to any of them that apply to you and you can ignore the ones that don't apply to you. So how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff, administration, and students and then medical or health appointments or procedures?

Participant O [00:12:20] Mobility doesn't apply. Academic accommodations like medical health appointments, those have been fine. Mostly you can just get something from the ARC that says that you're not lying, that you need to just skip whatever or whatever. That's kind of fine. But again, I don't have a particularly, like comparing, issue so. Just with communication between staff, administration, students, yeah you kind of just need to just get anything from the ARC is what I've found and they'll back off so.

Zoe [00:13:11] Great. And then anything about medical or health appointments or procedures?

Participant O [00:13:23] Oh, I kind of tried to cover that in academic accommodations, cause that's like my my thing that I can I have an excuse for occasional absences.

Zoe [00:13:37] OK, perfect. What were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? And have these reactions changed over time and how so?

Participant O [00:13:55] When I first arrived, I was very ill and the situation was somewhat urgent. I'm healthy now, but like the inner workings of the ARC were not of any concern to me. I just sort of trusted that it would work out and it did so to that extent, great. But I honestly didn't think about it very much.
Zoe [00:14:26] Totally understandable. What did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant O [00:14:32] I didn't think about it at all.

Zoe [00:14:36] Did you think about anything when you left your other campus that you wanted to be different in terms of it?

Participant O [00:14:42] Oh, my other campus rooms, they actually, believe it or not, the year after I left, they were found guilty of discrimination in their application process for not accepting anybody with disabilities, which is like a weird thing. The campus has a lot of problems. So, it was actually students who brought the campus down using the help of alumni, brought the college down. It was like a whole thing. The person resigned. She was like, well, we had to discriminate because this college does not have the ability to help people with disabilities. We were-- we just kind of have a messed-up campus culture and I was working with that, which is true.

Zoe [00:15:27] Oh my god!

Participant O [00:15:27] But so it was like there's like civil war between the students, the faculty, the staff, and the administration over whose fault it is that they are discriminating against people. So, it was like it was a lot.

Zoe [00:15:45] Wow! I'm astounded! That is like the last thing I was expecting you to say. That's insane! Wow! I can't imagine the experience you've had to have, you had to have had there for that first year.

Participant O [00:16:00] That was that was not-- there were there were some there was some life-threatening levels of bureaucratic incompetence with like hurricanes and stuff that were happening. So, it was like it was crazy. It was really crazy.

Zoe [00:16:15] Goodness gracious. I'm sorry that was the beginning of your college experience.

Participant O [00:16:19] That's why I went to Denison. I was like, this is the calmest, most stereotypical, almost suffocating bubble-like school. Yeah, it calmed everything down, you know. And that's what I found so that's great.

Zoe [00:16:41] Wow. Well, I'm glad you were able to get out of there and get into a place that you're more comfortable. OK, so our next question, what are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?

Participant O [00:16:56] For me, there have been few. That's it. That's all I'm going to say.

Zoe [00:17:03] Yep, perfect! What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?
**Participant O** [00:17:14] I don't know. It's hard to say. I've been like, I mean I go back to campus, but I have been hold up because of the COVID thing, so I can't for the foreseeable future that I can imagine, the ideal day would be like no day. Just like everybody stays inside day. But I guess I guess I don't know. People are astoundingly dismissive or paternalistic or whatever. And I, I just have a feeling that if we had one, it would end up being really like, I don't know, you know, you miss the mark, I would say. That that's that's my instinct on what would happen, but I guess yeah so that's kind of a copout answer is like don't try but.

**Zoe** [00:18:22] No worries. OK. What other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

**Participant O** [00:18:36] Well, because I'm a good student and I participate a lot in class and stuff. And I mean, not to brag, but, you know, most professors tend to like me. That makes things so much easier because they want to help you out anyway. And I think that if I was more if I if I was quieter in class or any less engaged, I would have had a different experience. A probably worse one.

**Zoe** [00:19:16] OK. So now we're into our support category. So, the first question in this is, what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

**Participant O** [00:19:33] I don't know. I had kind of-- for complicated reasons, I kind of stubbornly insisted that all support come from off campus sources. So, I never even tried to to get any kind of support from Denison beyond beyond the academic accommodations that I had to get. So, I mean, I don't really have much to offer there.

**Zoe** [00:20:07] What was your decision or what made you decide to get that support elsewhere?

**Participant O** [00:20:14] Because, you know, I met like a bunch of other people who were as sick as I was who didn't live on Denison's campus, and I was seeing them a lot anyway. And it was kind of like, oh, I don't want to, you know, tell everybody my business. I don't want to do that. I was more embarrassed and I couldn't really do that much. And so, so I kind of avoided people. I avoided, you know, I avoided meals with them in general. So, it's actually it's actually in a way, I did get a lot of support. It's incredible that I actually have friends that I refused to hang out with for for several months. But yeah. So, I guess that is support in a way. But, you know, I don't know. Plus, I don't know, that's essentially all I have.

**Zoe** [00:21:12] Yeah! Okie dokie. Our next one is what, in what ways do you feel, heard and not heard as a disabled student?

**Participant O** [00:21:29] I guess, I don't know if anyone's ever asked me that before. So, I guess I should say not heard until now. But also, I've never had the urge to talk about it more. Yeah, I don't know. Sorry, I just, yeah.

**Zoe** [00:21:56] No, you're fine. No need for an apology. OK, what does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?
Participant O [00:22:06] It's made me think somewhat about when it comes to advocacy, the things I think about the most are like little rules that kind of make sense, but it doesn't make sense to enforce them as soon as someone wants to break it. You know, like I have like I have a note from the ARC that says I get to, you know, I have to to to eat certain things at certain times so I can I should have my apple and peanut butter when I want my apple and peanut butter. And there's nothing you can say about that, which is fine. But like I mean, why why bother with it? Why bother enforcing that rule, that sort of thing. I don't know, nothing happens a lot. I used to babysit a lot of kids who had developmental disabilities and I was always kind of concerned about the line between skill building and just excessively practicing something that's not important. So so why spend all this time and mental energy for the kid to learn the stupid thing? And this apple debacle was kind of like an extension of that line of thought when it came up was like, what do you care? It's it's an apple. Just let me eat it.

Zoe [00:23:48] So were you able to get past that and get that accommodation that you needed?

Participant O [00:23:54] Yeah, oh yeah. Absolutely. No, the I mean, yeah, it was it was it was that hard. I was just I was just crazy about it.

Zoe [00:24:03] Understandably so. So now we're into our, oh wait no. One more. OK, you kind of already said that you get your support elsewhere. So, if you don't have anything else that you want to add to this question, that is totally fine. But the question is, where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Participant O [00:24:27] Well, actually, there are some teachers who I think would be could be a good support for students. But there's always like I mean, friends and peers. Hopefully you can find people who are supports. In terms of the institution, there are some teachers that I would also think people should back off a little bit from professors, if only because I think the nature of their relationship makes things kind of unreliable. You know, so but but some some teachers really want to, the professors really want to be helpful and on a more like like intimate and personal way. And that's good. But I also think it's risky and maybe they should just sort of-- I think they have good intentions but should probably just not. But I guess that depends on the person. I tend to be a little bit more rule follow-y, stickler-y. Everything has has has its proper boundary that is, it's probably a stricter boundary than most. But, yeah.

Zoe [00:25:51] Yep. OK, so our last section is disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, our first question in this is, what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty or staff with disabilities?

Participant O [00:26:22] OK. I don't think that-- the way I've been treated I think would send a positive message. But but I think they could do more. I don't know if they're not if they don't have, you know, informational emails to professors or like best practices or something with classes to make them accessible, because like some everyday things, like I think there's just some everyday decisions that I don't really understand why they're made and I know people for whom those decisions would be a problem. And it's kind of like, OK, why are you choosing Zoom over Google Meet? They seem like the exact same thing. Something like that. Or, you know, why
does it take so long for campus safety to get to you if you can't walk and you need to get to class? You have to think 40 minutes ahead of time. That's kind of an issue with the shape of our campus. And it's like I mean, I've seen worse situations. At my first school, they had us in these like avant-garde design dorms by I. M. Pei and so they would be very concrete things. And the girls that lived above me, they didn't have they didn't come to the school with mobility issues, but they both broke an ankle and a leg and they there were no elevators or anything because of the dorms. It's a long story. The dorms were designed to be in the middle of a bay of water, but then the school is like, that sounds expensive. Just build them on land, please and thank you. He then did, but he didn't-- so that they're designed in a way that would it's not a good design. It's the thing that you would need to do if you were going to have a building coming out of the water. But it is on land, right? So, you've taken all of the disadvantages that would come with water and basically, basically to get to the second floor, you have to go up like narrow concrete steps. And they were like crawling up the stairs because they couldn't bring their wheelchairs up. And it was like it was it was kind of funny, but also like we got to fix this problem. So, so I kind of am coming at this idea of OK, Denison is not great with mobility, but I've seen some stuff at colleges. Just, yeah. So, my guess is mobility stuff probably probably pretty pretty-- I think Denison warns those potential students off effectively. Non-mobility stuff, I think Denison does not scare people away so much.

Zoe [00:29:41] Mhm, for sure. So, what should be improved about Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

Participant O [00:29:55] I think the ARC seems to be pretty efficient and most professors don't need much more convincing than a simple message or note from the ARC and I think that's pretty awesome. In terms of mobility, I mean, I get that they can't flatten the hill, but there's got to be something.

Zoe [00:30:20] That's how I feel too. There's got to be something.

Participant O [00:30:23] Like it's just, you telling me that the institution has gathered all of its brightest minds together and they have thought for two weeks straight and no one can come up with a better system than like a campus safety person who goes around 40 minutes after you call to pick you up. All right, I guess.

Zoe [00:30:46] Or the inability to go in any dorm room.

Participant O [00:30:50] Oh yeah, there's another thing. Yeah. Oh, I was thinking something unrelated. Forget it. But yeah, I mean, so yeah mobility. I'm lucky it doesn't affect me, but you know, that's one bad fall off a bicycle. I mean, very important still.

Zoe [00:31:15] OK, so our last question is, or second to last. What is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?

Participant O [00:31:30] I'm lucky. I mean, when I first came to Denison, there were some pretty urgent things because I was like it was it was a little bit up in the air whether I could be at school instead of like a hospital setting. But like Denison did anything they could to keep me
here. So that was cool. And I'm not nearly as as ill anymore, so it's like I'm I'm I have no urgent concerns for myself. I already talked about the mobility thing. I've already talked about the captioning thing. So that kind of exhausts my concerns for my friends. So, I'm out.

**Zoe [00:32:11]** Wonderful. OK, so the last question I have is, is there anything you would like to share about Denison accessibility that I haven't prompted?

**Participant O [00:32:23]** No. I mean, it's kind of weird that the ARC is located in the basement. Just going back to the mobility thing.

**Zoe [00:32:29]** Yeah, yeah.

**Participant O [00:32:30]** But like, I guess there is technically an elevator so.

**Zoe [00:32:35]** I agree with you on that one. OK, well, is there anything else you'd like to add?

**Participant O [00:32:42]** No.
Zoe [00:00:08] How do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns do you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant P [00:00:17] I identify as male, so his/him. Yeah.

Zoe [00:00:17] Perfect. Great. OK, our next one is, how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community? So, are you a student, faculty or staff?

Participant P [00:00:33] I'm a student.

Zoe [00:00:34] OK, so now we're in the definitions and term section. So, the first one is how would you define disability?

Participant P [00:00:42] I would define disability as having a-- I'm trying to think of a synonym for disability. Having like a something going on to where you require extra like learning or extra help, a certain medication that allows you to, an individual may consider, function normally per say.

Zoe [00:01:07] Yeah, definitely. Perfect. What term should be used when referring to disability and this is the term I'll use throughout the interview and the term can also be disability.

Participant P [00:01:20] Disability.

Zoe [00:01:21] OK, awesome. What do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant P [00:01:30] I think depending on the person who, if the person has disability, they'll probably feel isolated immediately simply because they may be different from everybody else and they may not have that issue. Someone who doesn't have the disability but hears about it may assume that that person requires extra care, extra study time, various things. But that they're just maybe slightly different.

Zoe [00:01:59] Yeah. This question is like super similar, but some people interpret it a bit differently. So, what do others think of when they hear the term disability?

Participant P [00:02:10] I think others think of like probably most learning disabilities or like someone that probably was when I think of this really, probably either they have a learning disability or they probably served in the military. And yeah know, some things happened, some unfortunate situations or just someone that has, you know, may have a speech impediment. Various things, I think can range from numerous things like usually, someone with a disability, I'm assuming they probably need like extra care, extra time.

Zoe [00:02:44] Yeah, great. Do you see disability as an identity and why?
Participant P [00:02:50] I do, simply because your disability can, I know a friend who has like a lisp and that kind of defines their personality, why they are super shy simply because of that. But at the same time, they also do whatever they can to overcome it by taking speech classes, certain things and just kinda taking things slow.

Zoe [00:03:11] Right. Do you perceive yourself as disabled? And why?

Participant P [00:03:23] Yes, I guess I would say I have dyslexia. So, like some words may be a little bit tougher to pronounce or may sounds like blah when I speak. But other than that, I mean, no, I feel like I've personally been working on to take classes as well as other things that will help with my dyslexia.

Zoe [00:03:43] Yeah. What does accessibility mean to you?

Participant P [00:03:47] Means to have access essentially to numerous things, but basically access to something.

Zoe [00:03:56] And our last word in the section is, what does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant P [00:04:01] So I think that means if someone has a disability to be inclusive. So, you know, let's say if it's a speaking game, sticking with that example, they basically I want to end that game with, you know, make it inclusive and isolate the person with a disability because that, you know, is very hard to overcome your disabilities or what you may consider a disability, but then to be isolated among a group of friends or strangers that are indulging in some activity. Their, I don't want to say their duty, but as true friends, I think they would be inclusive by accommodating to their disability.

Zoe [00:04:37] Yeah, perfect. OK, so this next section is experiences. So, our first question in this section is, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant P [00:05:22] Great! What limitations, if any, have you experienced due to your disability or due to disability accessibility and or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?

Participant P [00:05:45] Personally, I know I require-- so I get like extra time on my exams. Personally, I don't feel any type of way about it. I just feel like, you know, I wish I wish I could finish it in a certain amount, but at the same time, I'm at a place where I'm understanding that I may require just a little more time to get some understanding or to perform a certain task. So, I would say I'm at a point where I'm comfortable in my disability.
Zoe [00:06:25] Mhm yeah. What has been and/or is particularly accessible and disability inclusive at Denison?

Participant P [00:06:30] And I would say the ARC center has done a great job, as far as I think professors and students just what's going on. I think they've done an amazing time to accommodate students when they require extra time as well as like tutoring. I would say some of the course courses offers, like public address, that I really helped. Just speaking from a class consistently, writing speeches and overcoming that fear of wanting not to say certain words because they seem foreign or maybe tough to pronounce. But I would just say Denison does a great job with the ARC center. I know that's been a heavy ally for me to lean on because of just having dyslexia. Having that extra time allows me to, you know, not feel rushed and to get all my thoughts down in a timely manner.

Zoe [00:07:22] Great. That's great to hear. OK, so we're halfway. So, this is an opportunity for break if you want one, but we can also just keep going. So, it's totally up to you.

Participant P [00:07:31] We can keep going.

Zoe [00:07:33] OK, wonderful. So, this one has four parts and you can speak to whichever one applies to you. And if it doesn't apply to you, you don't have to speak to it. So how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning-- and then the options are mobility, academic accommodations, communication between faculty, staff and administration and students, and the last one is medical or health appointments or procedures?

Participant P [00:07:59] You said experience accessibility, meaning? Can you just clarify?

Zoe [00:08:04] Yeah. So just what what has your experience been like with disability accessibility about these things? So just in general, what has your experience been like having a disability regarding these various topics?

Participant P [00:08:20] As far as, and I can speak to all or just one?

Zoe [00:08:24] Any of them you want.

Participant P [00:08:26] As far as mobility, I haven't had any issues there with my disability. Academic accommodations again, the ARC center has been there since I've came to Denison. So that's been great to have. As well as the Writing Center that helps to just develop my thoughts more. Communication between faculty and staff, administration and student, I would say there probably, I don't know if I would say my disability comes into play, but I know there's sometimes where like I get in a class participating where I may be afraid to see some things or I may like get in my head, because, like, I know what I want to say, but like it's just the proper way to pronounce it. So especially with when there's like a stigma at Denison where like everyone is just like so articulate and just like so brilliant. You don't want to be, isolate yourself. So obviously that encounter. As far as medical health appointments, I haven't had any.
Zoe [00:09:26] Wonderful, thank you. What were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? And have these reactions changed over time? How so?

Participant P [00:09:36] When I learned of this information, I was happy about it because I know coming from the school I went to up the road actually they had like a reading specialist. So, I think the adjustment I had to make was essentially like not being able to talk out my thoughts because that was something that was accommodated for me as well as to others, but now at Denison, it like more on your own, but there are certain accessible things, options for students who may have a disability. So, I feel like the adjustment that I had to that was just like, OK, especially with the Writing Center, cause what I was used to was maybe that you could go in and talk about your thoughts and then kind of help you like draft a paper versus like, they're more so looking for grammatical and like listening to your ideas and try to think of what they're interpreting what you're trying to say. So, I would say, overall, I mean, it's still been a positive reaction, but I guess, I don't know if I would say less of an expectation, of less of an expectation of them doing the work for me.

Zoe [00:10:51] Mhm. OK, what did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant P [00:10:59] So I was looking at resources like similar to ARC center that'll have something for you, extra time, as well as just tutors as well as some other aspects, such as the Writing Center. I feel like those are important because I've learned to be a better writer, but not the strongest so always improving. Having that as an option is great. Having the tutors as well as extra time is amazing simply because I know I guess being an economics major and making it tough sometimes to finish to finish those exams in a timely manner for what's given. So, having knowing that Denison has like a pretty stellar like, what, office was great and I figured that would help just with my academic career at Denison.

Zoe [00:11:44] Yeah. What are the consequences for having a disability at Denison in particular?

Participant P [00:11:51] I think for me it was just more so the lacking on confidence at times. I also think that you can worry about being judged, simply if you pronounce a word wrong or again, you know, for a while wasn't comfortable saying 'statistics,' but overcoming that fear and that pressure of not wanting to say words because your peers may not have had those issues or don't have those issues. So obviously, that's probably the biggest barrier for me.

Zoe [00:12:20] Yeah. What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?

Participant P [00:12:31] I think if there was a day dedicated to that, I would say like maybe bringing in speakers or people who have shared similar disabilities to students. They just like, OK, this is someone who is doing this in this career and they to come to speak to their experience with how they overcame their learning disabilities or disabilities in general that may, you know, allow people to count them out from the start, but to really show, you know, how they overcome with their situation and turn their disability into a strength.
Zoe [00:13:05] Yeah, that's a great idea. OK, this is our last one of the session. So, what other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant P [00:13:29] I would just say, like my race because like one, there's always a stigma that a lot of black people speak in Ebonics. So, overcoming that stereotype, as well as overcoming the, for lack of better words, not being able to say certain words sometimes has really contributed to that. It's just overcoming these stereotypes as well as, you know, being judged with learning and coming to Denison and just going through certain classes as well as getting help. The confidence has developed to where I don't have to worry about that as much that, you know, if I am corrected or someone wants to correct me to not take it as personal, but more so taking it as someone trying to me.

Zoe [00:14:15] OK, great. So now we're in the second to last section. So, this section is support. So, the first question is, what does disability support mean to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant P [00:14:28] Disability support, I would say meaning having options, an office or specialist who is dedicated to is dedicated to helping students with certain disabilities, whether it's either an umbrella specialist or someone that dedicated to just dyslexia like that is important for students to have as well as Writing Center coming, you know, having resources that can accommodate to the oral as well as written communications, because that would just help. Everyone works in different ways and everyone produces works in different ways, so have various options for student even if not the exact one to still help with maybe different things they know about themselves, but or just find a way for them to kind of adjust to the disability that they may have.

Zoe [00:15:24] In what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a disabled student? And then ignore the faculty or staff.

Participant P [00:15:34] I feel like the staff, overall, is pretty-- I would say I have no complaints about that simply because of the process. I mean, everyone using outlines it in the syllabus and just communicating with the ARC center about it. They do a great job of updating professors. So, I personally think that it hasn't been too terrible. But usually, I guess the struggle is for someone to participate in class, I would say. But overall, I feel like professors and the ARC center do a great job of communicating and giving those students extra time, at least from in my experience.

Zoe [00:16:09] Mhm, great. What does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

Participant P [00:16:14] It means either students, faculty, or staff seeking help or seeking to bring help to campus to or just to help certain students on Denison's campus get through the Denisonian experience, especially if they have a disability. So, because that can, you know, alter the experience in such a way, because everyone is coming from different parts of the world, adjusting from other cultures, a lot of different norms. So, having a way for those with disabilities to get somewhat acclimated to Denison culture will be very helpful because they
won't have to worry about feeling isolated as much as they already feel like. You're almost in a melting pot, essentially and then to have, you know, a disability is almost like a double whammy cause it's like well, you have to have to adjust to different cultures, not just overcoming my disability where that may be. So, I feel like any student, faculty, or staff that is willing to seek or demand help for those students is important.

Zoe [00:17:17] Yeah. OK, so our last question in this section is where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Participant P [00:17:22] I usually go to ARC center and just coming with my situation, they've been helpful. If not the ARC center, communicate with my professors individually just to let them know my accommodation or how, you know, I may learn a little bit better if I have this or that. And if not them, just checking in with, you know, someone or going to like MCSA space just to see them to help get resources. So, I know they do a great job. Nonetheless, in a focus this semester, this past semester. I'm sure this semester as well. Just to get help for different students. And I know they're always looking, everyone on campus is always looking for a different opportunity to make students feel welcome and do whatever they can to make students feel like this place is home. So those are like usually like some other options I would use. Usually the first one, if not the second one, it's always a pretty solid and I always get what I need to.

Zoe [00:18:25] Great. Yeah, that's great to hear. OK, so now we're on to our last section, which is disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, the first one is what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty or staff with disabilities?

Participant P [00:18:50] So I would say, speaking of for Denison, I think that Denison takes pride and makes it an importance simply because most schools like such as Ohio State, just like you're almost a number. Whereas at Denison, you're a person. Like people know you. And that's important because your opinions, your what you need is valued other than going to school that is a lot bigger simply because, you know, it's a lot easier to adjust to twenty-five hundred students than to adjust to fifty thousand plus.


Participant P [00:19:25] So your concerns and like your disabilities are-- I wouldn't say appreciated but are acknowledged I would say.

Zoe [00:19:34] Yeah, yeah. And what should be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged.

Participant P [00:19:46] I will probably you know, I like the idea of having like a disability day. Again, I don't know if that would be, you know, if those with disabilities, if that would be something they would want. One again, because of the feeling of isolation, but I think, you know, bringing different people to campus who are not the norm quote unquote because there's different. You never know, not everyone is very vocal or out front or out going with what they’re dealing with behind closed door. So, having, you know, someone come to campus, who, you
know, may have dyslexia or may be a paraplegic, anything just to show like, hey, I'm overcoming this other, you know, barrier in life, but I'm still doing well. This is how I've been able to turn this into a strength or care on it to help me get, you know, further in life. I think that's important because as a reminder, it just shows that, you know, you're not alone in this world. Even if it seems like, you know, within a what, 20-mile radius, it may seem like you're only one, but, you know, there's a much bigger world outside of Denison. And so, I think just bring people to show as a reminder would be a great thing.

Zoe [00:20:47] Yeah, that's a great idea. And what is the most urgent accessibility or inclusivity concern you have?

Participant P [00:21:03] I mean, I think one of the things is I thought would be tough. Like there is like elevators on campus or some but not all. And I know that's a big thing. And some people are just lazy, but some people need it, especially with Denison having a lot of athletes on campus and other injuries. Like having things that help address, I think also mobility wise. I know there is like a van. If there was something that was like the van, if they had like, you know, something that could drop out to help students get into the van. There's different things that can be enhanced for respect, to accommodate because the world is changing. There's different things that are developing for students as well as the different disabilities. So, I think just kind of staying in tune and checking in, like how is this working or are students able to get around? Is this sufficient enough? Is this even efficient, per say? So, I would say there's not too many, but I would say definitely enhancing and kind of installing some place on campus.

Zoe [00:22:05] Yeah, Thank you. I never even thought about getting into the van so that's very important. OK, so then the last one that we have is, is there anything you'd like to share regarding Denison's accessibility that has not been prompted?

Participant P [00:22:17] I'm good.
Zoe [00:00:30] So, to start out, how do you self-identify in terms of gender and what language or pronouns you prefer to use for yourself?

Participant Q [00:00:37] She/her/hers. Woman.

Zoe [00:00:42] Mhm. And how would you describe your relationship to the Denison community so are you a student, faculty, or staff?

Participant Q [00:00:48] Student.

Zoe [00:00:48] Perfect. OK, so now we're going to get into our definitions and terms section of the interview. So, the first question is, how would you define disability?

Participant Q [00:00:58] I would define disability as something that makes it more challenging to participate in the norms that are set up for people in society right now.

Zoe [00:01:14] And what term should be used when referring to disability? So, this will be the term I'll use throughout the interview and it can also be disability.

Participant Q [00:01:23] Disability is fine.

Zoe [00:01:23] OK. What do you think others-- oh, this is actually, OK. Oh, no. This is the same section. Never mind, I don't know what I was thinking. What do you think others think about when they hear the term disability?

Participant Q [00:01:40] I think other people like either feel bad about it or they think there's some sort of separation. Like that couldn't be me. They just think of something different.

Zoe [00:01:56] Mhm, OK. Then this one is very similar, but it can be interpreted a bit differently. So, what do others think of when they hear the term disability? if it's the same thing, that's fine as well.

Participant Q [00:02:06] Yeah, I think that would just be the same. I can't really, I don't feel like I you know so.

Zoe [00:02:13] Mhm, OK. Do you see disability as an identity and why?

Participant Q [00:02:16] Yes, because my friend has done a lot of work with the deaf community. And if I'm calling it deaf community, then I feel like it shows it has some sort of identity behind it.

Zoe [00:02:27] Yeah. Do you perceive yourself as disabled and why?
Participant Q [00:02:33] Not until recently because I thought, even though I had difficulties and challenges, that it was just a personal problem. And that I needed to-- that it could be overcome. It was pretty recently I did realize that it wasn't that kind of thing that's going to change.

Zoe [00:02:53] Yeah. What does accessibility accessibility mean to you?

Participant Q [00:02:56] Accessibility I think, to me, is a form of being unbiased. So, opening up whatever you're doing to everybody because you don't have a bias behind who you're wanting or expecting to participate.

Zoe [00:03:16] And what does disability inclusivity mean to you?

Participant Q [00:03:19] That like more similar to accessibility. You want people to be able to participate, but also, you're going above and beyond specifically for the disabled in the community to be able to participate in yeah, I guess specifics.

Zoe [00:03:35] Perfect. OK. So, now we're in the experiences section of our questions. So, the first one is, what has your experience been like having a disability on Denison's campus?

Participant Q [00:03:47] It's definitely made me more-- I feel like I stand out, not stand out in a good way either. Like stick out, maybe I should say a little more on Denison's campus because I've had to miss class or leave class early for doctor's appointments and things. I've had to have a lot of one on one conversations with my professors and things in a way that's been positive because I think I've had to form stronger relationships, but then it's also been hard because it feels like that burden has fallen to me a lot of the time to work on that communication has been so important. I guess because it's not set up with the assumption that there will automatically be people who need to do things differently. And so, that communication skill has been something that I've really needed to, that I've struggled with. But that in an ideal world, I would have probably really refined by now.

Zoe [00:04:46] So, the next one is, what limitations if any have you experienced due to disability accessibility and/or inclusivity issues in your university related experiences?

Participant Q [00:04:56] So, this is me personally, right?

Zoe [00:05:01] Yep!

Participant Q [00:05:01] OK. So, there's been a lot of experiences with being able to hear has been really difficult in terms of accessibility issues because starting my junior year, I started having a lot of problem with that. And so, that was hard because it's a weird thing to explain to your professors or it feels like a weird thing to explain because I feel like a lot of other students don't have that problem. And so, like having to go in to my professor after hours. I've done it once or twice to let them know I just couldn't hear what's going on, but then a lot of times I will just like take myself out of whatever is going on. And so, that's not really-- because it doesn't feel accessible and because I do still struggle that communication related problems. So, I just either won't do the assignment or I won't do it very well and not ask for that help or accommodation,
which has been hard, especially with transitioning to Zoom and Google. I know that Denison now has an option for transcription or captioning, but for the whole year we didn't have that, that was a really, really hard. And I know there was another student who struggled similarly on campus and she would have to go in with her professors instead of being on the computer. But I didn't feel, it's just the communication thing, I didn't feel like I wanted to do the same. So, I just I didn't know what was going on a lot of the time and also just like really certain pitches or loud noises will make it really uncomfortable for me. And there is this one class and people in there would be really loud a lot. When we would do presentations, everyone will clap and that clapping noise will aggravate it sometimes. So, I'm just sitting there in the corner, like cringing. And it just doesn't feel accessible because because I feel like I'm with the odd one out always when those things are happening. So, that's been limiting, I guess, in a sense, because then now I'm uncomfortable. So, I don't I don't want to clap the same way or interact with the class in a similar way, which is so important I feel like it's like at a school like Denison that you can be with your peers and can connect with them from multiple different levels. So, that's just been hard. Also, quiet hours and things. Right after I did start to have this problem, this party that would always happen on my floor and I couldn't sleep then because of that, because it was just always so loud. And the music would hit that certain pitch or tone. It literally feels like it's going to drive me crazy. That was hard and then I'm not sleeping and so then it's like harder to be in class. Or even just, I don't know if this is a disability necessarily, but when I had mono, I felt like I could be participating in my classes the same way because I was really tired all the time. And I couldn't, I also struggled with insomnia specifically my freshman year not being able to sleep. So, when professors talk really harsh attendance, I feel like my grade suffers, my participation suffers and then, yeah. I guess that's just it but, I don't feel like I can't get to class at this time. So, then I need to take this nine a.m. class to graduate or to get the GEs. And I've had professors be accommodating about that, but then like I've also had professors not be accommodating about that. So, my freshman year with the insomnia and everything, people were, my professors were willing to work around it and not excuse me, but treat me the same if I had been able to get to class on time. But then, I've had other professors, like when I had mono, tell me, just everybody feels tired and it was really hard to explain that there's a difference between feeling tired and being fatigued. And then, I had these professors when I had the mono, call me out and be like, you look really tired, in front of the whole class and things and that or like, oh my gosh. When I had to go to an appointment for my ears at one point, my professor said in front of the whole class, like, what was my problem is and why I'm leaving class at different times for all of these doctor's appointments. But like, I didn't really like that because I hadn't even really processed it myself what was going on. And it's not like there was a follow up, like how are you doing now? I actually care. It was more, I don't know, it's not gossip, but it just felt like it was just something to talk about for everyone else. It was not for me. So, then we were showing up to class later, so then I didn't wanna go and yeah, it's just a whole thing. So, I guess there's positive and negative experiences, but I feel like the negatives have kinda outweigh the positives. In terms of life on campus jobs, I've had a positive experience, because there was a point where I was taking a new medication. I had really bad side effects and I was able to leave a shift early at one point because I wasn't feeling, I was feeling really bad and things, but part of the problem was I felt really faint and like I wasn't going to be able to walk. I would have liked to have been able to call a safe ride, but they weren't doing safe rides at that time. So, I was able to leave work, which was really good to go get my, to just lay down and feel better I guess. Get it out of my system, but I wasn't able to get the help to get from point A to point B and I was living on
east quad. So, getting from A quad to east quad when I was was feeling that ill wasn't very good. Also, I don't like that you can't use your ARC help, like I also have received that at multiple points here. You can't use that retroactively. So, that is kinda hard because there is a lot of time where I would like to be able, I want so badly to just be able to participate like everybody else in the same way. So, there's a lot of times where I will like overshoot what I'm going to be able to do and it won't ask for that help ahead of time and I won't coordinate between ARC and Whisler and my professors and do all of that. If I don't have time to get the paper done, I probably also don't have time to do all of this other orchestrating behind the scenes. You can't use that retroactively. But then also you can't use that for assignments for papers and things. You can just use it for like extra time on a test or something, which is good. And I haven't taken advantage of that, but where it would really help me out is if I could have just a couple extra days for some assignments or things. Yeah, but that's just not not there. And that actually has really tanked my grade I feel in a lot of classes. I know you can ask for extensions and things, but in my mind, it's always been like ostracized a little bit. It's something you don't want to do because I do want to just be able to get it all done. So, the retroactive and then also not being able to use it on my papers and things.

Zoe [00:12:36] Yeah! OK, great. Our next one. What has been and/or is particularly accessible and disability inclusivity at Denison University?

Participant Q [00:12:48] So, I guess Whisler I would say like yes, maybe not in terms of like mobility or something. I haven't personally struggled with that, but I would say being able to work with like different departments in Whisler. They have always been trying to help me out, so that's been really nice. But then ARC, I have, I don't know, it's like they're supposed to be the office on campus that you go to, but then it's like they don't come to you at all. So, I didn't even actually know until recently that I was on ARC list because I got an email from them out of the blue. But like in the past I've gone to them and asked for help and requested help, but then I don't really hear thing back from them. I almost with it was, not like a club or something, but I almost wish you would get regular emails with resources or something. Because I would say, yes, they're kind of accessible, but I think the whole point of going to school is you shouldn't have to go out of your way to get this kind of community or treatment. And like if you do think about it as a community, I mean, maybe it should be like a club where they keep you updated on resources and that kind of thing. But I would say that's not super accessible and then well, I'm trying to think. My professors have been mixed. So, I would say as long as you're able to get that communication and relationship going with them, a lot of the time they're helpful. But then at other points, I don't know. There's something that makes it feel like a barrier and I don't know if that's like Denison's culture kind of thing or what. But when I'm just simply not able to form those relationships with them, my outcomes have been much worse in terms of being able to get the help that I need. Like as I mentioned earlier, not wanting to talk about not being able to hear or go sit in a professor's office instead of being on Zoom with everyone else. So, I guess that's kind of a mixed bag. When I had an on-campus job, I've had a couple and one of them was like really good about letting me, when I was having that adverse side effect to my medications. But then other jobs like when I had mono and I needed to miss things, they were not as accepting about that. So, I did end up having to leave that job because my boss had framed it to me as like, this isn't a priority to you, but it's not that this isn't a priority to me. It's just like my health is also a priority.
Zoe [00:15:19] It should be the priority.

Participant Q [00:15:20] Yeah, maybe even more of a priority. And then my boss was like, she emailed back and she was like, well, that's not what I meant is that your health shouldn't be a priority. But like, it just came across to me that way, because I'm telling you I'm sick and then you're telling me that it seems like my job is a priority. Then like I don't know how else I'm supposed take that. Yeah, and then I guess I kind of mentioned earlier about how some professors will call you out for it in front of everybody. That can be, I think not very inclusive.

Zoe [00:15:49] Definitely. OK, so we're halfway through. So, we, you can either have a break and we can come back a little bit or we can just keep going.

Participant Q [00:16:02] We can just keep going.

Zoe [00:16:02] OK. So, we're still in the experiences section. So, this one has four different options and you can speak to whichever ones. So, you can skip ones if you don't think they apply to you, you don't have anything to say to them, but you can respond to as many as you want. So, how have you experienced accessibility on our campus concerning and then our options are mobility, academic accommodations, the third one is communication between faculty, staff, administration and students, and then the last one is medical/health appointments or procedures.

Participant Q [00:16:34] OK. In terms of mobility, I haven't really experienced that with challenges to me personally, except for I notice a lot of the handicapped buttons on doors don't work. And so, that has been funny, not funny. That's not the word, but it's just it's unsettling, I guess, to see on campus when those things don't work. I've also reported different offices, or not offices, but at least one office that those things don't work. And I have been a tour guide so going to give tours and then wanting to hit a button so a large group of people can get through the doors and then having it not work, I feel like is sending a certain type of message about what kind of mobility Denison wants to offer students. And even today, like I was just in Slayter and the button didn't work. So, I guess that's in terms of mobility. Also, I know people have had issues, like I myself have fallen when things aren't iced well. And so, I imagine I just imagine if you have a hard time getting around then that just would not be very safe. A lot of places don't have any sort of elevator service. And when I lived in Craw, I would see people on catches, like struggling to get up the stairs. I also lived on North Quad and I was just so far away and there's not even side walks down there. So, I don't know if you're in some sort of wheelchair or on crutches, how you would-- actually like I know I don't have a problem with mobility, but part of that reason I never had that challenge is because I'm always thinking if I do get hurt, it's going to really suck for me. So, I don't want that to happen. Yeah. Academic accommodations, how have you experienced accessibility? So, yeah, I guess I'm already spoke to this little bit, but some professors will be accommodating, but terms of having some sort of ARC accommodations, they just haven't been exactly what I need. I could take advantage at the time and I'm sure that would have helped in certain instances. But I would just like the ability to have an extension and use it. Not all the time, but just sometimes when I do overshoot how much I'm going to be able to get done because it's just not it's not what the professor expects to be for everybody. So, yeah. Some have been good, some have not. Needing to miss class, that's hard because I needed to do go to
special doctor’s appointments and things and that my professor literally told me, it would only not count against the attendance policy, if I was able to be in class like this many minutes. And that was just hard because then I had to stay in this class for this time. I was probably, I think I was late to the doctor's appointment because I had to run to Whisler from the class because I needed to stay for an x amount of minutes or it was going to affect my grades. It's like, yes, I was able to leave halfway through, but I would have liked to have been able to stay for maybe fifteen minutes because I did want to make the effort. I always want to make the effort. It's just not, yeah. It's can't always be exactly what they want. So, that has been hard and then also when I was sick and needed to sleep and stuff. Some professors would be really accommodating, but other professors have not been. Communication, I feel like faculty, staff, administration, and students. I mean, there have been just so many problems, I think, from my end, but then also from professors' and different departments' ends. Cause I've called safe rides that have never come and never communicate back with me. So, I know that I wasn't like my communication issue. In terms of staff and stuff, it's like you shouldn't have to bare your soul to them, I think to be able to get what you want, because as I said earlier, I've formed closer relationships with my professors because I've had to share more with them about my personal life. And I don't know if it's wrong of me to think of it like a disability as something that is your personal life. Or maybe that's the stigma talking, but yeah, I've been in professor's hours talking about things that have made me cry at certain instances almost every semester. And so, I don't know if that's been exactly pleasant for either side at certain moments because some of the conversations have just so awkward because maybe it's not a faculty member that I would want to share this stuff with. So, it's almost a little bit of a forced relationship at some points, I think. Administration, I actually did email administration once because of a safe ride that never came. And then they wanted me to do a whole interview or something with them to talk about things. They did end up responding, but I don't know, I just didn't have the time. It felt like something that-- something that I wish Denison could just do more cause I understand that they wanted to be participatory, but if your first job really is to be a student and it is so rigorous here that they talk about, students don't necessarily have the time to be doing what feels like administration's work. Why should we be the ones? I feel like accessibility means that it should already be accessible for you when you get here. And I know those demands are kind of like maybe asking for a lot for them to be able to predict everything. Students I guess in some regard have a responsibility to use their voice to advocate for changes that students need, but it's just so much, so much labor it feels like. And that is how I feel like communication feels sometimes because nobody comes to you. So, that has just been hard. And then as somebody, like one of my disabilities makes me struggle with communicating with people and responding to those emails and keeping up with that kind of thing, like that's just a lot to expect. Which is why maybe ARC was frequently communicating with people, that would be helpful and maybe even with professors and things, I don't know. And then medical/health appointments or procedures, actually, so, it's really nice that Whisler does Uber Jack or campus safety rides to doctor's appointments. That's really a good thing that I think they have because I think also my disability has made it really hard for me to learn how to drive. And so, I don't have really access to a car all the time on campus. But there was a doctor's appointment I need to go to Columbus and apparently those rides don't go that far. So, that was a big hassle and because I couldn't get a ride from them and then Whisler actually said to me or I don't know if should be using that.

**Zoe** [00:23:58] You can use what you can use Whisler and offices.
Participant Q [00:24:01] OK, Whisler actually said to me-- so, Whisler actually made me the appointment, got me the referral, everything. That was super helpful for them to do all that coordinating, but then I didn't have a ride and most of my friends were abroad that semester and my boyfriend wasn't able to take me at that time. So, I had already tried to ask for other people to take me. But then Whisler made me the appointment and I told them I just wasn't going to be able to go at that time because I didn't have a ride there to campus safety couldn't take me and they would literally say to me, well, are you sure? It's your ears. That seems like it's really important to you and or should be. And I was like, I know damn well that my ears and my hearing is important to me. I'm only twenty-one. I would like to hear and it wasn't until that conversation, then suddenly they were able to take me. So, I'm just like, if you were always able to take me, I don't know why you just wouldn't. I don't know if I have the time or gas money or what it is, but it just feels, it felt really not not inclusive or accessible and was a lot of stress to get to that doctor's appointment. Also, they don't really advertise that you can get these safe rides to these appointments. So, for a long time, I was Uber-ing and I am like a low-income student. So, that has been expensive to me to go to just regular doctor's appointments here. So, I feel like if that was a little bit more well known, people would definitely take advantage of it more to get to this doctor's appointments. And yeah, I guess it, just getting to the appointments and things, but yeah, it's been helpful. But there's also been some negative sides.

Zoe [00:25:41] Yeah, wonderful. Thank you. OK, what were your initial reactions to Denison's disability inclusivity and accessibility when you first arrived on campus? Have these reactions changed over time and how so?

Participant Q [00:25:55] At first actually when I came to campus, I thought it was very inclusive because Shorney had a ramp. And that was one of the only buildings I was around all the time. And then when I got to know campus more, I realized that just simply wasn't true. I realized pretty quickly that I never saw disabled people on campus. I know you can't see everyone's disability, but I just never noticed and I came from a high school where you did see that often. So, I noticed that pretty quickly. And then when I had all these challenges, I started to realize pretty quickly that Denison, it feels like they don't actually care much about this. Yeah.

Zoe [00:26:35] Perfect. What did you look for in a college campus in terms of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant Q [00:26:42] Honestly, it wasn't something that I thought about too much. I didn't really know what I was looking for in a college, period, when I came, so I didn't really know what I didn't know. And I didn't consider myself to be disabled when I came to college so it wasn't something that was on my radar as much, even though I did go to a high school where you saw that a lot. I kind of thought that's how every school was going to be. But then it wasn't so, yeah, I just I didn't really look for anything specifically.

Zoe [00:27:12] Yeah, understandable. What are the consequences for having a disability at Denison University in particular?
Participant Q [00:27:18] I feel like the consequences are that you are going to be exhausted all the time and you're going to be limited in terms of what you can participate in and by how hard you want to work to be able to participate in something like it's everything that you do or participate in. It's not just going to an on-campus event or something. It's thinking about like is this going to hurt my ears? Will I be able to hear if I am sitting far away? Will I be able to get there if you did have mobility issue? So yeah, the stakes are a little bit higher I think.

Zoe [00:28:00] Yeah, yeah. What would an ideal day of disability inclusivity and accessibility at Denison look like for you?

Participant Q [00:28:06] Maybe if my professors knew me and knew ahead of time that I am just like everybody else in terms of wanting to work hard and things, but maybe I just need a little bit more grace when it comes to being able to participate in things because then it wouldn't be so nerve wracking for me to be able to communicate with them. So, like if it wasn't, and I'm sure it wouldn't just be me if they were like a lot of students who are like that even more. Yeah, it was just assumed that students were going to need things like closed captioning or to come to my office because they can't hear what's going on or to have the option maybe to sit closer there because I can't hear very well without having to ask for that. Yeah, I guess if I didn't have to ask for these specific things or know that if I turn in an assignment like a day or two later, it's not because I don't care about these assignments. Just like, sometimes it just feels like I'm not in charge of my own days. It's just this day is going to go how it is going to go today. So, yeah.

Zoe [00:29:07] Yeah. What other aspects of your identity have shaped your experience of disability inclusivity and accessibility?

Participant Q [00:29:18] Definitely being a low-income student because I don't, as I said earlier, I don't necessarily have the money to get all these doctors' appointments and things. If I had better insurance, I would be able to, which is not Denison insurance. If I had maybe, I don't know what Denison insurance offers, but like my scholarship doesn't cover Denison insurance. So, if I had insurance, I would be able to afford like something to aid my hearing and then that would be such a big problem. Yeah, being a student of color, I don't think that's affected my experience with disability as much as those other things. Yeah.

Zoe [00:29:57] Great, OK. So, that concludes that part of the experiences sections. So, now we're into the support category. So, our first one in support is, what does disability support means to you related to your campus experiences?

Participant Q [00:30:11] So, it means I guess to me it's like taking some of the burden off of me and sometimes that's an emotional burden and then sometimes it's a physical. Like I'm simply not able to do this. I would say I felt that the most support from my friends on campus. That community I made myself has honestly been the most helpful in terms of emotional support, but then also that physical support of, I'm going to help you write this email or I'm going to help you communicate with your professor, just encourage you to do that, has been very helpful, supportive.
Zoe [00:30:52] Yeah, wonderful. OK, in what ways do you feel heard and not heard as a disabled student?

Participant Q [00:30:58] I guess it depends on what space I'm in because in my non-major classes, I don't really feel supported because I don't, or not feel supported, feel heard because I don't really know anybody to talk to. And I felt like I tried like testing the waters with one of my professors once. And she just responded in a way that wasn't that didn't feel like she was hearing what I was asking for because I was asking to be able to, like I misunderstood an assignment and I was asking to be able to-- no actually, I misunderstood. I was taking too long to finish assignment because I thought it would just take me the one day, but it took me way longer because I wasn't because my ARC accommodations didn't give me. They gave me extra time on tests, but it doesn't give me extra time on a math homework assignment which is due at a certain time. So, I didn't start it with giving myself extra time and then I asked for a, I was asking to be able to redo the assignment, give myself more time, and she said no. That was just going to be like the one grade that she drops for this semester. But I knew I was going to be a problem I was probably going to be keep having. So, it didn't feel like she was hearing what I was asking for because I didn't think that was my recollection of the one assignment that I was was going to mess up. I knew it was going to keep happening. So, that's how I don't feel heard. Also, when you ask for a safe ride or something and they don't tell come, it doesn't feel like people are hearing you. Or also, when you just complain about these things and then administration or whoever responds to you and is like, well, why would you do something about it and go to this meeting and speak about it or something? I don't really feel like I'm being heard because the whole point is I don't want this to have to be my problem.

Zoe [00:32:44] Mhm, yeah. For sure. What does disability advocacy mean to you related to your experiences at Denison?

Participant Q [00:32:53] I guess the advocacy, it can be on your own behalf to communicate with professors and stuff. And then I also think a project like this is a pretty clear example of advocacy because yeah, because I'm kind of like, why has nobody ever try to assemble like all of the disabled students on campus into some sort of like-- because I feel like advocacy goes better if you have more support from people. And so, it is such a secretive, hush hush thing that no one really talks about. Bringing people together, I feel like would be the most effective way to get the disability advocacy for more accessibility or something like that, which because I assume that would probably be, or more representation on campus. Yeah.

Zoe [00:33:43] Where do you turn to for support and advocacy regarding disability at Denison?

Participant Q [00:33:48] So, I definitely turn to my friends, how I said earlier, but then also just like I guess like pulling it together enough within myself to send that email, like I need help. I've went to Whisler before, but then the way my professors responded after Whisler sent the email me was to just email me and ask, what does this mean? What's going on? How they help you? So, I guess just myself and then my friends.
Zoe [00:34:18] Mhm, OK. So, now we're on to our last section, which is disability inclusivity and accessibility changes. So, the first one is what do you think the current state of disability inclusivity and accessibility conveys to students, faculty, or staff with disabilities?

Participant Q [00:34:35] It all feels very hush hush like I said earlier. So, I think it conveys that that there's some sort of like not wanting to do these things a little bit because it is so secretive and kind of hard to find that support. Like I said, even once you're in that community, I didn't even know that I have been on the ARC list for this long. And I think it conveys that, I don't know. I feel very alone a lot of the time. And it wasn't until I saw these posters for this project and stuff that I was thinking there might actually be a lot of people here who are struggling, not necessarily in the same way, but just like with a disability in similar ways. I guess so much of it also isn't seen that maybe make Denison have more students where you could see that it. You might just feel more comfortable in feel heard a little bit that way.

Zoe [00:35:33] Mhm, definitely. So, what should be improved about Denison disability inclusivity and accessibility and what should remain unchanged?

Participant Q [00:35:40] In terms of what should be improved, definitely more mobility related functions on campus like it's ramps or if it's having those door buttons work or water fountains. I've never seen a water fountain here that's built for that kind of thing, which is something my high school would have. I also think, yeah, in terms of maybe like I recommended something that ARC does like regularly or ARC events or something for students to communicate about this kind of stuff. And then also just having more disabled students on campus, I think with help because then professors might just be more accommodating off the bat. The way it's always addressed is if you have an accommodation, let me know right now and sometimes you don't know what the accommodations you are going to need until it's already passed. And then it feels like the chance to speak about it is already past. So, then that deters me from wanting to reach out. What should remain unchanged? I think definitely having offices, how Whisler does those rides, oh. Maybe advertising those rides. Those rides help get to doctor's appointments and things. I think also, I think it's nice to be able to reach out to your professors on your own. So. I do think that should remain pretty much the same as being able to tell them how much you want. But I feel like, at the same time I complain about having to do that communication myself. So, I don't know what kind of like third party, or maybe if professors or just more knowledge, they would reach out. I don't know. Something something about that should change, I just don't know what it is.

Zoe [00:37:37] OK, yep. Oh, so you referred to participation policies and harsh lateness policies. What do you think that should look like instead?

Participant Q [00:37:51] Oh, OK. Yeah, instead I think that should look, well I had one class where you can turn in things a week after the deadline and then it would only be a slight deduction from your grade. I think I think if you could always just turn in things like a week after the deadline or maybe not even that much, but a little bit of time. That gives you more of a chance to work up the confidence to let the professor know what's going on and why you're struggling to get it done, but also to realize, you might not be able to get it done by the deadline and make your piece of that. So, I think that should change. Attendance policies I think we
should just not have. One department, I think does a pretty good job about making a lot of
classes, like you can come when you want to, because to be an adult, you're trying to prioritize
the things that are-- not prioritize because school is a priority or we wouldn't be here. But you're
trying to schedule your own time in a way that works for you and you are paying to be here. So,
if you can't make it to class that day, you shouldn't be having to like fail a class or something.
Like that will come through in your work. And you have to do extra work talking to professors
outside of class all the time anyways, you might still be getting equal time. So, I just think no
attendance policies. To me, I do not think it should be up to the professor. If you're not going to
make it no attendance policy, then it shouldn't be by professor because maybe a professor has a
completely different idea than Denison wants to communicate about disability and accessibility.

Zoe [00:39:28] Perfect and so, second to last one is, what is the most urgent accessibility or
inclusivity concern you have?

Participant Q [00:39:41] For me personally, I would say something to do with hearing
accessibility. So, last semester, it was definitely all semester was closed captioning. Now that we
have have that, they're not very good. So, I don't know if there is a way to refine that on Denison's
campus. I know it's probably hard to get a good technology or streaming service, but I don't
know if this one is super good for that. Maybe we should get a really accurate sort of
transcription because that has been hard recently, but then also not just for me personally, but
mobility, because that's just not there on Denison's campus really. Other than Shorney. So, safe
rides and structural changes would be a big concern.

Zoe [00:40:27] Great. OK, and then our last one is, is there anything you would like to share
regarding Denison's accessibility that has not been prompted?

Participant Q [00:40:41] Oh, I guess one thing I forgot to include was that when I called this
semester about getting a ride to a doctor's appointment, campus safety said they didn't even know
if they still did that or not. So, I think just the fact that communication is so limited between
these offices who are working on this makes it feel like it's not really a priority to people. And I
know people are busy, but just having that coordination in general between professors and ARC
and Whisler and campus safety and all of these offices would be helpful, I think. Also, being in
the dining halls and like how loud it is, that's another thing that really aggravates part of one of
my disabilities because it's similar-- I feel like I'm going crazy, even if it's not that same pitch.
Just like when it's too like that, that little printing room in Curtis has been especially bad because
you're hearing all the noises from like you're trying to focus on whatever you're doing. And then
cause you're trying to do something academic and then there's all these people in and out, up and
down, and then there's the noise from the top. So, yeah, loud noises too.

Zoe [00:00:31] Do have a recommendation that could be better?

Participant Q [00:00:36] Either there, oh, I know you can get noise canceling panels and those
kinds of things so maybe adding those in strategic areas to absorb some of the noises. That would
be helpful. Especially in classes. That can be really hard in classrooms with the clapping and
things. Yeah, that would be my only recommendation.
References


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