CAROLINE KRIX: We do have our final presentation coming on now, it's called Making Meaningful Work Business as Usual; Strategies, Issues and Choices that Support Graduate Employment Outcomes for Students with a Disability. It's being presented by David Eckstein, Equity Fellow, NCSEHE, Friederike Gadow from the Australian National University, and Jane Andersen from the University of the Sunshine Coast. To our presenters, I will just turn off my camera now but I will switch it on when there's five minutes to go and when there's 30 seconds to go as a sign to wrap it up. So, I will pass over to you. Thank you very much.

DAVID ECKSTEIN: Hi. Thanks very much for having us. I'm David Eckstein, I'm from the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. I'm really pleased to be here today with my colleagues, Jane, from the University of the Sunshine Coast, and Friederike Gadow from the Australian National University. We would like to in the time that’s available to us to discuss some issues associated with providing career development support for students with disability. I'm going to throw straight to our slides here. Just let me share that screen. Terrific. Okay. So, we would like to be able to make this personal and meaningful for you, and I'm aware that there are many people who are both disability consultants as well as a careers education consultants, and so we should get some very interesting questions as we go. But our aim today is to illustrate some of the choices that you're required to make when you're providing targeted support for people with disability. We're going to share some key findings from the research project that I've been involved with this year. We're going to also share some key learnings about the different kinds of targeted support that can be provided for students with disability and discuss any ramifications that you would like to table when it comes to progressing or enhancing targeted career support for students with disability at your university. So, we would like to start with a poll and then some questions. The poll, which we will run now if we can - thank you - is asking you how confident you feel at being involved with career support initiatives for students with disability. So, there are five choices there and hopefully they're on your screen now, those range from very unconfident to somewhat unconfident, neutral, somewhat confident and very confident. Almost half of us have voted. I’m going to give you another 20 seconds or so to provide us with a response. So far, the responses are fairly evenly spread. But the thing that we're going to ask you shortly, too, is what questions you have about providing career support for students with disability and these can be very directly related to your individual circumstances and at your university. Another 10 seconds and then we will end this poll. About half of us have voted, which is not bad. All right. So, I will end this now and show you the results. So, you can see there that there's quite a spread, that we’re fairly evenly divided between somewhat confident and somewhat unconfident. If you would like now to add some questions to the chat then this would really help us understand how to tailor this presentation to you. I will take that off now and we have got a suggestion in the chat there. We don't. Excellent. Well, we will move along. So, look, some key findings from the fellowship research project, that is that students with disability, from a careers perspective, are generally very easy to help because, you know, they know what they would like to do but we experience barriers to providing that help and those barriers are typically a lack of staff expertise. We also experience segmentation between services and making links between - for example, a disability service and a career service can be problematic. And we also experience different ideas about what constitutes careers helpfulness depending on whether or not we're working with people in faculty or in a career service or in disability or in another area of professional service in universities. And we also are prone to make assumptions about what students think about their careers and we're not always right about that. But we do find that there are willing and able collaborators, both inside and outside the university, if we reach them in the right way. Staff training is very helpful and we're able to work together to facilitate mutual understanding and develop local iterations of programs that are meaningful for us. So, as I mentioned, students with disability are very - or comparatively easily - to help, I think, usually because they're used to having socially imposed notions of disability put to them. So, when they're provided with a space that does the opposite and is inherently validating and enabling, it's something that they welcome. We know, too, that successful engagement with students with disability involves developing this kind of growth mindset in students, so that instead of them having to justify what it is that they would like to do, they see career development quickly as something that changes over time and that they can learn to be capable in areas that they're not capable in at the moment because they're learning requisite skills through their course and through other engagement that they have as part of their lives. We do this by engaging students in reflective activities so that they can actually construct a pre-professional identity that helps them make a transition into the workplace once they are moving through the final year or so of their course. So, that's a key concept that students with disability grasp very quickly, that employability is not a fixed thing, it's something that is developed over time and will continue to be developed once students leave university. So, the most important thing that we can do to help students with disability is not to lead with the disability and it's not uncommon in a targeted career service such as the one that I run at Swinburne University, the Accessibility Careers Hub, to not mention disability until quite late, in some cases, not at all, because it's not relevant to the student's professional aspirations. I would like now to hand over to my colleague, Friederike Gadow from the Australian National University, who recently began establishing a targeted career service at the ANU and is here to talk to us about some of the issues that that has involved. Friederike, over to you.

FRIEDERIKE GADOW: Thanks, David, and great to be here with you, everyone. Thanks for taking time out of your afternoon. As David said, I work at the Australian National University in the position of Senior Project Officer for Accessibility and Employability and I am based in the ANU Careers Team. I want to briefly speak with you about some of the work that we've been undertaking here at the ANU to establish a function that will support career development of students with disability and hopefully that will provide you with some insight into our experience so far. David, if you could move to the next slide, please, you will see I have called it a “work in progress” because that's what it is. And I saw that there was a question in the chat about when do we actually do this in our busy schedules? So, hopefully, I can provide you with some encouragement but I am also very aware that I'm going to speak to you from the somewhat privileged position of having been in a position that has specifically been created to provide some of these resources. Hopefully, I can still address some of those concerns. So, some of the background. In June 2019, ANU appointed a project officer, so that is me, to implement a range of initiatives to support employability and career development for students and graduates with disability. We have established this under the umbrella term of the Employability Hub. I won't be able to speak to you in detail about all of the different initiatives but I'm going to highlight some of the key things we have achieved to date. But I want to talk to you about some of the challenges because I think that is what stops most people from starting and, really, the first challenge is where to start when there's limited time, there's limited budget. One might think that there's a wealth of resources already out there that students could tap into but perhaps not knowing how to facilitate that. So, where we started here at the ANU - and, again, I'm conscious that I've had the luxury of being in a position where I've been appointed to do that - we undertook a best practice review. We connected with other universities who were undertaking similar work and that's how I met David. We were able to undertake some extensive consultation here at the ANU with students, with staff and other stakeholders around what they needed, what their views were, where some of the gaps were. Then, really, it was about setting and following through on some key priorities because the project was set up with an initial 18-month timeframe. So, really being conscious of the fact that this resource wasn't necessarily going to last forever. Then COVID happened. So, again, universities, including student-facing services, really had to reimagine how they engaged with the students and with the world. And as many of you will know, this has posed a lot of challenges but also provided many opportunities and I want to talk about some of those opportunities when I get to the next slide. Also, of course, in this current climate, the uncertainty around continuity. So, in relation to my project, it is funded through what we call soft money, so it's not part of the recurrent budget. That's obviously, in these current times, quite vulnerable, so we've always had to - especially during this year - keep sustainability in mind. So, what can we do that will outlast potentially this project and this position? So, moving on to the next slide, and this will stay fairly high level but I just wanted to briefly share what some of the key priorities and successes have been in 2019 and 2020. First of all, you will see on the left-hand side that the two main goals were to (a) implement a range of tangible initiatives that would benefit students, whilst simultaneously supporting career practitioners to increase their disability confidence and that confidence in providing inclusive practice, recognising that career consultants, careers counsellors, are already very skilled in supporting the diverse students that we do have at our universities. So, providing them with some specific tools and support to extend that to students with disability has been important. Moving on to the next part. Identifying the needs and gaps was really the key to being able to launch some of the initiatives. So, we have been able to look at some of our own internal graduate outcomes data, looking at the experiences are or the outcomes are for students with disability who have graduated from the ANU but then also looking at some of the national data. Obviously, that's why some of the research David is undertaking is just so important, because it continues to teach us about what students might need and what we need to look at. But then, also, really, it was about understanding our own context, our own university, our own individual challenges. So, that's been an ongoing piece and I think I would really say is key. The next part - and I hope that's an encouraging message. You don't have to reinvent the wheel. You don't have to create resources from scratch. There are a number of organisations and programs nationally that are funded or have been established to provide expertise in this space. So, really, it's about leveraging those resources. Specifically, that would include the NDCO program, who have over the years created some magnificent resources, the Australian Network on Disability, which was mentioned, of course, extensively in the previous presentation, along with others. So, it's more about curating those resources for both students and staff rather than developing your own university-specific resources for students. David also spoke about the effectiveness and power of collaboration, and that has really been my experience, particularly this year, that together we can achieve more. I am one person here at the ANU and I'm conscious that at many universities, there's no one in a position like mine. So, being able to connect with colleagues at other universities with NDCOs across the country to work on initiatives that are mutually beneficial but, most of all, benefit students. That, I would say, has been a key success in 2020. If you're interested in collaboration as a topic specifically in this sector, I would encourage you to come along to our presentation on Thursday afternoon. And one of the other collaborations that we have set up is our partnership with the GradWISE program. Lastly, wrapping up, an ongoing and substantial part of my work is to support career practitioners to feel confident in working inclusively and I really want to stress here that, as I said, there's already a lot of expertise and skill and it's just providing that ongoing mentoring and encouragement, along with a range of approaches. There's no one size fits all. I think we all know about disability awareness training, that's not necessarily just the key to success. So, what we've been looking at here is a mix of mentoring, team sessions, facilitating reflective practice, curating specific resources, and so on. So, in summary, as I said, our work here is a work in progress and we are continuing learning about how we can best support students. I'm just so pleased that David's work will result in a national resource that universities will be able to access to progress this work.

DAVID: Thank you very much for those comments, Friederike. Before we throw to Jane, just a note that there are some great questions in the chat and we are going to get to them. But just to tell you now, in case you haven't seen them, they're about - this is all great but how do we find time to do it and how do our students find time? Those are terrific questions that are germane to the whole discussion. So, you will get some clues along the way in Jane's remarks and we will address them explicitly at the end. Now, Jane, over to you.

JANE ANDERSON: Thank you, David. I'm Jane Andersen and, as of this week, I am the proud manager of five services here at University of the Sunshine Coast. So, up until recently, I was manager of one and then two services, being the Disability and then the Learning Advisers. And like every other university in the land, we've had some restructure and a bit of a refresh of our reporting lines, and I now also have the Careers Team and the Progression Team and the Student Success Team, which was no accident. It's been a work in progress that we have some more inclusive reporting lines here at USC. So, it's a great opportunity to speak with you today a little bit about how that works and what our hopes are, and also about some of our other initiatives at USC. So, the Venn diagram you have on your screen is a highly technical representation, essentially following on from what Friederike has said, is that between disability, practitioners and career practitioners, there is an overlap. We're all working with people. And for me, the competency is about being inclusive. So, for me and now all of the staff that I manage, there are some core competencies and everyday sorts of conversations that I would expect would happen to improve the employment outcomes for our students. One of the quite common things that used to happen for me was colleagues from outside the accessibility service would say, "Ooh, we had one of your students and we're just not sure how to approach the disability issues" or the reference that it's a student with a disability, “so we must need to do something different,” that this is a specialised and unique set of skills. And while that is certainly true, I think there are some core competencies, and, again, that is being inclusive. Career practitioners tell me that the competency is being inclusive and that's something that they're well aware of but, sometimes, I wonder if it's about how we conceptualise their skill, again, as being something special and different that we need to pull out for these students with disabilities. And as we all know, not every disability is visible, and as we heard in the last presentation, there are some really valid reasons about why students don't always choose to disclose that they have a disability. So, it's not always going to be presented front and centre to either the careers practitioner or to the disability practitioner, so we need to be comfortable in talking about that. And, sometimes, until we find ways of talking about that, the employability outcomes won't be addressed for what is a growing population at our universities, those who have a disability. So, have a think about what the diversity and inclusion resources that you have access to at your university. We have a range of things here at USC that are probably similar and not that different to what you have. We're also launching our first Diversity and Inclusion Plan, which will more clearly articulate what our commitment is to diversity and inclusion. And, as I say, it's that expectation that all staff and all students will respect that at USC. I'm just mindful of time, so I probably need to move on to the next slide. Thank you. One of the initiatives that we started having a look at here at USC was the USEP, the Uni Specialist Employment Partnership, which I'm sure most of you have already heard a little bit about. Essentially, it's a bespoke service that aims at reducing whatever barriers there may be for students with disability accessing disability employment services and aiming to ensure that employability outcomes are improved, specifically through students with a disability gaining employment in an area for which they've just completed their degree. We started planning quite some time ago with a very passionate local NDCO, Debbie Rooskov, and we finally commenced that here just last year. Then the pandemic hit and ruined a lot of our plans for really promoting the heck out of this and making 2020 the year of USEP but we're on track to enliven that again for next year. It's going to be a really active collaborative approach between both our careers and disability services. I'm happy to share more information about USEP if anyone is wanting that, about our experience of getting that up and going and tips and tricks, but we're one of a number of universities in Australia that has now rolled that out. I will leave it there and hand back to you, David.

DAVID: Thank you very much, Jane. So, we will get to a couple of specific questions, therefore, and the first question is how do we find time to do this? I think one of the answers to that is looking at us now. I mean, we've got resources like the USEP program or the GradWISE program to help university career services provide more targeted support for students with disability, and they do a lot for us. We need to find the right kind of partner that has, you know, the right kind of employment networks with the right kind of employers offering the right kinds of opportunities for our students, and they have to be able to be on campus or online, as many are operating now, at the right time for our students as well and have to be able to do so regularly. But, you know, those are some of the issues that will go into a memorandum of understanding with an organisation like a disability employment services provider. And I think the thing to remember is that, you know, this is one example of a resource that we can draw on. The career service is another example of a resource that we can draw on. And understanding that we speak a very similar language is, I think, key to developing that kind of partnership. We come at the effort from different angles in a very real way but we both focus on enabling our students and both professions have moved away from models of service that do things, you know, to or for our students and instead, we focus on doing things that help students demonstrate their own ability and do that through engagement with their course but also through engagement with work-related matters. And that brings us to the second question that somebody asked: how are our students supposed to find time for this, because our students are, you know, typically spending all of their time dealing with their course and dealing with their disability? And this is a really good question because it gets to the heart of a collaboration between the disability and the careers service. The point is that engagement with careers matters doesn't detract from a student's engagement with their core discipline. It actually enhances their engagement with their course because it helps them work out what it is they want to do with what they've learned in terms of the kind of place they want to work, the kind of contribution that they want to make, and why those two things fit with some employers more than with others. So, these are things that really give meaning to learning and help students personalise their learning. And if they start doing it early in their course, it takes a lot less time than trying to cram everything else in at the end. Those questions are very good examples of what are called inadvertent barriers to service provision because we need to understand more about what it actually involves and how we can engage with these opportunities. And that's what the career development, learning and disability community of practice is there for, and this is what we would like to ask you now, because we're hurtling towards the end of our time. But having listened to our presentation, what other questions do you have? What suggestions do you have? Or what priorities do you think that we need to focus on in order to provide you with - it could be activities or it could be tools or it could be ways of referring students to careers services. It could be any number of things but we need your suggestions. I'm seeing the hand so I'm stopping now. Caroline, sorry, I saw you courageously trying to get my attention there.

CAROLINE: We're at time, unfortunately, but thank you for an excellent presentation. What really resonated with me is that, you know, there are already a lot of things out there to support students and it's a matter of finding them, and certainly as an NDCO, I would encourage you to link with your local NDCO and with AMD.

DAVID: I would encourage you to link with your careers office as well.

CAROLINE: Yes.

DAVID: Because they know your students too.

CAROLINE: Absolutely.

DAVID: Sometimes, they just don't know they know them but they know them.

CAROLINE: That's wonderful. Thank you very much.