Okay, fantastic.

Well, welcome everybody

and thank you for joining us today for our webinar.

Taking a look at the growing Keep C.A.L.M.

and Caption On with Virginia Tech.

Thank you as we are exploring and showcasing the

inspiring work that's being done by Virginia Tech

as the University expands

its footprint of accessibility and universal design.

This is particularly an exciting webinar for me personally

because you're going to get the opportunity to hear

from two of the leaders at Virginia Tech

that have been working on really making

a cultural shift within the university.

This is going to be the first

of a multipart webinar series,

where we're going to be able to have the opportunity

to monitor, to watch, to see how Virginia Tech

continues to evolve as they expand their footprint.

With that, I would like to first of all introduce you

to our participants here from Virginia Tech.

Mark Nichols, who is the Senior Director of

Universal Design and Accessibility Technologies.

Christa Miller,

who is the director of Inclusive Media Design.

Mark and Christa, would you say a few words?

Hi everybody. I'm Mark Nichols,

thrilled to be here today.

I'm really excited by the opportunity to share

some tips and tricks and hopefully some information

about our journey with captioning,

that hopefully will resonate with you and

that you'll be able to take back and hopefully

apply into your areas of need,

whether or not it's around

post-production captioning or live captioning.

Hopefully we'll have some good resources

and ideas here to share with you.

Hi everybody, this is Christa.

I'm glad to be here with you

today and share all the things,

good, bad, and otherwise that we've

experienced on our captioning journey.

Fantastic. Thank you too. I'm Scott Ready.

I'm the senior customer success and

evangelist for accessibility here at Verbit.

Let's take a look at the agenda for today's webinar.

We're going to delve into Keep C.A.L.M.

and Caption On.

The initiative that Virginia Tech has established for

creating captioning throughout the entire university.

We're going to take a look

at their approach to captioning,

what the strategic planning looks

like and future efforts.

Then of course,

we're going to have time there at the end

for questions and answers.

Please feel free to start typing in

questions and answers as we go through the session.

We'll come back to those questions

as we get towards the end of the session.

We have some time set aside for that.

With that, we always like to

start off by asking a question.

With that, I'm going to hand this over to Mark.

Thanks Scott.

Just to give us an idea of where our attendees are at,

we'd first like to ask you how much captioning

support is in your college or university?

Are they currently providing?

Whether that's none,

if it's accommodations only support,

see if it's accommodations and

maybe some selected courses,

like fully online courses for example,

or if you feel like your institution is already

at a full legal compliance place.

Go ahead and let us know.

All right, let's see.

We have a few people who were at none,

and almost a tie here between accommodations only

and accommodations plus some selected coursework,

and a few people who feel like they're in

a full legal compliance place.

That is excellent.

Thank you so much for sharing.

Yeah, that's amazing.

All right, let's look at the next question then.

Slightly different here.

For us, COVID definitely had

an impact on facilitating captioning.

We'd like to know from you,

in what ways did COVID-19 positively

impacted accessibility at your college or institution?

This is a " pick as many as you want" box.

Implementing accommodations,

document accessibility, captioning or other.

If you have an item that's not on this list,

please open the chatbox and just type it to us.

All right, so that has now closed.

A number of people have said

implementing accommodations and I echo that.

We've definitely had a lot more support from instructors

on getting accommodations in place during this time.

A lot of people said document accessibility.

At some point, I want to learn your secrets

because that is not something that we have

had quite as much success with.

About half the participants also said captioning.

That's excellent.

We've got a lot of partners here in this journey.

Okay, we've got one last question.

Now, what types of captioning do you currently support?

We've got a list here again,

you can pick as many as you want.

Automatic Speech Recognition, and that can be in any way,

whether you're doing it through

a video management system or you're doing it through

something open like YouTube or Amara, anything.

Paying for professional post-production captioning,

professional live captioning,

whether that's in house staff or external staff

does not matter, or providing transcripts.

Again, you can use the chat box if there's

another captioning that you are working with

that is not represented here.

All right, the responses are in.

A lot of people are using Automatic Speech Recognition,

and we are too.

Professional post-production captioning and we are,

but we have not always.

Professional live captioning, which is new to us,

but we are now doing, and transcripts.

A lot of people providing

more support for transcripts than I would have expected.

That is awesome to hear.

Then we have student workers

who can caption pre-recorded videos.

We have done that in the past.

Then one more person responded faculty that you Zoom,

worked with a third party to provide captions sometimes,

but not all Zoom courses are captioned.

That's a really good point,

that all throughout this,

there are trade-offs of what to caption,

when to caption it,

and how to best make use of

your resources of people, time, and money.

Thank you so much.

I really hope that we get to touch on

each of those for you as we go along here.

Mark.

Thanks, Christa.

Nice to see in a diverse audience here

of captioning support and services

that are being provided.

I wanted to just start off,

just to give you a quick glimpse as to where

Christa and I are within Virginia Tech,

because I think that helps.

We fall underneath of the teaching and learning unit

called technology enhanced learning and online strategies,

TLOS, and TLOS is a unit within the division of IT.

It gives you places to where we're at at the university.

The goal with our team is to make

learning available to the broadest possible audience.

That takes us here to them

Keep C.A.L.M and Caption On campaign.

Where did this thing come from?

Well, the team sat down in our office back in 2018,

and Christa's laughing

because we had this giant whiteboard.

It's an eight-foot board whiteboard.

Yeah, it was huge, and we brainstormed like,

here are popular areas

that we're getting questions about as a team,

and that we're frequently getting questions about.

How do we go about

proactively moving the accessibility needle,

if you will, in the right direction

in a meaningful and impactful way across campus?

We were looking at high impact areas,

and then we wanted to align

those two success criteria

within the web content accessibility guidelines.

Where we landed was, we had

three particular key areas that we were

seeing the most consistent requests.

One of those areas was on captioning.

We looked at the success criteria under WCAG

and we said, "We want to build a campaign

or an initiative that would

allow the university to relate and connect

and not be one more thing that is being

advertised or additional job responsibility

on top of faculty and staff throughout the campus."

Some of our back-end work before we

arrived at this point was also leveraging

the quality indicators for

the provision of accessible educational materials.

If you're not familiar with that resource,

Christa, thank you, just dropped the link into the chat.

This is a great way of doing

a self analysis and looking at areas of improvement

around the delivery and provision of

accessible educational materials

and assistive technologies to help support

all students across your campus.

We looked at those and several of those indicators

align nicely with providing

timely delivery of information

by faculty producing content that is

accessible and the university needing to

commit to providing physical and human infrastructure.

In this case, we focused at around captioning.

We decided that we would create something that

would be short, concise, memorable,

that was an initiative that would be able to grow from

year to year with different topics,

and our our first campaign ended up being captioning.

We decided to take the Keep Calm poster set

from the World War II days,

and make that into a Keep C.A.L.M and Caption On campaign.

We developed posters and we developed stickers,

posters for both paper and digital,

and we've had great success

around the marketing and advertisement about this,

and Christa is going to share in just a moment here.

We had an internal graphic designer inside of TLOS

that helped us create our marketing materials.

Then we worked with the university

and multiple stakeholders to advertise and

bring awareness around this one specific campaign

about captioning on.

This aligned with a lot of efforts that were

already currently in motion in

the university about acquisition of

video content management system

and other tools and resources.

To try and give you

a brief overview of what has been a very long journey,

I'll describe it this way.

Think of what we did as a slider sandwich.

We essentially took

those long complicated WCAG guidelines and said,

"How can we make this bite-sized and consumable?"

Each campaign was very action-oriented,

aligning directly to an area of

success and we multistage this.

There's the university-wide campaign and then there's

some targeted focus on developing

accessibility buy-in through a number

of different stakeholder groups.

Then alongside that, there's

some targeted outreach in marketing.

For each of these campaigns,

we ended making a smart goal.

What is the change that we want to see,

and then we dive more deeply into who on

our campus do we need to engage

with in order to make that happen.

One of the things that

we've done as we've marketed this out,

captioning specifically, was that just turn it on.

Every time we brought this campaign

up to a new group of people,

we would say, "Just turn it on."

Sometimes we used this metaphor,

"In the United States, on October 31st,

if the light is on outside your house,

that means that you're ready

to receive trick-or-treaters."

We kept telling people,

when you turn the captions on

or when you make the captions available,

that's like turning the light on.

It's like telling people we're ready for you.

Then we helped people

turn the light on in three specific ways.

The first was we developed

some internal support for video for

instruction and this was a longer project that we've

got some more details about on the next slide.

But I'll just say at this point that the goal was to make

sure that our new video content management system and

our new video conferencing platform

could both support captions in place

to try and reduce some of the burden we had

with faculty trying to figure out how to provide captions.

The next piece was that we directly engaged with

students on campus to try to help push the word out.

We used them to help push the campaigns forward.

Then we did a lot of internal work

with our support team who run the video conferencing

and the video content management system,

as well as the support and documentation team to make

sure that the correct parameters

were set so that people could use it most

effectively with the fewest number of errors,

and as much as possible,

make sure that it was running

smoothly without a whole lot

of third-person involvement, meaning me.

Then the last piece here,

I think I skipped this. Yeah, I did.

Was we found ways to incorporate

what we did in various training.

Instead of just coming up with

a stand-alone training that was,

here's the Keep C.A.L.M and caption on training,

we embedded it into existing

professional development courses that we had,

we created standalone events that were

all captioning-centric so that people could enjoy it,

and then we provided some

self-paced training opportunities.

Mark is going to talk more specifically

about how this fits in.

As Christa mentioned, the goal there was simply first,

turn it on.

You find video content that has captioning

or add caption content to your video

and then don't forget to turn it on.

Most important factor here.

We had a lot of work that had

previously laid the foundation for

this campaign if you will, around captioning.

One of those efforts was around policy alignment.

Back in 2006, the University established

an IT accessibility policy that align to Section 508

and web content accessibility guidelines.

That was one pillar of that foundation.

Then we also had an additional university policy

for surrounding accommodations

for persons with disabilities

and that also aligned then, of course,

to ADA compliance and Section 508.

We had the policy foundation,

which was a key pillar in moving this forward

and turning it on.

Then we also had the build community.

This was developing a community that anybody can join,

whether or not you're a student,

a faculty, staff member, or the public.

This is members of our extended university community.

This was a way of participating in

a campaign and I'll tell you there's

nothing quite as reassuring as going into

a senior-level meeting and seeing

the CIO of your university

have the "Keep C.A.L.M and caption on"

sticker on his laptop lid in the meeting,

and people are asking,

"Hey, what is that?

Can you tell us about that?"

You can't buy better marketing opportunities.

That little sticker did that for us.

It was amazing just how well that has worked for us

across the university,

so getting folks to join this community,

these efforts and even students.

Students have said,

"Hey, my professor in this class is using captions.

Faculty Professor, can you enable captioning

within this particular class?"

It's both top-down and bottom-up ways of

tackling the awareness and the adoption of captioning.

We were laying the foundation for systemic change.

We started to expand the captioning services

across our campuses,

aligning them specifically to

university strategic planning efforts.

That was key because we were

aligning the things and elements

that other stakeholders across campus were

aware of and could easily draw the connections.

One of those was with

our Division of IT operational plan.

It's a five-year plan and we aligned

specifically to a pillar that dealt

with inclusive opportunities for stakeholders

across the university.

This was a way of helping to

support accessible educational materials

and providing inclusive media

to all consumers of the video content.

Of course, inclusive media.

By turning that on,

we are providing timely access to

accessible educational materials to the entire audience,

not just those individuals

who might choose to self-identify

that require them as accommodation,

but for everyone,

as well as really supporting

the framework for universal design for learning.

Within the division of IT

and within accessible technologies,

we do a lot of work around working directly

with faculty and creating inclusive classes and courseware

and modeling best practices around

the implementation of universal design.

We model that as a team with our outreach efforts,

with our professional development opportunities,

with our marketing, things like that.

It was a really nice way of building momentum

across the community and tying it together,

unifying everybody into one campaign

that was quick and easy,

and as Christa mentioned, bite-sized.

Video for instruction.

I'm going to tell you some more details

about how this happens.

Before Mark had joined the team,

I was a lowly graduate student working for

our office and I had just come off

a five-years of transcribing Braille full-time.

At that time,

I was a little bit of a loose ends.

I developed a lot of skills related to,

what does it take to make content accessible

and in particular media accessible.

But I had time on my hands and

it just so happened that it was the same time

our contract with WebEx

had expired or was about to expire,

and it was the same time we as a division

had decided it was time to put something in

place to manage our video.

Up until that time, everybody had video everywhere.

It was YouTube here for some people,

it was Vimeo for some other people,

it was Google Drive for other people.

There's still video everywhere.

There was a stakeholder group

who put together the call for proposals for video,

for instruction and that specifically what we called it.

We were looking for both a solution that would house

video into solution for video conferencing.

Since I had time,

I got to participate and I helped provide,

with my team members,

we provide a very specific input that said,

"This is what this needs to have for accessibility

and here are the eight criteria

that we need specific to captions."

We had not before that time put accessibility language

into any call for proposals

that we'd ever done for Virginia Tech.

So this was a big win,

even getting our colleagues to listen

and allow us to put that into the call for proposals.

In the end, we've ended up with Zoom and Kaltura.

Zoom for video conferencing and

Kaltura for our video content management.

Because they both support captions,

there are different times that we

used the different features of

each system if you will.

Student engagement. Mark?

Back on the second circle there,

student engagement and outreach.

Christa and I do not have a marketing background,

neither do the other members of our team.

We said, let's connect with some of our colleagues

in the communications department.

What that collaboration ended up turning into

was that we had an opportunity to leverage

a senior capstone marketing class

and helping to enhance our existing marketing campaigns

around Keep C.A.L.M and caption on.

It was really nice.

It was an authentic learning opportunity

for the students to help enhance the campaign at

Virginia Tech to build awareness and exposure

and the turn it on mentality among faculty,

staff and students in a way that was

a direct impact on the university in a positive way.

They set up various different booths

across key locations in campus

to handout information and answer questions.

They created additional signage,

sticker files and even drafted some social media posts.

It was really nice to see them coming together

to brainstorm as their senior capstone project,

how can we improve and enhance the existing

Keep C.A.L.M and caption on marketing campaign

that had been developed by accessible technologies.

With the support and training option,

we leveraged, as Christa mentioned,

a variety of different techniques

for supporting the university community.

We developed a C.A.L.M website,

which Christa is going to be dropping

in the chat here momentarily.

This website provides a general overview

of why you should be C.A.L.M

and why you should caption on,

as well as ways that you can share this information

across your circles of influence.

There's a slide deck that members of

the university community can share within

their own respective teams to build awareness.

We've shared the poster files and

the sticker files so they can

be downloaded and use accordingly,

we have a lot of digital kiosks

across campus and multiple buildings,

where the digital flyers were displayed

as well as physical kiosk boards

where we had paper posters that were placed,

and as we walk around campus

and go in a certain buildings,

we'd see the flyer and it was really nice to see

the effort this was expanding across the university.

Again, it was something that was

tangible and people could really just join

and feel like you're being part of a growing community.

We also has as Christa mentioned,

a variety of face-to-face and virtual

professional development opportunities

that were specifically targeted to C.A.L.M

or that were integrated

into existing professional development opportunities

across the campus.

We even did a Friday Brown Bag Lunches

where anybody across the campus could join,

and we had preset topics,

but anybody could join,

and add elements of questions or concerns

around web accessibility,

around accessible document design, around captions.

We had several sessions that were devoted just

to increasing awareness around captioning.

It was a really nice way

of leveraging multiple angles of the university

to help spread the word and share the information.

The Dark Ages,

as I mentioned, the effort was completely uncoordinated.

We have a very decentralized campus.

It's a research institution which comes

with its own interesting caveats.

On top of which at Virginia Tech,

the administrators hesitate to put

too many hard and fast rules in place.

It's just a cultural norm here that each college

is allowed a lot of freedom and independence,

in terms of the mandates

that they require for instruction.

That led to a lot of misunderstanding

or total not understanding about what captions were.

Almost every conversation about

captions before we put out that RFP,

was a vocabulary lesson,

that was the very beginning.

What is a caption?

What is a subtitle?

What does that mean,

open caption versus closed caption?

What's this thing called a transcript,

and why would I use that and what do I need it for?

All of which just led to

a greater lack of institutional buy-in.

Because people didn't understand what we were asking for.

Now at the same time that this was all going on,

there was a group,

we call them the Disability Caucus and Alliance,

and it was faculty, staff and students.

People in our community who have disabilities,

who were regularly going back

to the senior administrators and saying,

"This is a totally uncoordinated effort

and you need to fix that.

You can't have everybody under the sun

making captions and posting them who knows where,

and think that that's providing access."

All that to say that there was some grassroots effort,

but it wasn't getting anywhere fast.

There was no top-down support because of

all the miscommunication and we were barely

keeping pace with the requirements for accommodations,

and just for students in classes.

I'll say that at that time we've finally

managed to request a panel of study

to pay two student employees,

$10 an hour to caption some videos.

Now we have a Disability Support Office.

They have deaf and hard of hearing services.

They provide real time captioning using C-Print.

They provide sign language interpretation as needed,

but they were maxed out.

Anything that was an online class

that had pre-recorded content,

they were like, we can't do that.

We don't have time.

With my two students over the course of two years,

they were able to go from about

15 minutes to 6 minutes

for their captioning turnaround time.

For every one minute of video,

it would take them anywhere from 6-15 minutes.

Now that doesn't sound too bad,

until you realize that these students

would work one to two hour shifts,

three times a week,

which meant that for the 15 minute video

that was needed on Monday,

it took us until Friday

or the following Monday to get it done.

The lag time between the students shifts

was just not working,

which led us to the Pre-COVID 2019 growth spurt,

we're calling it.

This is a time when enough effort

and enough noise was created about

captioning that we could finally push forward

some meaningful requests about getting it in place.

One of the things that came

through at that time was we did

get Kaltura and we did get Zoom.

We said to everybody,

"Just go in and request the machine captions.

At a minimum, just turn it on."

Alongside that, the Disability Caucus and Alliance

continued to push for better support

and made it specific to curriculum.

That really gave us some edge

to work with in terms of requesting

funding because we were able to show

our student employees can't keep

up and if you want to really be compliant,

you have to think about all of

the online courses that we have,

all of the flipped classes that we have,

all of the blended classes that we have.

You got to get out of this mindset that you can pay

an undergraduate student for three hours of their time

and somehow be

meeting the need that we specifically had.

We use the accessibility network

to push out the captioning message,

to push out the turn it on message.

One of the clinchers to this

was that over a period of 18 months,

we worked with all the other institutes

in Virginia who were willing to participate

on a pricing call for proposals from

some of the main vendors for post-production captioning.

When that went through, we were able to

pool all of our resources and all

of the people who responded to the call and got accepted.

They said, "We will pool

all the minutes from all the schools in Virginia,

including K-12 and give you a tiered pricing discount."

Then the last piece of this

was that a new senior administrator was hired

to increase operational efficiency and one of

the first things he did was develop

the campus accessibility working group.

They're the ones who make the critical needs requests.

They gather all the information,

they define what they

got and they pushed for those needs.

All of that has helped us get

to where we are today in COVID-19.

I think this is one slide forward.

Just to piggy back on

just one thing that Christa mentioned there,

the statewide collaborative cooperative contract.

Those efforts really set a ball in motion

for creating an organization called VHEAP.

Which is the Virginia

Higher Education Accessibility Partners.

This is a nice collaboration effort

between multiple universities

and our goal is really to provide

community and provide training and provide support,

especially to the institutions in

Virginia that don't have dedicated staff

like myself and Christa to help

support captioning and to help support

accessible material creation and to help support

general digital accessibility across a scalable model.

This is a nice subsidiary of

that cooperative contract efforts moving

into an additional organization to

support digital accessibility across

the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Once we moved into this COVID-19 era,

which was really a focus on centralized support.

If you remember in those quality indicators,

one of the indicators was focused on

university commitment for

both fiscal and human resources.

Well, we got part of that which was great.

We don't have the additional human staff,

but we do have some fiscal resources which was in

a direct response and alignment to COVID-19.

With post-production, on March of 2020,

the efforts of the campus accessibility working group

and submitting a critical needs request was

approved in order for us to establish

a centralized post-production captioning font.

Now it came with a grain of salt because

the estimates were pre-COVID

that we had submitted with the critical needs requests.

We were now in a new era,

an era where video was

exploding at a monstrous level and the need for

captioning right in alignment with

that high increase in demand for

video to support virtual and hybrid instruction.

While that fund was established,

we've had to revisit with

various different entities on campus,

providing projections through the end of June of 2021,

which is almost triple the amount that we

had requested in the original CNR and again,

these are all based on projections because we

don't have yet historical data behind us,

regarding a centralized fund

and how those funds are being

utilized by different areas of

the university and departments and colleges.

We're treading new waters as we go through

this journey around post-production and live captioning.

That brings us to the second element.

With the increase in, as Christa mentioned,

Zoom is our adopted video platform

and that brought a heightened awareness

because we had been advocating both with

accessible technologies and

the Disability Alliance and Caucus and

the accessibility that work at Virginia Tech around

the need for captioning of

public front-facing live video content and

so these collaborative efforts resulted in

a variety of proposals that Christa and I developed,

and executive summaries.

He's understating that.

There's lots of different mini-proposals to help

people dissect the vocabulary

and understand what the ask was.

Once we finally got through all those layers of

communication and multiple meetings,

the university did move forward

with a commitment just within post-prod to

commit to both a fund for

the FY '21 year and for next year for FY

'22 around supporting live captioning.

Now, I don't know how it is at

your institution, or your university,

but we do not have

a centralized calendar that

we can just look at and guesstimate,

if you will, or have a reasonable guess as to

how many live events we're talking about here.

This was purely a shot in

the dark because no such resource exists,

and we've never done this before on

a central university level.

As we go through, we are building the quantity of

events that we're doing and looking at trends and peaks,

and things to determine

how will this play out in the upcoming years and how

will we have to change our equation,

our metrics for

centralized funding versus non-centralized funding,

and I'll talk about that here in just a little bit.

That's true, but I have to throw in here that

our shot in the dark included something real simple like,

how many colleges and departments do we have and

If they each did a one-hour seminar,

lecture speaker for 10 weeks,

out of each semester,

we would end up with approximately this many hours,

and then we padded it by

25 percent or something to

cover all the other things we thought might happen.

It was still a shot in the dark,

but I just want you to know, it was an educated guess.

There you go. Thank you, Christa.

Danielle, if you wouldn't mind just popping back to

the previous slide, just for one second.

I just want to talk real briefly

about the ASR captioning.

When the university rolled out Kaltura,

as part of the contract,

we had ASR level captioning

available for all video content

ported or brought into Kaltura.

In May, we upgraded

our captioning module to REACH 2.0 inside of Kaltura,

and that enabled us to connect Verbit as the backbone

for all of the ASR processing requests.

As Christa mentioned,

ASR does not meet certain legal compliance,

but it is a start,

and one of the nice things with

this new module in REACH 2.0 was that the ASR

also populated the interactive transcript functionality,

so that students could search

the transcript by keyword and be

brought to that exact point in the video where

that word is mentioned and watch that video.

From a Universal Design perspective,

by faculty going through the process of requesting ASR,

this had a multitude of benefits.

I say that tongue in cheek because it still was

a process to request ASR.

There are still 4-5 steps involved in

a faculty member going into

the system and requesting that,

and we'll get to that here on our next slide as we talk

about strategic planning and moving forward.

Because of that process of having multiple steps,

we collaborated with the provost office

and with our faculty senate

to come to the realization that in order to

truly have inclusive media at a bare-bones level,

we needed to enable the auto-ASR functionality inside of

Kaltura for any Zoom video content brought into Kaltura.

That is an update that we are going to be making on,

hopefully the end of December here,

so that any video ported in

will automatically have the ASR.

Now, that ASR accuracy rates fluctuate depending

on the video content and the quality of the audio,

a multitude of different factors,

but at least it's a step forward in the process of

reducing the load on the faculty for

having to go through and actually request that ASR.

Faculty can then choose to edit the ASR,

or they can choose to pursue

the professional post-production captioning route.

Both of those routes,

ASR and professional captioning,

populate the interactive transcript for

all students across campus.

That's one update with auto-ASR.

With professional captioning services,

we established a reverse-billing model

because we have in our rubric for

determination of who can access the centralized fund,

because the centralized fund is not

a limitless pot of funding,

as much as I would like to say it is.

We do have to be selective and be good stewards of

the fiscal resources the university has provided to us.

We have instances where folks and faculty and staff are

requesting captions that might not

meet the parameters that we have set up on our website,

and so we wanted to establish a reverse bill model.

That is going to be coming in December as well.

In fact, we have a meeting this afternoon on that.

Christa and I do, with a couple of other stakeholders

across campus around planning efforts about that.

As you can tell, we are

100 percent building the plane as we are flying it here.

We're learning from our mistakes,

we're learning from efforts,

but we're leveraging the buy-in and

leveraging the momentum that

the university has given us to expand captioning,

and that's been absolutely key.

On the live captioning front,

so Christa and I, dare I say,

are cheerleaders for live captioning.

This was the first time that the university had

committed to establishing the live captioning fund,

and it pretty much came with the parameters,

"Okay, here's the funding. Now, make it happen".

Well, making that happen was

quite a strategic investment

of time and planning resources because

we had to come up with

the structure of what that would look like.

Again, who qualifies, who doesn't

qualify for live captioning of live events,

and really establish all the metrics around that.

That's something that is continuously evolving

as we go through, and we've

implemented this since October,

and we're gathering our lessons learned

and our struggles and

trials and tribulations and

continuously refining that process.

But what the university essentially did here was said,

"We value live captioning".

Instead of every single person having to, or

every single event host, meeting host,

instead of you having to contact the vendor,

and set up a payment,

and go through all the process

of getting that all organized,

we're essentially going to

centralize that process for you.

It took a lot of the angst already

that many stakeholders have about hosting a Zoom session,

and now we've said, "We will

take care of you. We've got you.

We'll schedule the live session with you,

we'll provide you all the training

information that you need.

If it's your first time utilizing live services,

we'll even drop in before

your meeting starts to make

sure that everything is okay and set up."

Right now, we're looking at,

as we dive further into the live captioning front,

looking at how we're refining

that algorithm for determination of need across campus.

We're looking at a multi-year,

a 3-5 year plan around

captioning for both post-production and live captioning,

and looking at perhaps alternative models of funding.

Centralized funding was where

we had to start, and Christa and I,

I think, we're very invested in that mentality,

that it had to start from the central,

to build capacity that

the university recognizes that this is important,

rather than just saying, "Okay,

college or department, you have to do this,

and you have to find funding for it,

and you have to set it up yourself,

and here's your troubleshooting".

We're taking a lot of that off of

the plate of the colleges and departments.

But long-term, I think we'll be able to

come back with some data showing,

"Okay, here's exactly how much your department has used,"

and look at now

strategically building funding mechanisms with

these respective departments in colleges so that they can

adequately plan in

future budget sessions for captioning funding.

Will we have a continued centralized funding?

I imagine we will to some degree,

but we're not hitting every area of

the university underneath the centralized funding.

That was one thing that

became very apparent very quickly,

was that there are a lot of tentacles to

Virginia Tech in the events that occur,

and events that don't

qualify for our centralized funding,

but absolutely legally need to have live captioning.

What options exist?

How do we provide

the training and the support models around that?

That's what we're continuously

refining and building here at Virginia Tech.

Just to wrap up, we want

to encourage all of you to Keep C.A.L.M and Caption On.

I invite you to look at our resources, download them.

If you're interested in kicking off

your own Keep C.A.L.M campaign,

let us know. We love helping to

kick-start other people trying that on.

I'll say that for us,

we have definitely learned that we

have to very clearly identify

what the gap is for ourselves and for our leadership.

That after we've identified the gap,

we have to make a pretty clear and specific plan,

and usually those plans are incremental.

I think that didn't come out in what we shared today,

but I will tell you that they

were very incremental plans.

Like, this is what we're going to do

for the next six months,

and this is what we'd like to set

up in the next six months after that.

Then the third part is just to

encourage people to turn it on.

I'm not kidding when I say, that is

the very first thing that we got people to say "Ah" to,

was helping them understand that the caption

supports a wide variety of users and

that just turning it on is a good step,

it is a step in the right direction.

Accessibility is definitely a journey

and not a destination.

We are not in any way feeling like we've arrived,

or that we have a perfect solution,

but we're glad to be on this journey.

I can see we've got a couple of questions.

Participants, feel free to add your questions into

the Q&A and we will be taking

those as we still have a few minutes left.

Mark, Christa, I just want to

say how much I appreciate you all

being willing to open up the hood and

allow us to look in to the processes

that you all have been taking place over

these years in making this cultural shift.

All of us that have worked in higher ed know

that cultural shift does not take place quickly.

It's exciting to see how you all have

put the effort in to address policies,

to really take a look at all that needs to be in

place and the things that you have learned along the way.

Let's see what questions have come up.

Danielle, I am not able to see the Q&A.

There's a couple of questions in the chat here.

Sure, Scott. First, I think someone is asking,

this doesn't pertain specifically to Virginia Tech,

but about the Verbit-Kaltura integration and whether

Verbit advertises its AI that

learns the specific content and account.

We can get to that, I think, after, but first,

someone is asking Virginia Tech

how they're going about funding live captioning,

their parameters. So maybe about getting a

little bit more into that question, if

Mark and Christa you're able to?

Sure. Do you want to start, Mark, or shall I, either way?

Go right ahead. I was just going to mention that

I added a link in

the chat to our captioning page

which talks about those parameters.

Okay. I can also touch

on the Verbit-Kaltura integrations.

Our previous integration was with

cielo24 and we weren't unhappy with our service with them.

Like I said, we did everything in stages and we

did a pilot test of REACH 2.0

using the Verbit integration and we

got marginally higher accuracy.

We hadn't worked with Verbit before and thought that this

would be a good opportunity to learn more about them.

Mark, you may need to replace that link.

I think you might have sent it to an individual

rather than the whole participant list.

Yeah.

It is working well for our institution.

Currently, we don't have any complaints that aren't

the normal complaints you have about lots

of people trying to all use

the same service at the same time,

facing various interruptions along the way.

Funding the live captions,

this was a little bit odd.

Like Mark said that that working group,

they put in the critical needs request

for the post-production captions,

and we were just thankful that those funds

became available right about

the time COVID hit

because then the funds were already in place.

So when all of our deaf and

hard-of-hearing students rapidly needed

a whole lot more content

professionally captioned, the funding was there.

In the summertime, we basically

compiled the data and said,

"How much money have we spent on captions,

how quickly did we spend it,

and how much of it was spent

specifically on accommodations versus

those proactive compliance-related requests?"

I was asked to give that information

back to the working group.

I was asked to present it in one or two other places,

other stakeholders, to which everybody's reply was,

"Okay, I understand now that you're going to need

more funds to do post-production work,

but what about all these live events?

Are you saying that they need to be captioned too?"

That triggered a whole secondary phase

of gathering data for the different stakeholders.

We had all the people in our ADA office,

in our compliance office who were working with

senior administrators trying to

explain to them that, yes,

when you have a public-facing event,

you have to provide accommodations

and live captioning is part of that.

I don't know. Mark, you handled more

of the nitty-gritty details of that.

Do you want to take it from there?

I think you've summarized it pretty well.

I would say, it was successful because we've

had the previous years of

conversation around the need for this.

As we look at COVID and the impact

that it has had on higher education,

and I recognize this is not the same for everybody,

but in our view, in my view at Virginia Tech,

COVID has had a very positive impact on

moving accessibility initiatives

forward at Virginia Tech,

building the awareness across the community,

especially among our strategic leaders around the need

for captioning services and

other accessibility-related services.

Whereas before, the conversations may not have occurred in

a manner that didn't require a great degree of prompting.

Conversations were occurring among

senior leadership that were also reaching out to say,

"How are we doing this and what

do we need to do to help improve this?"

We could say, "Well, as a matter of fact,

we actually have a great platform

that we can use, the C.A.L.M.

platform, to help expand

awareness around live captioning".

Then they were like, "Great.

All right, so you guys will manage all

of live captioning for the entire university".

Again, our focus primarily is on

teaching and learning and supporting faculty,

so this was a new venture for us

because we were now responsible for

a service that the entire university

uses and leverages around live captioning.

While we were thrilled to be able to

acquire the funding and thrilled to

have the opportunity and the support to develop

the metrics and the criteria and

the workflow process and our service

now requestable item that

where folks can go in and

request live captioning services,

all of that has come with

primary support from accessible technologies in building

that entire service workflow

and then providing tweaks to that

as we get feedback from

other campus stakeholders and other groups on campus.

I don't think we were prepared to take

on a full university-wide

because, I should say, my shop

is literally Christa, myself,

and one other full-time employee,

and then we have two graduate assistants,

which are fantastic, but we are

relatively a small shop for

what we do and the services we provide, and

captioning is only one element of that service.

This was a great opportunity and one that we wanted

to shepherd for the university

in creating those inclusive media opportunities.

I'll add on to that, Mark,

because the question is also about the parameters.

We went back and forth with

our ADA office and

basically determined that what we should do is say,

anything that's public-facing,

if you're going to invite people who

are not university students, employees,

alumni, and retirees, that that makes it

public-facing and that you are

required to provide live captioning.

But we also said that when it's public,

you can use the centralized fund.

Then we decided, well,

we're a large institution.

We have somewhere around 35,000 students,

not to mention the 9,000

employees that we have all across the State of Virginia.

We're also an extension campus,

so the cooperative extension is part of our university,

and that includes an agent in

every single county in the State of Virginia.

They are massively producing webinars right now,

so we decided that not only did we need to tackle

that public-facing piece, but we needed

to make it a little more granular and say, "Look,

if you're going to invite the entire campus community,

meaning anyone on our campus can come,

then that's also public-facing and

we can also support those things".

The things that we decided we needed to bill for

rather than covering are things that are more specific.

If it's a college awards ceremony, for example,

if it's a student organization hosting a guest speaker,

if it's a staff club

that just has a weekly meeting about playing canasta,

for example, that while we would definitely

recommend that they live caption that event,

we were not going to be the ones paying for it.

The other parameter we said is anytime

an accommodation is requested under

the ADA under any circumstances,

we will cover it, no questions asked.

One of the very first questions on the forum is,

is this for an ADA accommodation?

We tried to make it easy to say

yes at the same time that we tried to make

it easy to define

if you could use the centralized fund or not.

That does not mean that I don't lose a lot of

sleep answering people's questions about it. I do.

I definitely answer a lot of questions about it.

Excellent. Well guys, we

are coming up to the top of the hour here.

Again, for everybody that's on this webinar,

just know that this is the first

of several webinars that we're going to

be hosting with Virginia Tech

to take a look at how this progresses.

As you can see, a lot of work has gone into creating

the position that we're all in right

now and we're excited to see where this journey takes us.

Also, if you are interested,

we're going to have a webinar on December the 10th

that's titled The State of Accessibility:

A Global Perspective.

The pandemic is not just hitting the United States,

so we've been really curious as to how

this is impacting Australia.

How is it impacting England?

How is it impacting across the globe?

We're going to be having that webinar on

December the 10th to take a look at that.

Again, Mark, Christa, thank you for sharing the insight,

the information, and the glimpse into

what all is taking place at Virginia Tech

that has led you to the place that you are right now.

I can't wait to see where we are in three,

six months from now as we continue to evolve.