**Katheryne Staeger-Wilson:** I'm Katheryne Staeger-Wilson and I'm the director of the Disability Resource Center here at Missouri State University. I'm going to talk a little bit about Universal Design today and some things that Faculty might want to consider when designing their courses. Universal design is the design of learning environments to be useable by all people without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Typically when we think of traditionally designed courses, we have a lecture format, and maybe three or four exams per courses. A lot of times when students with disabilities are taking those courses, we provide a delayed, segregated accommodation in order to include them. Well, universal design is a concept where we include all students and we're finding that it is not just a disability issue, it’s an inclusive issue. We’re finding that our student body is becoming more diverse, we have students who have English as a second language, different cultural backgrounds, different abilities and disabilities, and were having an increase in non-traditional age students. And they all learn differently, they all take in information differently and so as we design our courses, we need to look at keeping everyone in mind and really designing courses so we teach in mutliple ways and we’re very flexible in how we assess learning in general.

Some times when I talk to faculty about designing their courses, or redesign, many times it's very overwhelming for them, because it’s a lot of work to design a course. And to think about how might I teach this in multiple ways or how would I be flexible in assessment of the information? And so what I ask them to do is to think of a few things that you might try differently and there are some really easy things that a faculty person can do for example, if showing videos make sure that it is a captioned video, or maybe provide a transcript along with that video. This works great for students who might be deaf or hard of hearing or maybe someone who is from a different cultural background or someone who English is a second language to them. And this isn't just for students. A lot of faculty are learning more from their students about how they might be able to improve their teaching. For example, one professor realized that there was a barrier that a student with a disability that needed a note taker; well, instead of providing a segregated note taker for the student, what he did was he assigned two or three different students a day and they submitted their notes which he posted their notes on an accessible website so each student had a day where they were responsible for the notes and that information was accessible for all the students. So that situation didn't need a segregated note taker for the disabled student, but at the same time, students were exposed to different note taking styles, some students got information from a lecture that maybe others didn't and the professor was able to almost see, day by day what the students were taking in from his teaching. It was almost like a collaborative learning process. And it was a way for the professor to have an assessment about his own teaching style, what was working, what wasn’t and what information he may need to go back and review with students if they weren’t getting it. That kind of collaborative learning is really valuable and it is a universal design feature that any professor can really utilize.