

Dan Silverman: Good day, listening public. Today is April 20th, 2020, and thank you for listening to General Disclosure, the podcast from SAN. My name is Dan Silverman and I'm joined, as always, by co-host Cheryl Dowd.

Cheryl Dowd: Hi, everybody.

Dan Silverman: Are you present and accounted for? Yes, you are. All right. Today we are lucky to be joined by Katie Hoffman who works in the Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support, University of San Francisco. She is a stalwart SAN coordinator there. Katie, welcome.

Katie Hoffman: Thank you for having me. Hi, everybody.

Dan Silverman: So, first things first. When I think of USF, I think of Bill Russell. Are there any other notable nuggets, or grads, or something that you jump to when you're introducing your school?

Katie Hoffman: Yeah, absolutely. I think one of our most recent notables is a USF alum is London Breed, who is the mayor of San Francisco.

Dan Silverman: The mayor, okay. You're going to have to, yeah. I'm such an East Coast provincial guy.

Katie Hoffman: Yeah. One of the first mayors who imposed, or did a shelter in place order here on the West Coast.

Dan Silverman: Oh, okay. So, a pioneer.

Katie Hoffman: Yep. We have a lot of notable alums too, I think, and then there are people who are just part of the community that are well known. And this may be rumor too, I was a student at USF and so in my time there, Mel Gibson, I think one of his children may have attended with us. This is all speculation, so-

Dan Silverman: Yeah. Well, he keeps a low profile, I'm sure.

Katie Hoffman: Yeah. And then, I've heard that Danny Glover has worked out at our gym.

Dan Silverman: Yeah well, stars, they're just like the rest of us.

Katie Hoffman: Yes.

Dan Silverman: Now, some of our conversation is going to be more kind of COVID-tinged than others. Although, I think as of now, it's kind of hard to have anything be free of it, but we do start out most of our conversations with the same two questions that it... Sound a little different now, I guess. The first one is, defining your career or your field in any way you'd like, why do you do it?

Katie Hoffman: Yeah, that's a great question. I sort of fell into doing state authorization work by way of the provost's office at the University of San Francisco. If I back up even more, I wanted to return to USF because I was an alum there, and I loved my experience at a small liberal arts college and especially loved being in the city of San Francisco, and then zooming forward, got a job doing administration for a teaching center on campus, which is the Center for Teaching Excellence. I spent a lot of time thinking about pedagogy, and teaching and fell in love with the idea of... That we're just constantly always learning, and even the professionals, or even the experts, are in need of constant development and support. I think support's probably the better word, and sort of platforms where we can learn to explore what we're doing, explore how to teach better, explore how to be better learners.

Katie Hoffman: And that led me to being interested in assessment and sort of how does assessment feed into other parts of our lives? How can assessment be something that is a new field, or a developing field of research? Because assessment is just basically, what are we doing, how well, what are our students learning, how well are they learning and how can we say that they're learning what they're learning? And then, being in the assessment office, part of that, part of my job duty, job description, was state authorizations. And at first, I thought it was just going to be a small part of my job, but really, it takes up a lot of time, that I've learned. So for me, I wanted to have challenges and more responsibility, and that's what this position is. I described it to somebody when I was first starting out a year ago, so I've been in my position about a year, that it's a lot of sort of mystery solving.

Katie Hoffman: There are a lot of overlay pieces. It's like those books that you open up where you're looking at the ancient Roman Colosseum, but there's a transfer overlay that sort of shows the history of what it used to look like, sort of like an image. And so, when you overlay the pieces that go into state authorization and education, online education compliance or distance learning compliance, that's kind of what you're doing, essentially. And it's taken me a really long time to learn how to read regulations, how to know where to look for them, how to find help. And believe me, I found a lot of help in communities. So, other people who are doing the same kinds of work, largely through WCET/SAN, but also through smaller state authorization networks in California. Because, as you know, we're a non-SARA state, so the extra support is appreciated there.

Katie Hoffman: I feel like I've sort of wandered around a little bit in my answer.

Dan Silverman: That's okay. If higher-ed were eliminated, what would you do?

Katie Hoffman: Oh, I would start a community center where we can figure out how to learn together, again. I think that's kind of one of the lessons that's happening right is, what do we do when some of the supports are pulled away, or some of the usual habitual modalities in our life are removed? And we're having to learn right now, in this situation with COVID-19, how to keep learning, how to keep

connected, and I think if you were to pull away those very large structures, such as higher education, the need would still be there, and the joy would still be there in figuring out how to do things together on a grassroots level.

Dan Silverman: You mentioned about USF being a California school and that having its challenges in state authorization at all times by having to look so often, it's from state to state. During COVID, have you noticed anything on the state authorization side at a state level for changes that have been made?

Katie Hoffman: Are you talking specifically about California, or are you saying being a non-SARA state, are there extra challenges? Is that your question?

Dan Silverman: Kind of both. Let me sort of clarify. So obviously, you're always looking at what all the other states are doing.

Katie Hoffman: Yes.

Dan Silverman: You're not a SARA state, right? I was wondering if, during COVID, any of those states have changed some of their regulations and authorizations?

Katie Hoffman: Yeah, I think that's a good question because some states, especially states that we have relationships with, or agencies that we have authorization statuses with, they've issued guidance that said, "Hey, we understand that there's this pandemic going on, and students are in need of extra support. And so, we are giving institutions until this date to do whatever they need to do to support the continuation of students." That sounds like they're being more flexible in their regulations. That said, a lot of states and territories are still not being clear about who this guidance is directed to. So, we've received a few direct notifications from agencies, but then, we're still needing to look outside and sort of dig up some of the guidance that's coming out of other states. And even then, it's not clear. Well, what about California, or what about students, or what about institutions that aren't authorized by that agency? So, there's a lot of questions hanging in the air, still. Although, the general feeling seems to be that agencies are understanding that students' best interests come first.

Dan Silverman: Cheryl, I know that's an area that you've been curious about. Do you have any follow-ups on that?

Cheryl Dowd: No, I love hearing this firsthand information, because we have been working with some of our consultants who have been sharing information about that. Some states were indeed offering some sort of flexibility. But then, there were other states that were rather ambiguous about whether their information was just for institutions that were located in their state, or whether it included out-of-state activity, as well. So, we're still trying to reach the higher-ed agencies, and that's why I do appreciate the ability to have our relationship with NASASPS so that we can talk with state regulators because there are many who are understanding of what SARA does, and then not recalling that there are

institutions that operate outside of reciprocity, many in California, but then others sporadically throughout the United States. So, it's still important for out-of-state activity compliance to be recognized, and shared pretty widely, and to the public.

Dan Silverman: You mentioned, Katie, that you're digging around to try to find these answers and coming up with more questions. Are there any particular strategies or skills that you've been using to do that research?

Katie Hoffman: I think, so far we've been first and foremost trying to figure out where our students are located, those students who had to pack up and move out of the dorms, those students who needed to be home for one reason or another. And so, there's sort of a step by step process that we've identified for ourselves at USF where it's finding out where our students are, number one. Actually, that's number two. Number one is taking care of students' immediate needs when they're moving to the online atmosphere or going remotely. And that's brought up a lot of... Pretty much everybody at our university is, behind the scenes, working really hard to make sure that instruction can continue in a way that everyone feels supported. So, not just students, but what about those adjunct faculty who don't have computers or access to technology to help them figure out how to provide good quality online education?

Katie Hoffman: And so after that, then it's where are our students and then it's, okay, our game plan is to see where our students are. Find out, establish, okay, is that a state where we have authorization or is that a state where we have some sort of approval, or not? And if not, then we need to contact that state and figure out what our next steps are. I think all institutions are facing this, but what happens after the short-term? What happens after this semester?

Dan Silverman: What are some key changes to assessment that you've had to try to implement quickly?

Katie Hoffman: I think you cut out a little bit there. Can you say that? What are some key...

Dan Silverman: Sorry. Changes to assessment, if any, that you've had to throw together quickly.

Katie Hoffman: Yeah, so assessment, that's a very good question. This has been going around since we're part of the assessment office. How do we assess how well we're doing with online education, but also how do we assess how well students feel supported? And those questions go together, hand in hand. And so, the university has been trying to figure out ways to do that, that sort of bring everybody's interests into the fold. And the plan is to definitely figure that out. But the quick assessment, there's short-term quick assessment that happens in teaching that we're able to accomplish through the LMS, the online learning management system. We use Canvas. But, when it comes to larger programmatic assessment, I think that's had to take... There will be a delay in that, in assessing programmatic, how well programs are doing or how well are

curriculum working together because it's, as you say, it's short-term turnaround quick, what do people need, and where do they need it, and USF has done a really good job of communication.

Katie Hoffman: I've been archiving all of our communications to everyone in the university as to the extent that I can, where I have it sort of at a timeline that I've made that will show, okay, this is what's happening sort of externally, this is the guidance that's come from the CDC, or from the US Department of Education, and then I'll intersperse it with communications that have come out from USF. And so far that I've seen of the pattern, we're showing that we care about students, we're establishing emergency funds for them, and we're really trying to think about on the back end in conversations that are happening, how can we assess what's happening for students?

Dan Silverman: Well, you've sort of answered my next question, but that documentation project sounds interesting. But, I was going to ask, what new roles or tasks have you taken on, if any, in the COVID response?

Katie Hoffman: Yeah, absolutely. I think beyond doing the normal sort of look at regulations and check up on regulations that I need to do from time to time, I've been trying to read into what regulations are coming out of the local level in states where we have students, or where we may have students, and SAN has been really helpful in getting out, and that resource list has been amazing because I've been able to access professional licensure board information and guidance from states. I believe, it may have been on the SHEEO website, but I think that there's a great resource for checking in on individual state guidance there. And so, there's sort of extra reading of, not necessarily regulations, but what's come out from states.

Katie Hoffman: And then there's, as you mentioned, this idea of sort of documenting and archiving what's happening. And I've been creating a timeline, day by day, or piece by piece. It's sort of helped us keep track of what's happening, but also helped us to understand, maybe patterns and communications or I mean, eventually, this will be an opportunity for people to do research. And it's not necessarily my timeline, but in working with Gleeson, Gleeson is our library, and working with our library and our university archivist, we're also trying to capture the human stories of what's happening through social media with students, and through calling out for students to supply their experiences, and for faculty and staff to give some of their personal narratives on what's happening, so that this can be an opportunity for research, later down the line.

Dan Silverman: So, this has contemporaneous and, hopefully, future value.

Katie Hoffman: Yes. That's better said. Yeah. Yeah.

Dan Silverman: That's interesting. I hadn't thought about that. USF is a Jesuit school, does that temper their response at all?

- Katie Hoffman: Can you say that again? Sorry, I think you're cutting out.
- Dan Silverman: Sure. USF is a Jesuit school. Has that tempered the response in any way? Colored it?
- Katie Hoffman: I think it's just an opportunity to tap into some of the Jesuit rhetoric, and some of the idioms that are out there, such as a time of disbursement and discernment. We're always mission-focused at our school and the mission comes up a lot, which is a Jesuit education, and men and women for others, or persons for others. And so, it's all about looking out for the vulnerable populations and that comes out in the university communications. There's so much going on in the world, and everybody is affected, and how are you affected? But also, how do you think about other people who are affected and how can you possibly contribute remotely, or contribute some of your special skills and talents toward helping others in the future? And so, that sort of, that kind of colors it a little bit, is the Jesuit idea of being a person for others. You can see that in the messaging.
- Dan Silverman: Cheryl, do you have any follow-up questions for Katie, at this time?
- Cheryl Dowd: Yes. This has been fascinating, Katie. I have loved your descriptions of how you all are managing. One question that I do have for you is that we did a very quick change in September for those face to face courses to be able to convert to a remote format. Are you seeing in your planning, as you all look forward to summer term or maybe even options for fall term, are you seeing that the bar is raised, the quality expectations are a little bit higher, the regulatory compliance may be a little bit higher? What are you seeing, in terms of how to manage, now that there's some planning opportunity?
- Katie Hoffman: Yeah, absolutely. Our educational technology services team and our instructional design team, as small as it is, has stepped up so much to offer online, in the way of online trainings and faculty development to help move courses online. A long while ago there was an interest in having online courses at USF and then, sort of we realized how complicated that was, but then also the value of having in-person classes and so, for us, I think, and for USF students who... The value is being in-person, being online. So, it's sort of a challenge that's out there, that's met by this educational technology services team and instructional design team, which is to just help people figure out how to have that kind of feeling while being online.
- Katie Hoffman: Our summer term will be online, as far as I know, and I think our enrollment trends, as far as I also understand, have not fallen for summer, and so there'll be a challenge for fall. But, as far as creating quality online education and delivery, I've just been amazed at how many faculty have stepped up, that I've heard have stepped up to attend trainings, virtual trainings to be able to deliver quality instruction. And yeah, that's my answer.

- Cheryl Dowd: No, that's fantastic. We're seeing that there may be some interest in some areas that maybe people hadn't anticipated. Not only interest in, maybe, some of them that are predisposed for face to face are now even more emboldened that they want some face to face. But then, also some others who hadn't experienced distance-ed before that through this remote are going, "Hey, I can do some of this in an online format." So yes, building up the quality of what can be available. So, it's great that your group wants to do additional training. That's fantastic.
- Katie Hoffman: Yeah, I think it'll be interesting to see how at USF, we're a community-engaged sort of learning school and so, being in the community and doing volunteer work, or doing community-based research, or community-based learning is going to be challenging. But, I'm sure that we'll figure out a way to be able to do that.
- Cheryl Dowd: Great.
- Dan Silverman: Katie, do you have anything else to add? Other thoughts, there are... Or if people waiting for your careers [inaudible 00:21:22]
- Katie Hoffman: Yeah. I was trying to think about what it means to experience this shift, for all of us who are suddenly finding ourselves working from home or working remotely, and then I sort of started to wax on what it feels to have time pass, and what it feels like to have structures in your life and so, my two cents there is that, embrace what you can about this very different sort of feeling of time no matter how quickly it passes, or how shortly it passes, or however you measure it. I think it's an opportunity for everybody to sort of realize what those values are that you have, that come out of constraints such as being at home, or such as being able to spend more time with your family. And then, I was trying to think of a musical that I appreciated and I think it might be... It comes from the creators of South Park. I don't know if any of you have heard of it, and it's not the Book of Mormon. I haven't seen that, but it's called Cannibal, the Musical. It's very enjoyable. I might recommend that.
- Cheryl Dowd: All right. I will look for that. What you've been talking about in terms of musicals, I would say that Olaf kind of addresses this in Frozen Two, about controlling what you can control when things seem out of control. So, it's a lot of musical ties there. So, thank you, Katie, for pointing us in that direction.
- Katie Hoffman: Yeah.
- Dan Silverman: Yes. Thank you, Katie. And I think we will segue right into Cheryl on musicals with that.
- Cheryl Dowd: With Katie's assistance, of course.

- Dan Silverman: Of course. Yes. But Cheryl, here was a question I had. Would there ever be a musical that you watch on mute?
- Cheryl Dowd: On mute? Well, Dan, I cannot think of a reason why something considered a musical would want to be on mute.
- Dan Silverman: Let's say you were on a plane. Again, this is getting rather fictional, right? But you're on a plane and, for whatever reason, you have no entertainment, but the person next to you, in a non-creepy way, you see what's on that person's screen and it is a musical, but obviously, that person is wearing headphones so you can't hear. Is there any that you would think, "This is still valuable"?
- Cheryl Dowd: So, it'd have to be pretty powerful acting for me to be able to follow along. Well, Dan, I'm stumped. I'm going to have to think on that one. But you've definitely stumped the musical person today.
- Dan Silverman: I've never done that. I have never... This is quite a day. What about the reverse? Would there ever be a situation, let's say you were in the theater and you said, "For act two, I'm going to watch with my back turned, that I just want to hear." That ever happened, and what musical would that be, Cheryl?
- Cheryl Dowd: Oh well, I can picture every bit of Les Mis. So, Les Mis is sung-through, and so I could turn my back, and I would know that show well enough that I wouldn't have to... I mean, it's like listening to the cast album. I've listened to the cast albums for many musicals, and I can picture certain aspects of the musical, just by listening to it.
- Dan Silverman: You touched on a term that I don't know, sung-through. What is that?
- Cheryl Dowd: It means that there isn't a lot of dialogue. There could either be no dialogue, or barely any dialogue. So, anything-
- Dan Silverman: Opera.
- Cheryl Dowd: Opera. Rent is sung-through. Les Miz is sung-through. Did we lose you?
- Dan Silverman: No, no, we here.
- Cheryl Dowd: Okay.
- Dan Silverman: I'm sorry. What about, is there an actor who you've seen transition from, say, was a strong film actor and then, "Oh, so-and-so's going to Broadway," and there was one where it kind of flopped, and you saw it coming.
- Cheryl Dowd: So, was it somebody that I've liked as a movie actor that surprised me as a stage actor? Is that what you're saying?



Dan Silverman: Yeah.

Cheryl Dowd: Well, Hugh Jackman. I mean, oh my goodness.

Dan Silverman: It always comes back to Hugh Jackman, Cheryl.

Cheryl Dowd: I mean look at Wolverine, and look what he's able to do on stage, as well. So, he's quite a versatile actor. Katie, do you have anybody like that that you can think of?

Katie Hoffman: I was thinking of Emily Blunt.

Cheryl Dowd: There you go.

Katie Hoffman: And her singing skills, she's quite the singer.

Cheryl Dowd: That was surprising, too. Even Anne Hathaway did a pretty good job with Les Miz Russell Crowe, not so much, but Anne Hathaway did pretty well.

Dan Silverman: So, do either of you have examples of where when it didn't turn out so well?

Katie Hoffman: I think if you were to watch the Cannibal, the Musical, you may be able to make that judgment about one or two of the South Park creators who star in the musical.

Cheryl Dowd: Oh, I'm writing this down, right now. I've got to see this.

Katie Hoffman: It's still a very enjoyable... I won't sing it for you, but one of the lines is, "The sun is as hot as a baked potato, I think you'll know exactly what I mean when I say, it's a shpadoinkle day." So, the lyrics are great.

Cheryl Dowd: All right. I will ask my daughter about this, too. She knows way more than I do, so I will ask her. Thanks for that tidbit.

Katie Hoffman: You're welcome.

Dan Silverman: Katie, I'm going to turn to you for one other form of art form, fiction, because I know you're a writer, as well. What's your position on reading fiction about pandemics, during a pandemic?

Katie Hoffman: I think it's totally fine. You have to be able to find ways to emote, and I think reading is a way of emoting with, I guess, a ghost, whoever's writing on the other end and whatever narrative voice you're hearing. It's funny, my husband was saying the other day, "I can't understand why people are watching these pandemic movies, suddenly," and I said, "Oh, I totally want to." So, if you're reading... What are some of the books out there that... Is it David? Jared Diamond's novel about disease, or if you wanted-

Dan Silverman: What I was thinking was Station Eleven, and I actually, because I saw an interview with Emily St. John Mandel and she has a new book out, and she said, "I've heard that people are reading Station Eleven now. I personally wouldn't do it, but, hey, go for it. To each his own." But, that was the one that came to mind, for me.

Katie Hoffman: Yeah. I mean, I think anything you can do to... You have to sort of process what's happening. Otherwise, you could feel sort of stuck and more isolated. So, reading is a good avenue for that.

Dan Silverman: Okay, great. Well, I think we can leave it right there. Katie Hoffman, thank you, Cheryl Dowd. This is Dan Silverman. We'll see you guys next time.

Cheryl Dowd: Thank you.

Katie Hoffman: Thank you. Bye. Thank you.