

July 2020 SAN Podcast Transcript

- Dan Silverman: Good day Listening Public. Today is July 31st, 2020. And thank you for listening to General Disclosure, a podcast from SAN. My name is Dan Silverman and I'm joined as always by co-host, Cheryl Dowd. Cheryl, do you have a hello in your bag of tricks today?
- Cheryl Dowd: Yes. Hi, everyone. Glad to be here again today.
- Dan Silverman: Wonderful. Today's guest is Yolanda Cunningham, Online and Hybrid Learning Compliance Administrator at University of Technology at Case Western Reserve University. And I know enough to always say, Case Western Reserve University. They don't like too much shortening of their school's title, I found the hard way. Yolanda heads up the state authorization compliance operation there and has been a stalwart member of SAN for several years. Yolanda, welcome to the show.
- Yolanda Cunning...: Hi. Thank you for having me. And thank you for the full title for Case also.
- Dan Silverman: Exactly. A friend of mine, a former colleague, is the athletic director there and I tried to shorten it a couple of times and she was quick to correct me.
- Yolanda Cunning...: Wonderful.
- Dan Silverman: So I'm going to start you with a couple of questions that we ask all of our guests and we've developed a little interesting little log of various answers to this. Defining your career or your role in any way you choose, why do you do this? You could do a lot of things Yolanda, why do you do this?
- Yolanda Cunning...: I do it for the love of it, which may sound cheesy, but everything that I've done in the past has led up to, or always involved compliance and always involved doing a lot of research and this seems to be the best position for me at that and the interest in it.
- Dan Silverman: Can you say a little bit more about research and what you like about research and other types of research that you've done?
- Yolanda Cunning...: I love attacking a problem, delving into it, no matter how long it takes, finding the solution, bringing in all of my resources, whether it's written, electronic, people, all of those, just to reach that final goal. And just that sense of achievement, especially when I have to help someone. Just to give an example, I had to help a few people at our School of Nursing find an issue that they were struggling with for a couple of months. And I managed to solve it within two weeks. I was a little hard on myself because I thought I would find it within a few days, but they were very happy with it and so was I. So just that being able to help someone through it, but it's always been a joy, even when I was a child. I used to take things from my parents that they were researching. My mom is a former professor, so I would try to solve things for her, whether she asked or not.

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- Dan Silverman: Maybe especially if she didn't ask.
- Yolanda Cunning...: Mostly.
- Dan Silverman: Now the next kind of broad one I ask at the beginning is, if higher ed were to vaporize tomorrow, just doesn't exist, what would you do instead?
- Yolanda Cunning...: That is very interesting. I would have a few days of mourning and then I would probably go into the private sector, but I would try to find something similar to what I'm doing now, but in a different field.
- Dan Silverman: So you would want to do compliance in a different... Bank of America or something?
- Yolanda Cunning...: On a global level. No, on a global level, definitely. I would find myself affiliated with the United Nations in some capacity.
- Dan Silverman: Okay. Well, you and I have just collaborated on a yet to be released SAN paper that provides 10 sequential steps for getting started in state authorization. What do you remember about when you got started in state authorization?
- Yolanda Cunning...: I got started in 2014. I remember that it was in the fall actually of 2014. And I was thrown into it. Since I did have a compliance background, it really wasn't too much of a stretch, but doing it in academia was a completely different world, but they say I did take to it quickly. So I'm happy for that. I was previously affiliated with the university already, so I knew the background of the university, but just knowing it from a different vantage point, that took some getting used to. And luckily because of SAN, I was able to fall in.
- Dan Silverman: In what setting had you done compliance previously that wasn't higher ed?
- Yolanda Cunning...: It was in the business sector. I was actually working in New York. It was tied to the government. It was just a loose project that went for about four years. But it was okay, but I knew that I wanted something different because there was too much politics involved, a little bit much for me.
- Dan Silverman: And pardon me. In writing the paper, what did you think turned out to be the most challenging thing to write about and why?
- Yolanda Cunning...: I think it was challenging to find out the portion I wrote about getting to know your state, just each state has different requirements. We know that they do vary. For example, we had to deal with secretary of state, some states require it depending on the school, the type of university. So delving back into that, especially since I am coming from a private university, but I wanted to look at it from the standpoint of all types. I think that was the hardest. And I actually did research a few states, but that was definitely the hardest part. And it's ever changing, so...

- Dan Silverman: Either expanding on something that you wrote or something that didn't quite make it in, what advice do you have for somebody who's just starting out?
- Yolanda Cunning...: Expanding, definitely getting to know your institution, even if you're already there, you're already working, and even if you are already in this field, it doesn't hurt to do an assessment. I have begun to do it at least twice a year. I learned that in 2016 that it was best not to take it just annually. Someone gave me that advice. And I found through my own personal experience to just reassess everything, go around again, because things do change and you may not be privy to all of it in a given week, so at least taking an assessment twice a year really, really helps.
- Dan Silverman: How do you keep track of changes to NC-SARA?
- Yolanda Cunning...: I receive the emails. I tried to go to the website. There are several, I would say reviews that they have. I just try to in every way and worst case scenario, sometimes I will ask someone if I think I've missed something and it helps to talk about it also with colleagues. Word of mouth is very good also.
- Dan Silverman: You have colleagues, are you speaking of colleagues at your institution or do you mean across SAN?
- Yolanda Cunning...: Across SAN.
- Dan Silverman: Now we've talked a little bit about beginners and maintaining, that leads me to ask about what about a mid career person who's been doing this for a few years? What thoughts do you have about how to refine an approach to state authorization over the years?
- Yolanda Cunning...: You want to keep it fresh. You also want to make sure that your institution knows you're still viable, so it doesn't help... I mean, it doesn't hurt. I'm sorry. It doesn't hurt to step into other areas just to... You could serve on a committee that may be outside of your realm, that sort of stretches it, but it also helps you within state authorization because it makes you aware of what is going on, whether it's on the ground or beyond, out of state, out of country. So it helps to take part in different communities across your campus.
- Dan Silverman: So speaking of that then, are there other areas of higher ed? Either at your institution or across the spectrum that particularly interest you or you think would particularly help someone who's in state authorization to learn more about?
- Yolanda Cunning...: I personally have begun to take part in two things. One is, I am part of our university's contract review. So any contracts that affect distance education or basically higher ed as a whole, but mostly distance education, I am part of the team that gets to review those. So I see everything from the beginning. And this

is whether it's for a service, the educational partners, basically anything. So, that has helped me a great deal.

Dan Silverman: Cheryl, do you have any follow ups from any of this so far? I have a couple more, but you've been uncharacteristically quiet this morning.

Cheryl Dowd: Oh, I just have been really enjoying this because I am, as some may know, Yolanda and I go way back. We go pre-reciprocity in terms of compliance in the state of Ohio or from the state of Ohio, should I say. So actually my followup is, Yolanda having moved from the pre-reciprocity option, having to do state by state, how do you think that's affected your ability to do your work for compliance? Did you gain anything from that? What have you brought from that experience now into the ability to have state institutional compliance through reciprocity?

Yolanda Cunning...: I am glad I went through it. I know that sounds crazy because we had to go through so many states. When I first came, I actually had to backtrack through a lot of states that they thought we were authorized in and we were not. Long story short, it took me through the path so I'm glad I went through that because now I am familiar with the varying levels that each state, the departments that you would have to communicate with within each state or territory. And I am glad there was a different reciprocity, even though I have the authorization in the background, I think if we were to lose it, which I hope we do not, I would be able to step back into that.

But it's also helped to strengthen me because whenever I'm going through the manual, I see a lot of the correlations and I know the manual has gotten better, but communicating with the states with the various boards, that's something that I actually found was truly amazing. A lot of the licensing boards are familiar with reciprocity. So when you have a communication with them, a dialogue, it's completely different than if you were not participating in it. So it's just that background only served to strengthen me forward. If that makes sense.

Cheryl Dowd: No, absolutely. I appreciate that you explained it that way because it is interesting to talk to folks, as I think you've been at some of our workshops where we've said, "Okay, raise your hand if you did this work prior to reciprocity." And fewer and fewer participants are able to say that. And what we find is, those of us that did this work pre-reciprocity also understand now how we need to have those interactions in the states. Whether it's for secretary of state, as you explained, or with state licensing boards, because there are a lot of state agencies, not just the higher ed agency for which reciprocity provides us assistance. So I echo that because I think that really does help strengthen your compliance work ethic in mind.

So I remember the great work you did when you came into Case Western Reserve, I won't just call it Case Western, because I know it was a challenge and Dan, sorry to take over here, but just a little plug here, we in Ohio really tried to

stick together as a unit to try to make sure that we were all helping each other to understand compliance requirements, because we all did have those ideas sometimes incorrectly that we were approved in states and we didn't really understand what approved versus exempt versus no oversight. We had to get all of those distinctions understood back in the day. So, makes sense.

Yolanda Cunning...: Yes, I am so glad I went through it and just I have never served as an official mentor, but I've had a few people ask me and those who are not in reciprocity, I'm glad I have been able to explain it to them and to help them through that because, for whatever reasons their schools cannot or perhaps do not want to, at this time go through reciprocity. So it's good to be able to just serve as a resource for those. And I remember Cheryl, you were one of the first people I met in Columbus.

Cheryl Dowd: Well, we had some good meetings back then, didn't we? And we still do. We still have those state meetings in Ohio and I'm glad that I still get invited.

Yolanda Cunning...: Me too.

Dan Silverman: Actually Yolanda, that brings up an interesting point. Would you mind expanding on that a little bit in terms of how you've been approached for mentorship and guidance? And you don't have to name names or anything, but this is always so interesting to me and Cheryl because we're always talking about how our network succeeds because of the... Succeeds or doesn't succeed based on what the members do talking to each other, not so much what we say at our level. And so can you talk a little bit more about that?

Yolanda Cunning...: Oh, certainly. I have been approached via email, but also mostly in person at our conferences or meetings. And that's always great because someone will walk up and I have this legendary thing in my head where I think I'm completely anonymous and no one knows me, but it was good to have someone walk up, even if they're not new, they may have been in it as long as I have or slightly less, but just having that dialogue and somehow it would turn into, "Would you mind if we can email or talk about this later after the meeting?" And that would turn into over the phone.

I remember once I was working very late at work and I received a call from someone in another time zone. I was glad I was there because I was able to talk them off the roof, which did help. They actually, I won't mention the school because I don't want to give away, they're a wonderful person, but they happened to be in a room in a conference room so I was their resource person. And I could hear when we were having our conversation, I could feel that the people they were in the room with suddenly felt more confidence in them. And that made me happy.

- Dan Silverman: That's a great story. My last question for you, just to stick... And Cheryl to backtrack for a moment, there's no such thing as a co-host taking over. It's on the same team.
- Cheryl Dowd: I just didn't want to... The flow was going so well. I didn't want to interrupt the flow.
- Dan Silverman: Well, my last question was going to be an Ohio one, so Cheryl, you feel free to answer this about Dayton, but I'll ask Yolanda first. What is a surprising fact about Cleveland?
- Yolanda Cunning...: Okay. First of all, disclaimer, you're talking to someone who is not a Clevelander. I moved here. So-
- Cheryl Dowd: I'm not a Dayton person either, so I totally get you there.
- Yolanda Cunning...: Totally not from Ohio, but surprising, the museums I love. University circle. I have to plug that because the university, Case Western Reserve University is located within University Circle and it's huge, Cheryl knows this. And the Case Western Reserve is big, University Circle is one square mile. We basically are University Circle, but just the wealth of museums that people have. I had no idea existed there, Severance Hall, just everything that's there. So that's something, whenever you hear about Cleveland, you never hear about the museums and the galleries that are part of that.
- Dan Silverman: Richmond, where I live, Richmond, Virginia also has phenomenal museums and just like that, nobody ever talks about them.
- Yolanda Cunning...: Exactly.
- Dan Silverman: Cheryl, what about you? Dayton?
- Cheryl Dowd: Oh gosh. Dayton. What I love about Dayton is I think it's a great place to raise a family. For me, the fact that it is a smaller community, having grown up in the Washington DC area and lived in the New York City area and then lived in... Well, living in Canada was a whole different experience that I loved. But anyway, being back in the States, I do like a smaller community for raising my kids. I think that's been really beneficial. I found Northern Virginia, although there's lovely things about Northern Virginia, I just found that the density of the population is really difficult to be able to maneuver when you're trying to get four kids to be able to do all the things that they want to do. So very happy to be here in Dayton and put all my kids through high school here. So that was great.
- Dan Silverman: All right, I'll take that. It wasn't quite a surprising fact, but that's okay.
- Cheryl Dowd: No, it's not surprising.

Dan Silverman: Maybe it's surprising that it was so fun to live there. So Yolanda, is there anything else you were expecting to be asked or like to get off your chest or any other thing we missed?

Yolanda Cunning...: No, actually I did want to say though, I don't know if I said it earlier, but I thank you for this. This feels wonderful. Just even being invited to chat. And I hope whoever listens to it, if you do know me, I'm saying hello to you when you finally listen to it.

Cheryl Dowd: That's great.

Dan Silverman: Yeah. That's great. Yeah. We're really grateful to have you. So we're going to now move on to our new segment out of left field for those who didn't listen last time, this is a new segment where I take something that I've found outside of standard higher ed regulatory resources, but try to tie it in to something that we talk about in this world. So once again, I am choosing a children's book, just reading a lot of children's books these days and finding them to be quite interesting or horrible. There's a lot of really bad ones, but there are some also really wonderful ones. And the one today that I want to talk about a little bit is called Annie and The Wild Animals by Jan [inaudible 00:20:07]. And I will not give away any spoilers, but the crux of the story is this.

Annie is a young girl living, certainly seeming to be alone, perhaps abandoned in a cabin in the middle of the woods and it's very snowy there. And she has a cat who seems to be her sole companion. Again, I do not know the municipality of this cabin, but there were no parents seeming to be anywhere. Her cat runs away and this is very distressing for Annie because it is her only friend. So she tries to get another animal companion and her method for doing this is she cooks corn cakes and leaves them out at the edge of the woods to see which animals come out. The first night a moose comes out, then a bobcat, a parade of animals come forcing her to have a few problems. One of them is cooking more and more corn cakes, some questionable behavior of the animals, some questionable learning that she gets about the nature of animal care, wild animals.

And what this brings up... It all turns out great in the end, again, I won't spoil how it turns out so don't worry about Annie. It turns out great for her. But what this book made me think about was scale. We've been talking so much about scale and higher education, really for years in the online education world, about how big can a class be? How small? What are the trade offs? We're seeing institutions that chose not to engage in those debates as much when they were more face to face, but who had to do a quick pivot to [inaudible 00:21:44] the pandemic and are continuing to wrestle with those questions into the summer, into the fall. So if you want to look at another way of looking at scale, I highly recommend Annie and The Wild Animals by Jan Brett. Okay. Now-

Cheryl Dowd: Wow. That was interesting.

- Yolanda Cunning...: Very.
- Dan Silverman: Yep. Yep. Yep. So we're now going to move on to Cheryl on musicals, everybody's favorite segment. And I've been told that Yolanda is also a musicals fan, although she doesn't follow the new releases. So we're going to get her involved too. It's always good, the more people are interested in them. But Cheryl, the first thing that everyone's going to want to know, what do you think about the Hamilton movie version?
- Cheryl Dowd: Well, those of you that received the WCET email blasts on Friday, I did a review of Hamilton as offered by the Disney+ streaming channel. It is the version that was on Broadway and was actually part of the national tour as well as they had some residencies in Chicago and Los Angeles. And I believe in, I know in the West End and also in Toronto. Anyway, I saw it in Chicago. So I was very pleased to see it live. And then I thought it was great to be able to see it on Disney+. I thought that, I don't know if anyone's listened to any of the, how it was created, but what they did was they filmed two... So I understand it correctly, they filmed two live versions, but then spent a day trying to get some closeups. So that's why you're able to see some of those really great closeups of some of the actors as they were going through some of the dramatic portions.
- But I think very highly of the musical. I think it brings a lot of conversation about history, maybe to audiences that wouldn't have otherwise pursued this history or had these conversations. So I think it's very timely and I appreciate how Lin Manuel Miranda viewed the Ron Chernow book and then was able to adapt it for new audience. So two thumbs up.
- Dan Silverman: Is there an older musical that you've been returning to the filming of during this time? When you're not able to go to live shows?
- Cheryl Dowd: Oh, you're saying what musicals I go back and watch? Well, of course there are several movie musicals and up at the top of my list is always Singing In The Rain. So that's my go-to when I need a lift. I like things with tap dancing.
- Yolanda Cunning...: I actually love Singing In The Rain, but I also love Mary Poppins.
- Cheryl Dowd: Ah, me too.
- Yolanda Cunning...: That's one of my go-tos. And Phantom of the Opera, I have been known to sing that a lot. A lot of the songs from it, I actually have it on DVD. Cats is another one. That's something that I love and I sing Memories. May you never hear it, anyone from SAN. But I love that. And Pippin, I have been watching Pippin. Yeah. And that's my lifelong theme song is Corner of the Sky.
- Cheryl Dowd: Have you found a version that you can watch online?

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Yolanda Cunning...: I am still looking. I found... What I do go to, and I really shouldn't say this, but my nephew actually starred as Pippin. It was his final high school musical.

Cheryl Dowd: Oh, very nice.

Yolanda Cunning...: Yeah. And actually I filmed the whole thing, I was sitting next to my brother and I managed to film it and I realized I was singing with him while he was singing it.

Cheryl Dowd: And hopefully nobody from MTI is listening to this, that you have recorded that.

Yolanda Cunning...: I'm very sorry. But it was a great experience, so yeah. That's my go-to.

Cheryl Dowd: It was funny. I was talking to some parents, those of you that know me know that my daughter does this work. And so I was talking about how I have nothing from her high school shows recorded to be able to have for posterity. And one parent said, "Oh, well, you know what? We sort of maybe recorded a little bit of Anything Goes her senior year." I was like, "Well, wait a minute. I want to see that. But don't tell anybody." And I may or may have heard of bootleg Hamilton videos prior to the release on Disney+. But I may or may not heard of that.

Yolanda Cunning...: I may or may not have heard that also. I can neither confirm nor deny.

Cheryl Dowd: Exactly. Exactly.

Dan Silverman: I am a mandatory reporter for all copyright violations.

Cheryl Dowd: There you go.

Dan Silverman: So you guys are in trouble. Well, I think that's about all we've got in us for today, but thank you all for listening. Yolanda, thank you so much for coming. And we will-

Cheryl Dowd: Yes. Thank you Yolanda. It was really special to have you, one of my first compliance buddies, so really appreciate that.

Yolanda Cunning...: Well, thank you. This was such a treat.

Dan Silverman: Wonderful. We will talk to you all soon.

Cheryl Dowd: Thanks Dan.