Accessibility Notes for the Faculty Senate

Last fall a small, ad-hoc committee of faculty was created to look at and address accessibility and faculty concerns about academic freedom and available resources.

## Faculty Senate Accessible Resources Committee

**Members:** Mara Alagic, Whitney Bailey, George Dehner, Nils Hakansson, Laura Prahm, Jeff Pulaski, Linnea Glenmaye, John Jones

The committee met monthly over the course of the year to discuss a faculty position on accessibility in textbooks and publisher resources, as well as other topics related to accessible texts and promoting accessible instruction.

The committee was an exceptionally useful resource for the accessibility effort, and provided valuable input on several projects.

At this point we have three things to report to the Faculty Senate:

1. Accessible Textbooks and resources statement
2. Data Gathering on the accessibility of textbooks
3. Accessibility self-evaluation check-list.

### Faculty Senate Statement on Accessibility

The committee worked over several meetings, with several drafts, and has produced this statement that we would like to be ratified and adopted by the full faculty senate. (Attached as a separate Sheet)

### Data Gathering on the accessibility of textbooks

The committee talked through a wide variety of options and methods for gathering data on the accessibility of textbooks (and associated resources) being used in classes.

After several false starts and a lot of discussion, we have established a plan that will engage the university in the collection of that data when books are adopted for classes. This will result in the smallest possible impact on instructional staff, depending upon how individual departments adopt textbooks and will allow us to gather the necessary data institution-wide.

This does require work with the company that provides the book adoption and inventory system – the bookstore is working with them at the moment, and we will come back to share the results of that effort when the time comes.

### Accessibility Self-Evaluation Checklist

At this time, outside of WSU Tech, there is no plan or process for auditing the accessibility of our courses. Individual faculty may wish to evaluate their own course.

Before fall 2018 we will produce and make available a rubric for a self-assessment that will allow instructors to take a guided look at their own courses.

## Requested Actions from Faculty Senate

We request that the Faculty Senate take these items under consideration:

1. Please review and endorse the Faculty Statement on Accessibility
2. Please consider the creation of a permanent subcommittee on accessibility, or adding accessibility to the portfolio of the Diversity Committee that is under consideration.

# Accessibility progress across campus

A lot of work has been done, but if you’re not on the accessibility committee you probably have not heard about much of it. (The AC now has 4 active faculty on it, and more are welcome)

## Completed or in flight:

* Formed an Accessibility Committee – Remediation first, then addressing the agreement
* Appoint a Coordinator (Originally Deltha Colvin, now Molly Gordon)
* Hire an Adaptive Technology Specialist (Kent Willis)
* Hire an Educational Accessibility Technician (Michael Cole)
* Writing policies (two new policies and clarifications to one more)
* New University Website (will land in Summer of 2018)
* New Training for all staff, and additional, in-depth training for instructional staff
* Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) Audit
* Remediation plans for the EIT audit items
* Blackboard Ally in pilot, will be live for all Blackboard Classes for the Summer
* Developed standards for F2F instruction
* Working with Faculty Senate on Textbooks and publisher resources
* Making Physical Spaces accessible – Pizza Hut, RSC, Menus and so on
* Developing resources and skills to share with campus

# Faculty Senate Statement on Accessibility (Proposed)

The Faculty at Wichita State University are committed to providing the highest quality instruction for all students. As a part of that commitment, we make continual efforts to seek new information and methods to teach in our subject areas.

Instructional content at WSU is the responsibility of the faculty teaching each individual course; the accessibility of that content is also the responsibility of that faculty, and as we do many other critical issues, we will take accessibility into account as we consider textbooks, resources, and tools for our classes. Accessibility is not the only consideration when choosing a text, but we understand its importance to our students, and we are committed to making accessible choices when they are available and the choice does not have a negative impact on the quality of the course in other ways.

We will discuss the need for accessibility with publishers when we have the opportunity.

We will learn what we can about accessible instruction – both in general as it is being made available by the university, and from other leaders in our fields of study.

Drafted by the Faculty Senate Accessibility Resources Committee.

George Dehner, Nils Hakansson, Mara Alagic, Jeff Pulaski, Linnea Glenmaye, Laura Prahm, Whitney Bailey, John Jones

# Summary of the WSU/NFB Resolution Agreement

On July 29, 2016, Wichita State entered into an agreement with the National Federation of the Blind. In this document, the university agreed to the following things:

* Hire or designate an Accessibility Coordinator and an Accessible Technology Specialist.
* Adopt or revise and disseminate policies regarding:
  + discrimination
  + procurement and implementation of accessible technologies
  + timely accommodation whether anticipated or not
  + affordance of opportunity for blind students
  + the role of Disability Services as a liaison with the university community
  + the role of Disability Services as the main point of contact for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues for students
  + developing a grievance process for vision related disability issues
* Train students on WSU services, the ADA, and other topics, and train instructional staff these issues as well as on common methods used to produce accessible materials. WSU also agreed to make and keep records of all attendees to these trainings.
* Audit all student-facing electronic and information technologies (EIT) including any student-facing websites, LMS’s and all technology used, or provided for use by, students on the WSU campus. Within three years of the audit, make all inaccessible EIT accessible to the blind.
* By July 29, 2020 all instructional materials, co-curricular materials, and electronic and information technologies used in connection with any WSU course offering as well as all online courses will be accessible to blind individuals at the same time they are available to any other student enrolled in that program.
* Provide print textbooks in the alternate accessible format requested by a blind student, including Braille and tactile graphics, in a timely manner.
* Ensure that WSU’s public website is accessible to blind users in accordance with WCAG 2.0 level AA standards.

It is important to note that the term “blind” is defined broadly as including, “all persons who have a vision-related disability that requires the use of alternative techniques or assistive technology to access visual information.” “Accessible” is defined as, “blind individuals are able to independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services within the same timeframe as non-blind individuals, with substantially equivalent ease of use.” “Accessibility standards” and “accessibility requirements and norms” are specifically defined to include at least ten categories of standards, and plus the ADA and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act.