Making Our Campus Welcoming and Accessible to Faculty with Disabilities

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AccessADVANCE objectives

- **For Institutions & Organizations**
  Implement systemic changes within STEM departments & BP activities so that women with disabilities in academic positions are welcome & fully included & can achieve success.

- **For the Entire Community**
  Developing resources regarding institutional practices to increase the successful participation of women with disabilities in academic STEM careers.

  - uw.edu/doit/programs/advance
Today’s topics

- Experiences of women with disabilities in STEM
- An introduction to disability and the social model of disability
- Access approaches: Accommodations and universal design
- Practical strategies for disability inclusion
- Questions & Answers
Discussion

What access issues have you seen people with disabilities experience in STEM education and careers?
Examples of access issues for faculty with disabilities

- Disability-related issues that impact productivity
- Inaccessible online tools related to HR & benefits, used for meetings & collaboration
- Uncaptioned videos
- Inaccessible grant portals, journal articles & review processes
- Concerns in requesting accommodations
- Disability-related issues related to scheduling courses
- Lack of mentors with disabilities
In an inclusive environment everyone

- who meets requirements, **with or without accommodations**, is encouraged to participate
- feels welcome
- is fully engaged in accessible & inclusive environments & activities
What is the legal basis for access?

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 & its 2008 Amendments
- State & local laws
Consider **ability** on a continuum

- understand English, social norms
- see
- hear
- walk
- read print
- write with pen or pencil
- communicate verbally
- tune out distraction
- learn
- manage physical/mental health
One-minute history of the evolution of responses to human differences

- Eliminate, exclude, segregate
- Cure, rehabilitate, accommodate
- Social justice: Inclusion & universal design
• Most disabilities are not obvious to others
• Most people with disabilities do not report them
• Campus disability services primarily offer accommodations to individuals after an inaccessibility is discovered
Accommodation-focused approach to access

Adjust an existing product or environment for a specific person:

- creating accessible documents
- captioning videos
- sign language interpreters
AccessADVANCE practices embrace

- the social model of disability,
- social justice education,
- disability as a diversity issue,
- intersectionality, &
- universal design (UD)
Universal design (UD) =

“the design of products & environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

The Center for Universal Design
www.design.ncsu.edu/cud
3 characteristics of UD practices
Scope: Applications of UD

Applications of Universal Design in Education

- Instruction
  - Class climate
  - Interaction
  - Physical environments/products
  - Delivery methods
  - Information resources/technology
  - Feedback
  - Assessment
  - Accommodation

- Services
  - Planning, policies, and evaluation
  - Physical environments/products
  - Staff
  - Information resources/technology
  - Events

- Information Technology
  - Procurement/development policies
  - Physical environments/products
  - Information
  - Input/control
  - Output
  - Manipulations
  - Safety
  - Compatibility with assistive technology

- Physical Spaces
  - Planning, policies, and evaluation
  - Appearance
  - Entrances/routes of travel
  - Fixtures/furniture
  - Information resources/technology
  - Safety
  - Accommodation
3 sets of principles underpin UDHE guidance for all aspects of education

- 7 Universal Design
  - 3 Universal Design for Learning
  - 4 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
In a nutshell,

1. Provide multiple ways for participants to learn, demonstrate what they have learned, & engage.
2. Ensure all technologies, facilities, services, resources, & strategies are accessible to individuals with a wide variety of disabilities.
We need a paradigm shift

- from reactive to proactive design of products & environments
- from design for the “average” to design for everyone

- Once upon a time we already did it…
A paradigm shift in sidewalk design

- The Daily, UW, 1970

How could we apply this approach to aspects of the workplace that involve technology?
UD provides inclusive access
UD of technology

- builds in accessibility features
- ensures compatibility with assistive technology
Beneficiaries of captions on videos

People who:

- are unable to hear the audio
- are English learners
- are in a noisy or noiseless location
- have slow Internet connections
- want to know the spelling of words
- need to find content quickly
As an attitude, a framework, a goal, & a process, UD:

- Values diversity, equity, & inclusion
- Promotes best practices & does not lower standards
- Is proactive & can be implemented incrementally
- Benefits everyone
- Minimizes the need for accommodations
Discussion

What practices do you already engage in that encourage the participation of people with disabilities?
Questions?
When it comes to accessibility....

What are some practical steps you can take?
Think about accessible meetings and events
Preparation

- Develop and share accessibility guidelines with presenters
- Make it clear how to request accommodations
  - May differ online and in-person
- Know how to respond to requests
  - Accessible presentations
  - Sign language, captioning
  - Automatic captioning tools
Event spaces in person

- Wheelchair accessible space
- Adequately well lit
- Microphones for presenters and for questions
  - Use the microphones without exception!
- Accommodate food restrictions
  - Well labeled buffets
Event space online

- Not all meeting software is accessible
- Captioning
- Become familiar with accessibility features of your software
- Share relevant accessibility information with participants
Presentation materials

• Use a high contrast color scheme
• Large fonts
• Keep text brief and graphics simple.
• Use more than color coding to communicate information
• Use captioned videos
Presentation materials (cont’d)

- Prepare & share accessible versions of your agenda & any presentation materials

- Provide materials to interpreters or captioners ahead of time
Delivery

- Incorporate a variety of instructional methods
  - Polls, breakout discussions, chat
- Speak all content on slides
- Verbally describe images and graphics
- Pause after changing the slide
- Use understandable terms
Follow up

- Follow up with URLs, resources, & action items
- Gather feedback about accessibility
- Make adjustments to future meetings
Evaluation

1. Do you identify as having a disability or other chronic condition?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Prefer not to disclose

2. How would you describe your disability or chronic condition?
   a. Attention deficit
   b. Autism
   c. Blind or low vision
   d. Deaf or hard of hearing
   e. Health-related disability
   f. Learning disability
   g. Mental health condition
   h. Mobility-related disability
   i. Speech-related disability
   j. Other (please specify)

Discussion

What steps can you take to make your department more accessible, welcoming, and inclusive of people with disabilities?
Resources

Visit uw.edu/doit for a variety of practical resources related to:

- UD of instruction, presentations, services, …
- Accessible technology
- Accessibility in STEM education

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