

Southwestern Community College

Web and Electronic Resources Accessibility Plan

Purpose

The World Wide Web is a major, if not a primary, source of information for many people. Acknowledging that Southwestern Community College (SCC) is engaged in development of Web-based resources for its constituencies, Southwestern Community College (SCC) is committed to ensuring that students, faculty, staff and community members can access its communication and instruction. To this end, the college is formalizing its ongoing plan to ensure that its Web and Electronic Resources are developed with accessibility in mind.

The Web and Electronic Resources Accessibility committee proposes the following plan for assisting SCC Faculty and Staff to address Web Accessibility as a reasonable addition to its mission. Full compliance is a lofty goal, and the changing nature of technology, as well as the workload of SCC faculty and staff make this less than achievable. As an alternative, the committee suggests reasonable continuous action toward ensuring compliance on a consistent basis, and developing practices to allow for plausible action should a need for unplanned accommodations develop. Students who have an ESP (Educational Support Plan) on file will be contacted periodically throughout the term to ensure accessibility of materials. Should a need be identified through this process which could be fulfilled through a reasonable accommodation, these accommodations will be put into place within a reasonable time frame (two to four weeks). Should no reasonable accommodation exist, an alternative “soft landing” will be implemented by the college. It is our belief that by accomplishing the tasks outlined, the college will succeed in ensuring consistent compliance in all publicly accessible Web materials, and will be well positioned to meet the same standards as requested in its educational offerings.

This plan focuses on ensuring that faculty and staff participate in training on the Principles of Universal Design, Web Accessibility Guidelines (Specifically WCAG 2.0), and associated laws and requirements (as applicable). This training will result in a concerted effort of faculty and staff to undertake the actions prescribed. In addition, faculty and staff will provide input into the plan through participation in Faculty Senate, E-learning and Web and Electronic Resource Accessibility Committees, and all campus surveys. This plan will be monitored and updated, as necessary, annually by the SCC President’s Cabinet, Instructional and Student Services Administrators and the Web and Electronic Resources Accessibility Committee.

The college chose, (in conjunction with the NCCCS, North Carolina Community College System), the WCAG 2.0 standards as a benchmark of compliance. The WCAG 2.0 standards are founded in four main principles, Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robustness. The website (<https://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag.php>) provides a detailed overview of these principles and guidelines.

Scope

This plan encompasses all Web-based information and services, including (but not limited to) websites, instructional materials, and online services that are developed, hosted or maintained by the college. This plan does not encompass unauthorized Web pages published by students or employees.

Current State of Web Accessibility at SCC

In its recent history, many SCC faculty and staff have received training on Web Accessibility through attendance at conferences, state level meetings and webinars.

As a result of this training and discussion among the attendees, the Instructional and Student Services Administrators requested the formation of the Web and Electronic Resources Accessibility Committee in the fall of 2015. Committee members were selected from departments across campus including Public Information, Information Technology, Student Services (encompassing among others Disability Services), Learning Support (encompassing among others Professional Development, E-Learning and the Library), Continuing Education and Instructional Faculty. This group spent its first year and a half reviewing research, internal data and best practices in preparation of developing a plan. This plan would serve the needs of its students, faculty and staff while balancing activity throughout the campus and ensuring, whenever possible, that any undue burden will not hinder the efforts to reach compliance.

Data collected and processes implemented during this initial timeframe, as well as a bibliography of the literature reviewed, are contained in Appendix A.

5 Year Plan (2017-2022)

Objectives to be completed by May 2018:	Assessment
<p>Professional Development and Training Activities Host a Professional Development Day event (with required participation of all full-time faculty and staff, and requested participation of all part-time faculty and staff) including discussion of the Web Accessibility Plan, WCAG 2.0 and resources available for students.</p> <p>Periodically host ADA accommodation training opportunities to SCC faculty and staff concerning testing processes, development of an ESP, and universal design of content.</p> <p>Implement required WCAG 2.0 training for all staff and faculty that update Web pages.</p>	<p>Participation in accessibility training</p>
<p>Evaluation Activities Review all current 3rd-party platforms currently in use by Student Services, Public Relations, and campus technology to determine accessibility and, whenever possible, document using a VPAT (Voluntary Product Accessibility Template). Should VPATs be unavailable, the end user and Disability Services will be notified. Considerations of necessity will be made and focus will move to making the functionality available through alternate methods/mediums.</p> <p>Using a small random sample of fully online courses, test processes to ensure course materials can be made accessible within established reasonable time frames.</p> <p>Review a minimum of 75% of the support materials developed in Learning Support and Disability Services to ensure WCAG 2.0 standards are met.</p> <p>Review a minimum of 25% (approximately 7500) of SCC Web pages to ensure WCAG 2.0 guidelines are met, or if alternative placement is warranted.</p> <p>Ensure all editors who review and maintain Web pages on the college website have adequate editing permissions.</p> <p>Implement Drupal processes to ensure that updates can be reviewed for compliance with WCAG 2.0 standards, prior to publication.</p> <p>Implement central repositories to store accessibility documentation.</p>	<p>Accomplishment of specific tasks</p>
<p>Resources Required Budget for contracting services to add closed-captioning to videos or a transcript, on an as-needed basis. (Initially a reserve of \$1,000)</p> <p>Resources Required Upgrade part-time Public Relations Assistant to a full-time position including duties of both Public Relations Assistant and Webmaster.</p>	<p>Allocation of Budget / Resources</p>

Objectives to be completed by May 2019:	Assessment Tools
<p>Professional Development and Training Activities Continue existing training efforts, plus:</p> <p>Host in-person or online trainings, and one-on-one consultations with Learning Support, IT and Disability Service staff to engage faculty and staff in implementing universal design principles with the goal of making instructional documents and multimedia accessible.</p> <p>Direct new faculty to complete Web Accessibility Module during new faculty orientation.</p>	<p>Participation in continuing Accessibility training (in at least one form)</p>
<p>Evaluation Activities Establish processes to conduct (and document) annual audits of electronic and 3rd-party platforms, ensuring the continued compliance of ADA accessibility.</p> <p>Disability Services Web page will include a comprehensive list of adaptive technology available to SCC students.</p> <p>Make available, through the SCC bookstore, the purchase (accommodation) of E-books for qualified, eligible students.</p> <p>Enlist ADA-eligible students to conduct an audit of Student Services material, verifying accessibility.</p> <p>Establish processes to ensure that 3rd-party instructional tools are reviewed for ADA compliance.</p> <p>Update, with input from the E-Learning committee, the Course Readiness Review checklist to include updated accessibility standards (WCAG 2.0).</p> <p>Begin random sampling of course materials uploaded to the Learning Management System (Blackboard) to set benchmark.</p> <p>Evaluate requests for accommodations from the front-facing website and implement a resolution tracking process to ensure any ADA requests are handled as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Review an additional 25% (approximately 7500) of SCC Web pages, to ensure WCAG 2 guidelines are met, or if alternative placement is warranted.</p> <p>Evaluate existing closed-captioning on all videos published on the SCC website, to ensure auto-captioning is sufficient.</p> <p>Evaluation Activities Develop plans for an alternative placement for this information (such as an Intranet).</p>	<p>Accomplishment of specific tasks</p> <p>Adoption of Universal Design for Learning (Survey)</p> <p>Random sampling of course materials uploaded to the Learning Management System (Blackboard)</p>

Objectives to be completed by May 2020:	Assessment
<p>Professional Development and Training Activities Continue existing training efforts, plus:</p> <p>Conduct awareness sessions for faculty and students surrounding resources available to assist in meeting learning need requirements.</p> <p>Provide incentives for faculty mentors to assist with ensuring course documents and multimedia are WCAG 2.0 compliant.</p>	<p>Participation in continuing Accessibility training (in at least one form)</p> <p>Number of two faculty and student awareness sessions conducted</p> <p>Number of Web accessibility mentors established on campus</p>
<p>Evaluation Activities Implement an updated Course Readiness Review process for all online courses including WCAG standards (adopted by the E-Learning Committee).</p> <p>Implement processes to ensure that 3rd-party instructional tools are reviewed for ADA compliance.</p> <p>Implement plans for an alternative placement of non-marketing information pages (such as an Intranet) in conjunction with the IT, Learning Support, Student Services and Instructional areas (5 year goal).</p> <p>Review an additional 25% (approximately 7500) of SCC Web pages, to ensure WCAG 2.0 guidelines are met, or if alternative placement is warranted.</p>	<p>Accomplishment of specific tasks</p> <p>Results of Annual Audits (VPATs, Student Audits, Accessibility Requests for front facing websites, Closed-captioning of videos on SCC Web page)</p> <p>Adoption of Universal Design for Learning (Survey)</p> <p>Course Readiness Review Results</p> <p>Random sampling of course materials uploaded to the Learning Management System (Blackboard)</p>
<p>Resources Required Budget to fund Faculty Mentor Program</p>	<p>Allocation of Budget / Resources</p>

Objectives to be completed by May 2021:	Assessment
<p>Professional Development and Training Activities Continue existing training efforts.</p>	<p>Participation in continuing Accessibility training (in at least one form)</p> <p>Number of faculty and student awareness sessions are conducted.</p> <p>Number of Web Accessibility Mentors are active on campus.</p>
<p>Evaluation Activities Develop strategies to ensure continual improvement in the level of instructional materials that meet WCAG 2.0 standards based on data collected through random sampling of course materials uploaded to the Learning Management System (Blackboard).</p> <p>Implement plans for an alternative placement of non-marketing information pages (such as an Intranet) in conjunction with the IT, Learning Support, Student Services and Instructional areas (5 year goal).</p> <p>Review the remaining 25% (approximately 7500) of SCC Web pages, to ensure WCAG 2.0 guidelines are met, or if alternative placement is warranted.</p>	<p>Accomplishment of specific tasks</p> <p>Results of Annual Audits (VPATs, Student Audits, Accessibility Requests for front facing websites, Closed-captioning of videos on SCC Web page)</p> <p>Adoption of Universal Design for Learning (Survey)</p> <p>Course Readiness Review Results</p> <p>Random sampling of course materials uploaded to the Learning Management System (Blackboard)</p>

Objectives to be completed by May 2022:	Assessment
<p>Professional Development and Training Activities Continue existing training efforts.</p>	<p>Participation in continuing Accessibility training (in at least one form)</p> <p>Number of faculty and student awareness sessions are conducted.</p> <p>Number of Web Accessibility Mentors are active on campus.</p>
<p>Evaluation Activities Implement strategies to ensure continual improvement in the level of instructional materials that meet WCAG 2.0 standards based on data collected through random sampling of course materials uploaded to the Learning Management System (Blackboard).</p> <p>Implement plans for an alternative placement of non-marketing information pages (such as an Intranet) in conjunction with the IT, Learning Support, Student Services and Instructional areas (5 year goal).</p> <p>Begin random sampling process to ensure SCC Web pages comply with WCAG 2.0 standards.</p>	<p>Accomplishment of specific tasks</p> <p>Results of Annual Audits (VPATs, Student Audits, Accessibility Requests for front-facing websites, Closed-captioning of videos on SCC Web page, Web page Compliance)</p> <p>Adoption of Universal Design for Learning (Survey)</p> <p>Course Readiness Review Results</p> <p>Random sampling of course materials uploaded to the Learning Management System (Blackboard)</p>

Appendix A:

Data Collected and Processes Implemented:

- Library Print Materials – It has been determined that large print and braille alternatives are often available within the system. Some e-resources are available from publishers, with possible costs. The budget allocated appears ample to cover this cost if incurred.
- All DVD commercially-produced material in the Library collection has been checked for closed-captioning and labelled appropriately. A few items that do not have heavy circulation are not currently closed-captioned, however materials can be purchased on an as-needed basis.
- The Library Databases, EBooks and catalog (CCLINC) have been deemed to be in compliance and continued efforts to maintain compliance has been assured by the NCCCS system.
- The college maintains and publishes data on the accessibility of all known instructional tools in use. VPAT or other accessibility information is made available to students and faculty. Research has determined that some tools either do not have this information available or are non-compliant.
- SCC offered a Professional Development training - 5 Things You May Not Know About Web Accessibility - which was attended by six faculty members on October 13, 2016.
- An institutional license for Read/Write Gold has been purchased.
- A review of Student Services 3rd-party platforms for ADA compliance compatibility was conducted for Accuplacer, Career Coach, and TEAS. If a compliance gap exists, determine if it can be corrected with SCC adaptive technology tools - Zoom Text, Read/Write Gold.
- The IT and Public Information office utilized the Web Aim WAVE tools to assess pages on the SCC website. It became quickly apparent that the process of ensuring continued compliance with Web Accessibility warranted dedicated attention, and potentially some specialized training. In addition, this training will be essential for faculty and staff who update program and department Web pages. Finally, a process to ensure that trained eyes review updates prior to publication is required.
- In the interim, a contact link has been added to all pages to enable anyone who is having difficulty accessing the college's Web pages to have immediate access to support. To date, the college has received no requests for such support, however the link will remain in effect in perpetuity.
- A random sample of online courses was taken to develop a bench line for video content that may require captioning on an as-needed basis. (Number of courses = 49, Average = 23.44 minutes, Standard Deviation = 50.39)
- Experiments we conducted to determine the effectiveness of in-house closed-captioning show that currently there is a skills gap in closed-captioning creation, resulting in a low level of effectiveness. In addition, given the frequency of request, outsourcing the process seemed to make the best sense, (cost varies between \$3.00 and \$10.00 per minute).
- 2015- 2016 - Disability training occurred with all academic divisions during the first week back-to-campus activities.

Literature Reviewed:

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