To: CORE Accreditors

From: David Bullock, Technology Manager

RE: Website accessibility for the Graduate School of Education

Date: March 24, 2009

Thank you for your patience and persistence on this matter. The extra time we have spent reviewing our procedures, working with campus entities, and outlining the steps we are taking have been very valuable to us. As a result there is a greater awareness here in the Graduate School of Education and on the Portland State University campus. It was also very exciting to learn that much of what we needed to do was already in place, though we did not all know what the other was doing.

I have outlined the Standards and Indicators below with detailed information about who is monitoring this issue, the steps we are taking (have taken), and what we are doing to achieve and maintain full compliance. I have also included an example of one of the reporting tools that we use so that you can see the type of detail we are able to achieve in our efforts to make our web sites fully accessible. I am pleased to note that changes have already been made, and many of those that remain, though they are fully under the control of the university web master, are in process now. It is exciting to see that our leadership includes two people who have extensive backgrounds in accessibility issues.

Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Sincerely,

David Bullock, Ed.D.
CORE & Accessibility

I. Standards
   A. A.1
      There shall be written statements of the program’s mission and objectives contained in institutional documents (e.g., brochures, websites, catalogs, intern manuals, handbooks). These statements must be in an accessible format and meet national website accessibility standards.

   B. F.2
      The campus... web sites... shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities.

II. Indicators
   A. People in charge of evaluating compliance
      We have three key people who monitor web site accessibility at the university, department and program levels:

         Kristin Boden-MacKay (Webmaster for Portland State University).
         Kristin started her career in 1989 at Lassen College (Susanville, CA) as the Computer Resource Specialist for the Learning Disabilities and Special Needs teams. After two years at Lassen College, Kristin returned to Oregon, working at Lewis & Clark College as an Academic Computing Consultant, during the founding years of pre-public Internet access. After Lewis & Clark, Kristin spent three years at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, as a Research Consultant -- Internet Applications Specialist -- working with Local, Regional and National Education teams on establishing best practices for Internet Access at the school district level. Before coming to PSU she also worked at Nike for eight years.

         Darcy Kramer (Accommodations Coordinator for the Disability Resource Center).
         Darcy holds a Master of Science degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and manages the Disability Resource Center’s (DRC)
Alternatives Format Office, which serves students with print disabilities. She has been designing web pages and writing HTML for 14 years. She has worked closely with students who use screen reading software and learned how to code pages to meet w3.org standards. Darcy also works closely with Polly Livingston, Disability Resource Center Director, who is part of the effort to establish and maintain an accessible web site in addition to all other services on campus. The DRC provides consultation and helps recruit “beta” testers who use screen reading software to provide feedback on proposed changes to web sites.

David Bullock (Manager of Technology for the Graduate School of Education (GSE)).
David has a Master of Science degree in Educational Communications and Technology from Western Oregon University and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from Portland State University. He has had primary responsibility for the Graduate School of Education web site since its inception. David has gained experience related to web site accessibility through conferences and professional organizations like ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education). He has also had support from web-based study guides and faculty in the Special Education Department. He routinely monitors the GSE web site and works with Rob Brown (Technology Consultant and web master for the GSE) to verify compliance and train GSE web support in accessibility issues.

All three of these people are working at the university, school and department level to educate web designers, administrators and web users about these issues. Both Kristen and Darcy have extensive backgrounds working with web site accommodations and people with disabilities. As PSU web master, Kristen encourages web site owners to leverage the tools available at http://uitest.com which includes a great selection of tools addressing accessibility (http://uitest.com/en/analysis/#accessibility). In
addition, Kristen wraps accessibility into our Web Communications training, educating and encouraging our site owners on the quick accessibility win of, at a minimum, leveraging the Image Tool in our new Drupal interface to add/update alt tag data. We note this at every training.

Kristen and David are also members of Advisory Committee on Academic and Information Technologies (ACAIT), the campus committee that advises the Provost about technology needs and issues from a faculty perspective, and develops the university's technology plan. They have been working, along with other faculty, to make this committee aware of the university's responsibility related to web accessibility issues, not only with the web site, but with our course management system. ACAIT, as well as similar departmental groups are working to spread awareness and achieve compliance.

Finally, all three are part of the university’s Web Advisory Council that oversees and advises the web master and university on web site related issues.

B. How do we determine if a program/department web site is accessible?

We have used a variety of tools to assess web site accessibility both at the school and department level, and at the university level. We have also implemented a plan to assess the Graduate School of Education (GSE) and program web sites using an accessibility tool that looks for 508 and WAI compliance (TAW 3.0). This will be done on a quarterly basis, as well as when major editing or content changes are applied. All of our web designers have been instructed in the use of alt. tags for graphics, color issues, and transcripts for audio and video files, as well as other accessibility issues as we uncover them. In addition, an editor reviews all web content for language and consistency issues. We are currently in the
process of standardizing the navigation within all of the GSE web sites to maintain some consistency and make it easier for users to locate information. This process will also be systematized so that it is done on at least an annual basis.

C. **What evaluation tool or procedures do we use?**

We have used three tools to examine accessibility issues on our web sites: Truex Online 2.0, FAE (Functional Accessibility Evaluator), and TAW (Test Accessible Web) 3.0. All of the three identify errors and provide some type of explanation. We have determined, for now, that the TAW 3.0 reports are the most comprehensive and useful of the three, and plan to use this tool on a quarterly basis, as new pages are added, or as major updates are made. In addition, we have shared readings about accessibility issues (e.g., Understanding Accessibility by Robert B. Yonaitis), and have plans for two of our faculty to do a demonstration about issues for the visually impaired, with the people and committees that are charged with assuring that our web sites are accessible.

The university has adopted a new CMS (content management system) called Drupal. This new system gives us greater control over the look and feel of the university web sites, more flexibility in editing, and the opportunity to correct the coding issues that have resulted in non-compliance warnings from TAW 3.0. Kristen has set a goal of addressing these issues at a university level by mid-September 2009. Both Darcy and David will be monitoring the university progress as well as the web sites that fall within their areas of responsibility. We are pleased to report that TAW 3.0 found very few errors within the content directly controlled by the GSE; most of which were alt. tag, PDF and audio/video file issues. We are in the process of correcting these and expect them to be remedied by the end of March 2009. We also acknowledge that the transition from our current CMS to Drupal we may discover new challenges. Our
preliminary scans, however, do not appear to show anything new as a result of this change in system.

D. **Brief demonstration of the tool.**
   I have attached an example of a TAW report to this letter. It is very comprehensive, and contains even more detail than this report shows including an item-by-item analysis of each web page with suggestions for corrections. We are showing improvement over previous reports and working to make corrections with each one that we run.

III. **Summary of our Plan**
   A. Quarterly reviews using TAW 3.0 and/or another tool
   B. Training of web design staff
   C. Presentations to increase awareness of key personnel
   D. Review of GSE web sites on an annual basis for navigation and consistency issues
   E. Content reviewed by an editor for all major revisions and new content