

Executive Board

Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

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May 1, 2024

Darnell Hunt
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Re: Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

Dear Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Hunt,

At the April 25, 2024, meeting of the Executive Board, members reviewed the report of the Accessibility and Instruction working group and the feedback of divisional Academic Senate committees and councils.

Members voted unanimously in favor of a motion to share the following feedback: they expressed appreciation for how the report opened a campus discussion, pointed to how the report findings built upon a series of Senate initiatives, noted that the discussion of the report needs to be placed in a wider context, and recommended constituting a new taskforce to consider the tradeoffs and wider implications of the report.

Members agreed that the issue of accessibility and instruction requires consideration in relation to issues such as faculty rebuilding and renewal and graduate education funding. They noted that the working group resulted from the student sit-in and the fact that the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC, which was then the Center for the Advancement of Teaching) and the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) were not working well individually or together. The working group was an opportunity for the relevant units to think through these issues. Members observed that the working group membership was not a very faculty or student-oriented group.

Now that TLC is in place, members suggested that the creation of a new task force that includes more students and faculty and considers the issues in the context of the [Future of Instruction Report](#), the [Faculty Rebuilding and Renewal Joint Task Force Report](#), and the [Final Report on the Future of Graduate Programs and Graduate Student Support](#). Members observed that this report reframes instruction and flips it to universal design rather than an individual instructor response, which requires more conversations and context because the report appears written in isolation from related issues.

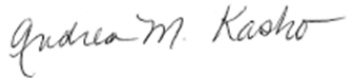
Some members found the report recommendations confusing because they were very focused on access while a lot of the evidence was based on the number of accommodations. In other instances, there was no evidence to support the claims in the report. For example, students may perceive that online learning is good, yet research shows that it is worse for student learning. Members reiterated the goal should be how well the students are learning.

Some members suggested the need for acknowledgement that while it is a goal to accommodate, not everyone or every situation can be reasonably accommodated. They also noted there are related issues such as privacy in the context of classroom recordings due to concerns about intellectual property as well as sensitive discussion topics.

Lastly, members agreed that CAE is under-resourced, which has caused significant problems. CAE needs more resources. Similarly, they questioned whether there would be more resources to support faculty's extra labor in terms of instruction and accessibility.

The Academic Senate appreciates the opportunity to advise on this important report. The Executive Board requests a response that outlines Administration's next steps with regard to the report and the Senate's feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea M. Kasko".

Andrea Kasko
Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

Encl.

Cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Adriana Rosalez, Administrative Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate
Emily Rose, Assistant Provost & Chief of Staff to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
Erin Sanders O'Leary, Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning



DATE: April 4, 2024

TO: Andrea M. Kasko, Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

RE: Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

The Faculty Executive Committee for the Luskin School of Public Affairs expresses strong disagreement with requiring faculty to accommodate by live streaming or providing recorded lectures and providing universal remote options. This infringes on academic freedom, faculty autonomy, and creates an undue and uncompensated burden on their time. There is concern that this will create disincentives for students to come to class and will result in faculty teaching to empty rooms, which greatly diminishes the learning outcomes of all students and especially the students who are live in the room. It is believed that faculty will leave the profession over time in even greater numbers if this becomes the new norm.

Members of this committee also believe that the incentive/optional approach described here certainly is better than any requirement for online accommodation or other course elements. Note that it has already been observed that customizing the student experience in ways outlined in this report requires a large amount of staff time (in addition to uncompensated faculty time), jeopardizing faculty recruitment and retention.

Online courses can be taught as online courses, which is a separate issue and should not interfere with the teaching of regular in person courses.

Overall, there should be a division between fully online and fully in-person classes so that all parties involved are in full agreement from the start.

Thank you for your considerations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "VHerrera".

Veronica Herrera
Associate Professor of Urban Planning and Political Science
Faculty Executive Committee Chair, Luskin School of Public Affairs, UCLA

April 4, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

Re: Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

Dear Chair Kasko,

The Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) reviewed the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report. We recognize the responsibility placed on the group and appreciate its work.

Accessibility is vital to UCLA's mission. A faculty member of CAF said that, while many access problems were standard, he encountered some that baffled him and was very grateful for the Center for Accessible Education's expertise and guidance. The experiences of students and faculty who have used the Center indicate that it is underfunded and needs more personnel. We believe, and very likely the working group agrees, that we cannot ask for additional efforts without adding more disability specialists and more testing accommodations.

The report includes a proposal that we viewed as a wrong step. It suggests that computerized accessibility training be a new criterion for promotion and tenure. The current three criteria have been worked out over decades and have been accepted across the University. A proposal for this fourth one would unnecessarily provoke strong opposition, would not succeed, and would hinder the committee's basic goals.

Many faculty would oppose it on grounds of precedent, asking what will be next.

Also, UCLA's computerized programs often ask the user to assent to propositions they may not believe. Here, apparently, the faculty would be required to endorse Universal Design for Learning or some other specific educational approach. Teaching, unlike cybersecurity or harassment, is our specialty, a criterion in selecting us for our jobs. We welcome new ideas, but endorsing them should not be a condition for promotion.

A premise of the proposal was that many faculty will otherwise not participate in the training. In fact, most would participate without extra inducement because the great majority value these goals at least as highly as cybersecurity or preventing harassment.

We strongly believe the requirement for promotion element should be dropped.

The legal criteria for accessibility adjustments are vague, and necessarily so. What counts as an “undue” burden or as a “fundamental” change in a course? While conflicts are likely to be rare, there should be an appeal mechanism in place beforehand, and appeals should not be settled by a single group. Faculty should have a voice.

An example of a possible disagreement involves the recording of classes. Here there are legal and educational criteria on both sides. Recording can be important for accessibility but it raises problems of protecting the faculty member’s intellectual property rights and, for controversial or personal topics, maintaining an atmosphere where students and the instructor can speak openly. Since many of these rights are held by faculty, in cases where the solution is disputed, they should have a voice.

Members expressed the view that, compared to students faculty are less informed about the options and approaches on accommodations. Some form of closer partnership between the faculty and CAE might help.

The committee focused on current UCLA students. At future meetings it might consider how to recruit more students with disabilities. This would be consistent with our goal of achieving a diverse student body and serving all segments of society.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at barry.oneill@polisci.ucla.edu or our committee analyst Lilia Valdez at lvaldez@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

Barry O’Neill, Chair
Committee on Academic Freedom

cc: Kathy Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Lilia Valdez, Senior Policy Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate
Members of the Committee on Academic Freedom



April 3, 2024

To The Executive Board:

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) of the School of Theater, Film & Television (TFT). At our meeting on February 28, 2022, members of the TFT FEC expressed their appreciation for the report by the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group, while also expressing their hope that future versions of this document and/or any resulting policy decisions might acknowledge the discipline-specific challenges that are faced by many fields in the Arts including Theater performance and Film production, for which alternatives to physically co-present instruction are uniquely compromising to pedagogical value.

Thank you for the opportunity to opine on this important topic,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve F. Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Steve F. Anderson
Chair of the Faculty
School of Theater, Film & Television
sfanders@tft.ucla.edu
424-259-1067

Cc:
Brian Kite, Dean, School of Theater, Film & Television

April 3, 2024

Andrea Kasko, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

Dear Chair Kasko,

At its March 5, 2024, meeting, The Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) reviewed the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report. Member offered the following comments and recommendations.

While the FWC is highly supportive of the goal of improving accessibility for disabled students, the FWC was puzzled by the vague and generic nature of this report. Specifically, the FWC found the memo to be lacking key details about the educational experience for disabled students at UCLA, such as the number of students who need additional accommodations/accessibility, their current challenges with navigating campus life, and the major existing issues with accessibility that need to be resolved for all students at UCLA to thrive. It was unclear whether any students were consulted in preparing this report.

The FWC further notes:

1. Our strong support for CAE. FWC members noted that CAE is an excellent resource, performing an essential service by mediating/deciding disabled students' needs rather than leaving it to individual faculty to decide. By making these decisions, CAE protects both students and faculty from being discriminated against. The FWC strongly supports additional funds being made available to more fully resource CAE, such as hiring additional case managers.
2. Faculty need further clarification about in-person instruction. The report makes vague suggestions that courses should "enhance accessibility" and "invest in multimodalities" without reflecting the reality that not all instruction is lecture-based. For example, lab classes are not mentioned, which often must be done in person, and have substantial "hands on" components. More thought and specifics are required to guide faculty about improving accessibility across the full range of in person instruction at UCLA.

We thank you for the opportunity to opine. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at butlersj@ucla.edu or via the Committee analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,



Samantha Butler, Chair
Faculty Welfare Committee

cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/ Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Renee Rouzan-Kay, Senior Policy Analyst, Faculty Welfare Committee
Members of the Faculty Welfare Committee

UCLA MEMORANDUM

FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
College of Letters and Science

A265 Murphy Hall
Box 951571
Los Angeles, California 90095

To: Darnell Hunt, Executive Vice Chancellor Provost
Monroe Gorden, Jr., Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs

Fr: Efrain Kristal, Interim Chair, College Faculty Executive Committee

Date: April 2, 2024

Re: Response to the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

The College Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report, dated November 1, 2023. The report and its findings were reviewed via email between March 13th and March 30th, 2024. This response consolidates the main ideas shared by our faculty, including the broader context of recent discussions and faculty concerns.

Concurring with the report, the committee recognizes the importance of increasing accessibility for all students at UCLA, while also respecting faculty autonomy and workload, and other factors, such as maintaining accreditation compliance.

The working group's report offers several positive elements to consider, such as promoting inclusive teaching and acknowledging the need for faculty support. The emphasis on collaboration, pilot programs, and alignment with existing initiatives showcases a thoughtful and adaptable approach to achieving accessibility for all students. The approaches, such as encouraging inclusive teaching practices through the lens of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), resonate with those who may be concerned about compromising pedagogical quality for accessibility. The committee agrees that creating flexible learning environments can benefit all students, not just those with disabilities.

While the positive elements are acknowledged, the College FEC recognizes some key faculty concerns. These include (1) the potential strain on faculty workload if extensive adaptations are required, (2) the desire to preserve autonomy in choosing teaching methods, and (3) potential accreditation issues arising from increased online course components. There appears to be significant time constraints and training needed to adapt, or be able to adapt, existing materials. Many faculty members feel that they are already stretched thin, having larger classes, but with fewer resources or TA availability. The prospect of converting lectures, assignments, and other resources can seem daunting to some faculty. To make those adjustments, some instructors may need further training, adding to the ongoing list of required training modules, which also takes away from their core responsibilities. In terms of UDL, while this approach emphasizes multiple

means of representation, it may not explicitly address the need for culturally relevant materials, and the committee urges that it not be seen as a one-size-fits-all approach, particularly within diverse classrooms.

It is also important that the Working Group take into consideration that some faculty would have special needs that need to be identified and addressed. For example, some of the current technology has already posed significant challenges to faculty, such as speech recognition technology unable to properly recognize or transcribe the speech patterns of non-native English speakers who have otherwise no difficulties communicating with their students in the lecture or zoom environments.

Additionally, it is unlikely that faculty will be able to fulfill any calls for improving accessibility without meaningfully increased support from such resources as the Teaching & Learning Center and the Center for Accessible Education (CAE). CAE is already seemingly overwhelmed and unable to accommodate all the students to test under their supervision during finals. In any event, whatever efforts are implemented in the service of increased accessibility will likely require increased staff and support for centers such as CAE.

In terms of the report's discussion of remote instruction: it highlights the positives of remote instruction but does not show a balanced review of the negatives of remote instruction. On page 3, the report mentioned "The emergency pivot to remote instruction provided a remarkable breadth of experience to the entire campus in online teaching and learning and demonstrated increased access through remote teaching." Given the emphasis placed in this sentence on the demonstration of increased access (by bolding the "and"), it would be helpful to give a reference or point to the source of the assertion or, at a minimum, explain the demonstration of access supported by data. An aspect related to remote instruction that was not mentioned in the report is that of accreditation compliance. WSCUC defines as "online" any program that CAN be completed online to be distance education, even if an in-person option exists and/or is encouraged. Providing options for students to take courses online could contribute to being out of compliance with WSCUC, as no UCLA undergraduate degrees are approved to be offered online (50% or more online).

As always, our membership appreciates the consultative process and welcomes the opportunity to participate in the discussion of important matters like this. You are welcome to contact us with questions.

March 28, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

Re: Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

At its meeting on March 12, 2024, the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CODEI) discussed the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report. The committee agreed that the report was well done but identified various areas which should be further addressed.

Various times throughout the discussion, committee members highlighted that the needs of students should be a main focus of the report. In this current draft, a small portion of the report highlights the impact on students but members agreed that this theme should be a pillar of the report. For example, a statement is made in the report that alludes to students with disabilities are not seeking support for their disabilities. Members felt that the report should include solutions to issues such as these.

The committee also asks that the Working Group consider recommending additional support be provided to the Center for Accessible Education (CAE). Various members identified that students and faculty often run into issues when arranging accommodations for students due to difficulty getting through to CAE. Further, it would be helpful for instructors to have more information on CAE and the resources available to students. A member stated that having a ballpark idea of what can be provided would allow instructors to clearly identify what the needs of the students are and how they can assist the student. Currently, an "accommodations statement" is included in syllabi, but members added that additional information to provide students and inform instructors would be helpful.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the report and provide comments. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (thall@mednet.ucla.edu) or Academic Senate Policy Analyst, Lilia Valdez (lvaldez@senate.ucla.edu).

Sincerely,



Theodore Hall, Chair
Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

cc: Kathy Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Lilia Valdez, Senior Policy Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate
Members of the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

March 21, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair, Academic Senate

From: Catherine Sugar, Chair, Undergraduate Council

Re: Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

At its meeting on March 15, 2024, the Undergraduate Council (UgC) reviewed the report by the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group.

Overall, the Council commends the Working Group's efforts to promote accessible, inclusive instruction at UCLA. While supportive of the report, UgC also encourages the Working Group to further consider how the recommended strategies for enhancing accessibility (e.g., investment in multiple classroom modalities) may impact faculty in significant ways. Members are pleased that the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) plans to incentivize faculty engagement with existing training opportunities, but the benefits of expanded involvement must be weighed against ever-increasing demands on faculty labor and time. Positive incentives for faculty must be adequately resourced and recognized in the academic personnel review process. The Council also notes that instructors themselves may require accommodations for various reasons, raising complex questions about how to reconcile such needs with the necessity to accommodate students and create accessible learning environments.

The Council echoes comments from the Committee on Data, Information Technology, and Privacy about the importance of including student perspectives in further planning and assessment. In this spirit, UgC's undergraduate student representatives appreciate the recommendation to increase opportunities for new and continuing faculty to engage with accessibility training. Members and student representatives also emphasize the need for long-term investment in technology and staffing, particularly in collaboration with CAE, in order to support instructors in providing an accessible education for all UCLA students.

Thank you for the opportunity to share comments. If you have any questions, please contact me via the Undergraduate Council analyst, Julia Nelsen, at jnelsen@senate.ucla.edu.

cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Julia Nelsen, Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate

3125 Murphy Hall
410 Charles E. Young Drive East
Los Angeles, California 90095

March 21, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

From: Brooke Scelza, Chair, Graduate Council

Re: Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

Graduate Council members independently reviewed the *Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report*. Most members did not have comments.

Of the members who responded, one member appreciated learning about the new Disability Studies major and the development of new teaching tools to make teaching more accessible and would favor finding ways to distribute this information to instructors so they are adopted and implemented. The member also supported the idea of presenting to faculty through a slide presentation and appreciated the creation of statements about accommodations in the syllabus.

One member expressed endorsement of the report, particularly the need to involve students and instructors to collaborate with the Center for Accessible Education to establish clear mechanisms for assessing the impact of implemented changes on student learning and accessibility. The member also endorsed the sensibility of equitable and inclusive technological innovation explicit in the recommendation to benchmark and evaluate assistive technologies across several platforms and domains independently and through partnerships with other institutions, non-profits, and corporations.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views on this matter. If you have any questions, please contact us via Graduate Council Analyst, Emily Le, at ele@senate.ucla.edu.

March 7, 2024

Andrea Kasko, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

Dear Chair Kasko,

The Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) discussed the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report at its meeting on February 26, 2024. Members unanimously endorsed the report as written (12 in favor, 0 oppose, 0 abstain). [Student vote: 4 in favor, 0 oppose, 0 abstain.]

Members suggested that the implementation of incentives aimed at promoting accessibility initiatives should be given consideration. For example, the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) may consider instituting awards or recognition programs to acknowledge and celebrate courses that excel in fostering accessibility and inclusive practices. This approach would not only recognize individual faculty members for their contributions but also serve to showcase effective strategies and encourage broader adoption across UCLA.

If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at emmerich@humnet.ucla.edu or via the Council's analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu.

Best regards,

Michael Emmerich, Chair
Council on Planning and Budget

cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Elizabeth Feller, Associate Director, Academic Senate
Members of the Council on Planning and Budget

February 23, 2024

Andrea Kasko, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

Dear Chair Kasko,

Following its February 16, 2024, meeting, the Committee on Data, Information Technology, and Privacy (CDITP) reviewed the report by the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group. Members made the following comments:

Overall, the report from the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group is a significant step forward in promoting accessibility and inclusivity at UCLA. By continuing to refine and implement its recommendations, UCLA can lead by example in creating a more accessible and equitable educational environment for all students.

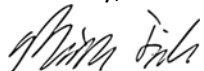
Nonetheless, substantive challenges remain. While the report outlines an impressive array of faculty, staff, and administrative involvement, it could further emphasize the importance of student participation in the planning and evaluation phases. Students can provide firsthand insights into the effectiveness of accessibility initiatives and suggest areas for improvement. Students should also be included in the development and deployment of assessment and feedback mechanisms. To ensure the effectiveness of the recommended strategies, it would be beneficial to establish clear mechanisms for assessing the impact of implemented changes on student learning and accessibility. Regular feedback from both students and instructors can inform continuous improvement.

Specific to CDITP, the Committee would like to note the crucial role that technology plays in accessibility. Going forward, we would like to highlight the need for ongoing evaluation and integration of emerging educational technologies. In the capacious understanding of accessibility, the report sets out that this includes assistive technologies across a number of platforms and domains. Continued collaboration between the Working Group and various areas of IT and instructional IT expertise is essential.

We encourage broader awareness campaigns to further promote the importance of accessibility across the campus community and to foster an inclusive culture that values and supports diversity in learning. The committee also encourages the Working Group to explore partnerships with other institutions, non-profits, and corporations to potentially develop and provide additional resources, expertise, and opportunities for collaboration on accessibility initiatives. Sharing best practices and lessons learned with a wider community can amplify the impact of UCLA's efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at fisher@humnet.ucla.edu or via the Committee analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,



Matthew Fisher, Chair

cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Renee Rouzan-Kay, Senior Policy Analyst, Committee on Data, Information Technology, and Privacy
Members of the Committee on Data, Information Technology, and Privacy

ACCESSIBILITY AND INSTRUCTION WORKING GROUP - Report to VP Erin Sanders-O'Leary
November 1, 2023

Co-Chairs:

Rachel Kennison, Director, CEILS
Adriana Galván, Dean, Undergraduate Education

Members:

Caitlin Solone, Academic Administrator, Disability Studies
Ilana Intonato, Director, Bruin Learn Center of Excellence
Travis Lee, UCLA DCP Coordinator
Nicole Green, Director of CAPS
Connie Kasari, Professor Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences
Jeff Burke, Professor and Associate Dean, Theater, Film and Television
KC Bui, Deputy Director and Director of Student Affair Initiatives
Spencer Scruggs, Director, Center for Accessible Education

The Charge

The **Accessibility and Instruction working group** is charged by the UCLA Provost's office and Student Affairs, to consider ways to expand and improve learning and teaching modalities to increase accessibility for students. Students have a right to an accessible education and our mandate as a public institution is to serve and educate all of our students, equitably, so it is imperative to find solutions to increase access to all students. The workgroup is composed of faculty, academic and administrative staff, student affairs leadership and instructors who have specific knowledge and experience related to accessibility instruction. The workgroup has considered current and defining teaching modalities, mapping campus initiatives and aims to identify the benefits and challenges of options that improve accessibility and instruction for all students.

Scope

To achieve this goal we should strive for accessibility and flexibility without altering the fundamental nature of teaching and pedagogy; by using evidence based assessment and practice, data and analytics to recommend the best practices in teaching and learning. The scope of this working group is to examine accessibility and instruction at UCLA, including but not limited to questions about teaching modality. We are considering accessibility in general, rather than specifically focused on accommodations needed based on ability status. A critical lever for change to promote and increase accessibility in teaching is to universally provide training for instructors in a variety of modalities and teaching approaches, which will give teachers options. We are not suggesting that all class types (with respect to size and discipline) and all instructors must provide all varieties of teaching modalities, or completely redesign their courses to be universally accessible; but there are some concrete, actionable steps that can be taken to increase inclusivity, flexibility and accessibility in teaching. Implementing a new teaching strategy and approach does take some training and effort, but in the long run when students are given some flexibility and are more easily able to access and learn the material, these strategies will be time saving measures that center student learning. Making teaching universally inclusive and accessible is aligned with UCLA's commitment to inclusive excellence in teaching and will improve outcomes for all students.

Aim

The aim of this workgroup is to recommend teaching and learning modalities that improve accessibility for all students, rather than focus on formal accommodations for ADA compliance purposes.

Summary Recommendations

- We recommend that [the TLC, CAE, DCP] should develop and be resourced to lead implementation of a multi year strategic plan to continuously improve the accessibility of UCLA teaching and learning, following the broader definition given here.
- To inform that planning process and take some near-term actions, we have a more detailed set of recommendations, many of which have pilot opportunities or involve alignment/awareness of existing initiatives that can be adopted in AY23-24.
- This group is invested in this process and would like to continue to meet, work with Vice Provost Sanders-O'Leary, and implement recommendations. We are also open to additional members as the need arises.

Definitions

Accessibility

- The ability for each student to achieve the learning objectives, given each student's individual set of circumstances. Accessibility empowers the individual by removing barriers to learning.
- We differentiate between the instructor's legal requirement to provide individual students with approved accommodations through the Center for Accessible Education (CAE), from maximizing equal access to all students by using specific pedagogical strategies, backed by education research.
- Accessible Education is the process of designing courses and developing a teaching style to meet the needs of people from a variety of backgrounds, disability, abilities and learning preferences.
- It is essential to ensure that UCLA students with disabilities can access instructional content, UCLA services, and learning tools without any barriers, making their lives easier and more equitable. The purpose of accessibility is to remove these barriers and provide equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of disabilities.

Accommodations

- Accommodations are adaptations made for specific individuals when a product or service is not accessible.
- Within higher education, accommodations can often take the form of modifications to policies, practices, and procedures, provisions of auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities, and academic adjustments and modifications to the environment intended to remove barriers to equivalent access.
- Accommodations are intended to be reasonable and appropriate for the context of the individual's need and the service or program's intended purpose. Above all, an academic accommodation is generally not considered reasonable and appropriate when it fundamentally alters the essential requirements of a course or academic program. Please refer to UCLA's guidelines on [determining essential requirements for accommodations](#).

Evidence-Based Teaching and Universal Design

- Courses designed using evidence-based teaching, which are pedagogical practices, course and curriculum design based on the core principles of learning derived from cognitive and behavioral psychology and social science research; and [universal design for learning](#) (UDL), which designs for flexibility and accessibility by incorporating multiple modes of: (1) student engagement, (2) representation of content/curriculum, and (3) action/expression of acquired knowledge/skills, into the instruction and learning environment may decrease the need for accommodations, when implemented effectively.
- The core principles of learning and pedagogical best practices apply to the spectrum of modalities from synchronous, in person classes to asynchronous, online learning. *By designing and developing instructional material that are inherently universally accessible without additional accommodations, the learning experience for all students is improved.*

Why now is the time for transformational change in how UCLA approaches teaching

- Instructors have faced many of the same stressors as students in the transition to "post" pandemic teaching and also have the unique challenge of coping with this new "normal", while being dedicated to meeting the diverse learning needs of all students. We are at an inflection point, where we need to interrogate our systems of teaching and learning and provide (students and) instructors with guidance on how to best learn and teach in this ever-changing environment.
- Many students experience inequities in access to education because they are combating multiple stressors (e.g. mental health issues, having to work and go to school, taking care of relatives, etc.), some are exacerbated by the return to fully in-person learning. In a 2020 Educause report, nearly half of students with disabilities do not register with their institution's disability services office for support.¹ This suggests that any given instructor, and particularly those who have large enrollment courses, most likely have students with disabilities who are not officially registered. With more and more students also experiencing undiagnosed and untreated mental disorders or illness, making the classroom a welcoming and accessible space, where students feel comfortable reaching out

¹ <https://www.educause.edu/ecar/research-publications/student-technology-report-supporting-the-whole-student/2020/accessibility-and-accommodations>

to their instructors, and where the teaching approach allows for some flexibility, will help increase equity in teaching so that all students benefit and can achieve the learning outcomes.

- The emergency pivot to remote instruction provided a remarkable breadth of experience to the entire campus in online teaching and learning, *and* demonstrated increased access through remote teaching. Research studies on the effectiveness of learning remotely is not yet conclusive. Student's perceptions are that they are learning as well online as in the classroom, although education research provides evidence that perceptions of learning are not aligned with actual learning (Deslauriers et al. 2019, R. A. Bjork 1994, Carpenter et al. 2020, Carpenter et al. 2022).
- Remote teaching allowed students and instructors to experience a more diverse set of instructional modalities and pedagogical strategies, and the potential flexibility they offer. However, there are significant challenges both technologically and pedagogically, in creating effective online synchronous streams and/or asynchronous recordings with respect to the diversity of class types (and classrooms) that UCLA currently has.

Recommendations of key considerations for how UCLA could maximize equitable access to education for all students

1. **Increase opportunities for instructors to engage with enhanced training on UDL and accessibility:** Instructional design should use [evidence-based pedagogical strategies for equitable and inclusive teaching](#), which includes the principles of [universal design for learning \(UDL\)](#) that incorporates multiple modes of engagement, representation, and action/expression, as well as [digital accessibility](#) with alignment to WCAG. This is only possible when instructors, including TAs, are trained and have opportunities to practice and receive coaching/feedback in professional learning communities. The new TLC, the [Cross Campus Teaching Innovations Group](#) in addition to the other teaching centers, should play an active role in providing educational development and training. Enhanced training, delivered in multiple formats to meet instructor needs, would provide instructors with onboarding, training and access to educational technology and tools, which, *when used effectively*, improve equitable access and increase engagement both in person and online teaching.
2. **Incentivize instructor engagement with training:** Training needs must be incentivized and incorporated into faculty promotion and tenure process and non-senate faculty advancement and evaluation. Without these incentives, and an explicit explanation of how participation will be rewarded, many instructors will not likely participate in training, workshops and professional development. Asynchronous training modules should be developed and iterated on over time (as technology advances) to support instructors that are not able to attend in-person trainings due to time constraints. Certificate programs for instructors on teaching, such as the [CITI program](#) or summer course design institutes, should incorporate the topic of accessibility and accommodations. Instructors should be provided a pathway and professional development on how to assess the effectiveness of their teaching with the help of educational developers. There is currently no official mechanism for this to happen although some faculty will individually request a consultation from OTL or CEILS or the Center for Educational Assessment, or academic units will assess their courses.
3. **Enhance accessibility of current courses:** Instructors can get started quickly by improving accessibility in small but effective ways. Regardless of the instructional modalities (see senate guidelines for definitions) chosen to increase accessibility, pedagogical strategies and technological requirements instructors should employ the following:
 - a. An [accessibility statement](#) should be included in the syllabus. This may be incorporated within or in addition to instructor statements on inclusivity in the classroom.
 - b. Course materials (readings, pdfs, slides) should adhere to the guidelines for accessibility so that technology such as screen readers can smoothly navigate through them. Trainings [and resources](#) on how to do so are available through [UCLA's Disabilities and Computing Program](#).
 - c. Live captions should be enabled and captions/transcriptions provided for videos embedded within courses. These services and automated technologies are provided at no cost and available through BruinLearn, Zoom, Google Slides, and other commonly used technologies.
4. **Exploration of and investment in multiple classroom modalities:** The campus should seek/develop specific guidelines for multimodality support as well as for a variety of classroom types. An example for a framework for developing learning spaces and analysis is [The Learning Space Rating System \(LSRS\)](#), which provides a set of

measurable criteria to assess how well the design of classrooms supports and enables multiple modalities of learning and teaching, especially that of active learning. Deeper alignment with Information Technology is needed to address the redesign of classroom spaces to remodel/redesign/upgrade wifi.

5. **Streamlined campus guidance and resources:** The new Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) should consolidate already existing documents that provide guidance on easy, quick, simple strategies that will increase accessibility in the classroom, which can be housed centrally in the TLC.
6. **Support and recognition for more resource-intensive course needs:** Department and campus leadership must acknowledge that the impact on time/effort to design, facilitate, and make accessible will vary according to course size (large lecture vs small discussion courses) vs. laboratory, studio, and project-centric courses. Resource allocation should be discussed upfront with explicit commitment to making new courses aligned with standards for accessibility.
7. **Collaboration with UCLA's new disability studies major:** UCLA leadership should work to elevate and spotlight the faculty research, course curriculum, and student experiences of the [newly established disability studies major](#). These efforts can support cultural change on campus and position UCLA as a leader in this space.

With appreciation that this is an important and timely issue we understand that the TLC will need time to get ramped up before implementing a plan. The following are suggestions for more immediate actions, initial data gathering and pilot activities that could be started that will inform the longer-term plan. We recommend and would like to provide feedback on a multi-year strategic plan **with the goal of maximizing equitable access to education for all students** that includes an ongoing investment to ensure the sustainability of a transformation in our approach to teaching in four areas:

- 1) Mapping of campus infrastructural and programmatic/course assessment of universal design

Pilot opportunity: *Identify and document a small set of exemplars across campus.*

- 2) Faculty training development and support around universal course design and evidence-based teaching

Pilot opportunities: 1) *Develop an online asynchronous module in BruinLearn for instructors that provides an onboarding to accessibility and accommodations and directs them to associated campus resources, with a feedback survey piloted by Department Chairs* 2) *Consolidate and disseminate existing resources on campus to include in BruinLearn training sites for faculty* 3) *Incorporate a live training component into the next offering of a Summer institute for teaching (modeled after the Disabilities and Computing Program in-person trainings).*

- 3) Improvement of physical spaces (physical space, networking, staff, furniture, services) and technology to sustainably support more flexible/equitable access to UCLA education, while also meeting the letter and spirit of ADA requirements; by supporting a variety of teaching methodologies that will achieve accessibility in instruction.

Pilot opportunity: *Fund a small number of evidence-based modifications in high-impact (or less-studied) areas and assess the impacts.*

- 4) Faculty incentives for Professional development as it relates to merit advancement, tenure and promotion process

Pilot opportunity (already being piloted by multiple departments across campus): *Course review and faculty feedback on teaching should be universally implemented by using UCLA's [Holistic Evaluation of Teaching Protocol](#), which provides multiple dimensions for evaluation, formative as well as summative, and provides opportunities for improvement to become more equitable and inclusive practitioners*

Alignment of efforts and resources on campus that support instructors in creating accessible education (this is not an exhaustive list and we will continue the process of compiling resources and efforts).

- [Disabilities and Computing Program](#) (DCP) provides faculty handbooks and guidance on how to make your course and documents digitally accessible to all students.

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- [Online Teaching and Learning](#) (OTL) provides expertise on instructional design to develop and implement evidence based online instruction and course design. They offer individual consultations, workshops and media production to support instructors in using technology to advance excellence in teaching and learning.
- The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) provides workshops, resources, consultation, and technical support to faculty and TAs to promote more inclusive and equitable teaching and learning practices.
- The [Center for Accessible Education](#) (CAE) provides a [Faculty Handbook](#) that outlines what faculty should know to ensure access for Bruins with disabilities.
- The [Center for Education Innovation and Learning in the Sciences](#) (CEILS) provides workshops, training, support, consultations and tailored departmental interventions to transform the STEM classroom using evidence-based teaching to create an equitable and inclusive learning environment.
- [The Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning \(CIRTL\)](#) an International network that advances teaching training, professional and leadership development for graduate students and postdocs. UCLA's membership in CIRTL is administered by CEILS and provides the [CIRTL@UCLA](#) program.
- [Bruin Learn Center of Excellence](#) (COE)- UCLA's learning management system provides integrated tools and infrastructure to support accessible instruction for synchronous and asynchronous learning, as well as training for instructors and students.

Next steps for the Accessibility in Instruction Working Group:

The Accessibility and Instruction Working Group will continue to meet for the Winter and Spring Quarters 2024, and will be Chaired by CEILS Senior Associate Director Jess Gregg. The priorities for the next 6 months will include:

- ☐ Continued iteration on these recommendations in partnership with Vice Provost Erin Sanders O'Leary and work with campus units and particularly CAE to provide instructor resources meeting the standard of guidance needed.
- ☐ In collaboration with CAE, refining an exemplary syllabus statement that instructors could include in their course syllabi.
- ☐ Review of existing public-facing UCLA materials on accessibility and accommodations and collaborative efforts to identify areas for improvement and/or consolidation of these multiple resources.
- ☐ For each proposed pilot opportunity, the working group will identify a campus unit or individuals interested in taking the lead on implementing/completing these pilot activities and reporting back to the working group. This will enable updates on these recommendations over time.
- ☐ Once the recommendations above are finalized, members of this working group will prepare a short slide presentation to share during upcoming faculty meetings in departments to help disseminate this important guidance, provide clarity on resources (current and forthcoming), and solicit feedback from instructors on any challenges for implementation.