Accessibility in the Trenches
Keys to a successful redesign

Research
As important as current higher ed web trends.

Draw from others’ experience
- Vet your vendors:
  - Examine previous work: claims vs. delivery
  - Are they knowledgeable?
- Employ an expert (staff or consultant)
- Look for sites approved by experts
- Talk to colleagues (internal & external)
- Get input from people with disabilities!

Design with accessibility in mind
- Make vendor contract explicit
- Select a high-contrast palette
- Test at every round
  - Manual experience-based testing: create the best user experience you can
  - Automated testing finds errors you might miss
- Hold your ground to get the important things right!
- Don’t overthink it, go simple
- Replace inaccessible technology, i.e., media players, widgets, tools, etc.

Maximize migration
- As content is rewritten and layout applied, also make it accessible.
- Train web migrators in best practices for web accessibility:
  - Proper heading structure
  - Appropriate alt text
  - High-contrast graphics/text
  - Descriptive and unique hyperlinks
  - Captions and transcripts

Implementation
Plan & Test:
Accessibility cannot be an afterthought.

Make sure RFP is explicit
- Listing WCAG 2.0 AA is not enough
- Emphasize specific criteria
- Include more criteria, as needed

Get Stats
- Save data on your site’s current accessibility for progress comparison
- Create a road-map

Design with accessibility in mind

Maintenance
Be a coach, not a cop.

Share your expertise
- Train web editors
- Offer extra support
- Be approachable and positive

Establish a support system
- Have resources to meet requirements
- Have alternative solutions ready
- Secure support from senior administration

Demand strong efforts
- Have consequences for ignoring/refusing to follow rules
- Put compliance requests in writing, keep good records of the school’s efforts

Monitor content
- Update stats and show progress
- Use web crawling software & CMS reports
- Spot check: web editors will introduce issues

Continue improving
- Listen to your users, keep an open mind
- Establish oversight, keep momentum going
- Technology evolves: so should your site

Lessons Learned

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