

## Accessibility - Legal Requirements for Faculty - 3/12/2019

Dear Faculty,

Last December, I sent out an email to let you know that we are legally required to make **all electronic documents**, that we **distribute to students**, be compliant with **Accessibility laws**. Accessibility means that all documents must meet specific minimum standards that will make them usable to students who have disabilities.

While these laws have been in place for nearly two decades, most instructors are not aware that they even exist. Those who knew about the Accessibility laws applied their requirements to varying degrees that did not necessarily meet the minimum standards.

**If no one has enforced this in two decades, why are you bothering me now?**

Good question.

The Federal Government has taken notice that these laws are not being followed and recently updated the Rehabilitation Act that creates new expectations for accessibility standards in higher education.

Our Chancellor is “encouraging” all districts “to improve accessibility on campus, in order to provide equitable higher education for all students”. The reality is, if Palomar College doesn’t begin to address this soon there are liability issues for the District and we will likely have issues in our next accreditation review.

**When am I going to find the time do this?**

It is my goal to bring faculty along in a way that they are given a reasonable amount of time to assimilate the training needed and to make the necessary changes to their documents.

The Accessibility laws and regulations apply to **all the electronic documents faculty distribute to students**, both for documents that are **self-created** and for documents that are from **external sources**, so we are planning a **phased rollout... the first phase being concerned with faculty-created documents** and the second phase with external documents and software.

Fortunately, the training you need, to know what to do with your self-created documents, will become available on April 8th, from the ATRC. In this first phase, the

tasks are fairly easy to understand and to implement. (NOTE: I will send you another email soon that will give you the training details.)

### **Do I need to do anything right now?**

I would encourage you to **take a personal audit** of the electronic documents you currently distribute to students. Perhaps maintain a spreadsheet that groups your documents by their **document type** (e.g. Canvas, MS Word, PDF, videos, etc.) I recommend that you note any documents that are from **external sources** since those will be handled later.

While most document types will need the same kind of “things” done to them, they all do those things in a somewhat different manner. Most of our training will be oriented around the document type. Keeping a personal list of your document files will help you keep track of your progress.

### **What's next?**

I will be sending you more information each week about the Accessibility training and resources that will be available to help you in this effort.

Thanks,  
Steve

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