



## AccessCollege: Systemic Change for Postsecondary Institutions

This publication describes promising practices and resources funded through the *AccessCollege* project. It is expected that, ultimately, efforts such as these will increase the success of individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education and careers. Replication is encouraged.

### Background

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) at the University of Washington has, since 1992, worked to increase the representation of individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education and employment. In 1999, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) funded *DO-IT Prof* (Grant #P333A999042), which created professional development materials and trained faculty and academic administrators nationwide to more fully include students with disabilities in their courses. In 2002, OPE funded *DO-IT Admin* (Grant #P333A020044), which expanded *DO-IT Prof* efforts to train student service administrators and staff. Project team members further identified the critical need to systematically change policies, procedures, and practices in order for both universal design and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities to be embraced at an institutional level.

In 2005, *AccessCollege* (Grant #P333A050064) was funded to continue to offer and refine the successful professional development and resources for faculty and administrators of earlier projects, complement them with the identification, validation, and application of campus-wide Campus Accessibility Indicators to document institutional change toward more accessible campuses and programs, and develop online *The Center for Universal Design in Education*. *AccessCollege* staff worked with a team of faculty and administrators representing twenty-three two- and four-year institutions each paired with another campus during this project. Staff and team members

- developed and delivered professional development and technical assistance using multiple delivery systems
- developed and validated Campus Accessibility Indicators and use pre-post checklists to document institutional changes in policies, procedures, and practices that lead to campuses that are more inclusive of students with disabilities
- initiated *The Center for Universal Design in Education*
- developed *The Veterans Center* with resources for veterans with disabilities and faculty and campus units who support them
- published articles, prepare a book, and distribute training videos, publications, and web resources to share successful practices in training faculty and staff and promoting applications of universal design in higher education
- improved the accessibility of activities and products of professional organizations

Project activities resulted in postsecondary faculty and administrators better prepared to fully include students with disabilities in their courses and service units, campus programs with systems in place to ensure full access to students with disabilities, improved accessibility of professional organizations, and enhanced resources for ongoing impact. The DO-IT Center continues to maintain the resources created during the *AccessCollege* funding period.

### Resources

Select *AccessCollege* from [www.uw.edu/doiit/](http://www.uw.edu/doiit/) to find links to comprehensive websites designed for faculty, student services professionals, administrators, employers, student veterans, and students:

- *The Board Room*
- *The Center for Universal Design in Education*
- *The Employment Office*
- *The Faculty Room*
- *The Student Lounge*
- *The Student Services Conference Room*
- *The Veterans Center*



Within these websites are guidelines and information that lead to more accessible courses and programs and that help students with disabilities prepare for success in college.

The book *Universal Design in Higher Education: From Principles to Practice* published by Harvard Education Press shares perspectives of UD leaders nationwide. To receive a 20% discount, visit [www.uw.edu/doi/UDHE/coupon.html](http://www.uw.edu/doi/UDHE/coupon.html).

### **Campus Accessibility Indicators**

The goal of accessibility for people with disabilities on campus is to ensure that all people experience the campus fully and equally through the same venues. This can be done through ongoing development of an accessible campus that embraces and celebrates diversity.

The *AccessCollege* Team developed the following draft list of eleven Campus Accessibility Indicators. These indicators are starting points for conversation about how to create an inclusive campus. Suggestions for improving the list should be sent to [doi@uw.edu](mailto:doi@uw.edu).

### **University conversations:**

1. The university-level mission statement is inclusive of people with disabilities.
2. Disability is included in discussions of diversity and special populations on campus.

### **Administrative empowerment:**

3. Policies, procedures, and practices are regularly reviewed for barrier removal and inclusivity.
4. Administrators, staff, faculty, and student leaders are trained, encouraged, and empowered to take action around disability and universal design issues.
5. People with disabilities are visible (even if their disabilities are not) on campus including in positions of power or authority.

### **Infusion of universal design in all campus offerings:**

6. Budgeting reflects the reality of the cost of universal design and of accommodating current and prospective employees, students, and visitors with disabilities.
7. Measures of student success are the same for all student populations; institutional research includes this data.
8. Campus marketing, publications, and public relations are accessible and include disability representation.
9. Campus websites, including web-based courses, meet established accessibility and usability standards.
10. Relevant disability issues are addressed in curricula.
11. All campus facilities are physically accessible and universally designed.

### **AccessCollege Team**

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**Model Demonstration Projects ensure students with disabilities receive a quality higher education.** *AccessCollege* was a Model Demonstration Project developed by a grant from the Office of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education, #P333A030064. The purpose of these projects was to develop innovative, effective, and

efficient teaching methods to enhance the skills and abilities of postsecondary faculty and administrators in working with students who have disabilities. Links to all of the Model Demonstration Projects can be found at [www2.ed.gov/programs/disabilities/awards.html](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/disabilities/awards.html).

#### About DO-IT

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) serves to increase the successful participation of individuals with disabilities in challenging academic programs such as those in science, engineering, mathematics, and technology. Primary funding for DO-IT is provided by the National Science Foundation, the State of Washington, and the U.S. Department of Education.

For further information, to be placed on the DO-IT mailing list, request materials in an alternative format, or to make comments or suggestions about DO-IT publications or web pages, contact:

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