Syracuse University

Fall 2020 Open

Access and Inclusion
Working Committee

September 11, 2020
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The recommendations below are the work of the Disability Community Group and have been adopted by the Access and Inclusion Working Committee as a starting framework for ensuring that access and inclusion are prioritized in all aspects of the Fall 2020 Open and COVID-19 response.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching and Learning

1. Prioritize teaching effectiveness over research, publishing, and non-essential or COVID-19-related committee service.
   - Provide compensated extra instructional preparation time for faculty.
   - Provide instructional materials for faculty to give to their students on presenting/sharing their work in accessible formats.
   - Ensure provisions for hybrid options, flexibility with in-person instruction.
   - Explore remote/virtual proctoring for accommodated exams.
   - Ensure faculty will be protected (e.g., those on tenure track) if they cannot keep up their research agenda / publishing, in light of the added instructional responsibilities? Avoid an either/or scenario, and not have time spent on inclusive pedagogy/accessible design not worth the investment of time.
   - Continue to provide guidance, resources, and tools for best accessible instructional practices to all instructors, such as the Academic Continuity Resources Toolkit provided
and regularly updates by Jenny Gluck’s team in ITS, and the Accessible Teaching in the Time of COVID-19 resource provided by the UC Berkeley School of Information.


2. Provide clear guidance on how mandated social distancing practices will be implemented in classrooms

**Considerations for Disabled Students**

1. All faculty must know the process for students to register and access disability-related accommodations. The Center for Disability Resources (formerly the Office of Disability Services) website details the registration process. Note: Third-party documentation is NOT a barrier to access disability-related resources.

2. Faculty should familiarize themselves with the Faculty Disability Portal, via MySlice and their responsibilities pertaining to disability access and accommodations. Faculty need to stay connected to the Faculty Disability Portal, as many students will choose to disclose via the accommodation letter released to the faculty in the portal.

3. For students with lowered immune system health concerns or other disability-related concerns, additional accommodations may be necessary, for online and/or in-person instruction. This is determined on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the nature of the disability or learning environment, the CDR access counselor will engage the instructor to explore various options to accommodate the student.

4. For exams and extended writing assignments, consider the energy it will take with prolonged screen time and adjust assignments timelines. For synchronous instruction, allow students to participate with or without video. This is especially true for blind and students with low vision, as well as students with migraines and seizure disorders.

5. If you are speaking while presenting PowerPoint slides, be mindful some students may not see the slides and read them. Orally describe images.

6. Reach out to students who are attending in-person class sessions, but who fail to show up for the on-line/virtual class sessions.

7. To reduce the need for individualized accommodations:
   a. Consider easing in-class attendance requirements, limit out of class group activities and balance synchronous and asynchronous instruction.
   b. Record synchronous lectures and make them available to all students.
   c. Detail required course work and due dates at the start of the semester. Explicitly offer opportunities for flexibility at the start of the term to all students.
   d. Consider saving your documents in two formats, your original application and a pdf, which is easier to read on phones and tablets.
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND PLANNING

Assistance Messaging
1. Develop standard operating procedures for all communications, including signage and messaging that include adhering to accessibility standards at the design stage.
2. Clear and ubiquitous messaging, online and in physical locations, where people can go for prompt assistance when encountering technological, physical, sensory and other accessibility barriers.
3. Consider routing requests through a single portal with multiple means to access, where requests are automatically directed to appropriate resources, so as to capture the frequency, quantity and nature of requests - such as how the Accessible Syracuse link functions, Or as the Mapping the Disability Experience: Share your stories portal functions at at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Signage
1. Hand washing, social distancing, etc. will need to be communicated effectively, such as to the blind and visually impaired - e.g., using Large Print, Audio Signage, Braille with a system for disinfecting braille signage.
2. Consider our InclusiveU students, provide detailed step-by step instructions with text, images, pictures, video and audio.

EVENTS AND ALUMNI

ASL Interpreting, CART, and Captions: Carefully follow the SU Guidelines for CART and ASL Interpreting, updated May 7, 2020.

Visitors / Guests on Campus
1. Follow established guidelines for being on campus.
2. Follow public health requirements for being on campus.
3. Ensure provisions to allow for attendants and aids who provide personal services for people with disabilities to work on campus.
INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESIDENCE LIFE

Transportation & Parking
1. Provide guidance on how students, staff and faculty who have lowered immune system health concerns or other susceptibilities to COVID-19 will be transported to / from their parking lots / residence halls, in light of the shortage of North Campus parking,
   - Ensure limited ridership numbers.
   - Rotate number of staff in offices / students in classes to assist in ridership reduction.
   - Create alternating / shared use of North Campus parking among colleagues in a given office coinciding with reduced and rotating staff.
2. AccessCuse
   - Prepare a process to ensure social distancing while locking down a mobility device.
   - Prepare for potentially increased demand for AccessCuse, i.e., by persons e.g. with impairments involving lowered immune systems.

Housing & Residence Life
1. Implement a fast-track, streamlined housing approval process for students who do not have disabilities - but especially for those with lowered immune system issues - in response to requests for COVID-related accommodation requests: such as for singles, private bathrooms, release from housing, emotional support animals, and increased cleaning protocols.
2. Similar to housing, create a fast-track process for the Office of Student Living regarding move-in.
3. Provide comprehensive, certified gluten-free dining options on South Campus to support spreading students out in terms of housing.
4. Along with grab and go options, include food delivery for disabled students, when necessary.

Entrances / Exits
1. Provide guidance how entrances and exits to building, offices, and classes will be designated to ensure social distancing. Please note: accessible entrances and exits must be available for every building and not limited by special designation of entryways.
2. During class and shift changes, consider that:
   - Physical distancing in elevators and stairwells may create a bottleneck at shift/class change.
   - Additional time will be needed for a floor to empty safely.
   - Bottlenecks disproportionately impact persons with mobility impairments.
**Buildings**

1. Implement HVAC changes to maximize air flow and filtration.
2. Air Filtration Systems may be required (in labs, other communal spaces).
3. Installation of Plexiglass dividers in front of checkout counters in dining rooms, cafes, libraries, restrooms, etc. with personal assistance or modifications for people who cannot reach counters or who use wheelchairs.
4. Provide alternatives to hand washing - sanitizing wipes/gel dispensers.

**LEGAL AND LABOR**

1. Lowered immune system or other health / disability concerns can be expected to impact a significant number of staff / faculty who otherwise would not request an accommodation - based on the volume of ‘COVID-19’ accommodations managed since March.
2. With regard to employees who have lowered immune system or other health / disability concerns, medical providers have not been prescribing the COVID-19 safety conditions or protocols under which they can safely work. Greater medical guidance will be essential.
3. Remote work options for employees, who can perform their essential job functions remotely, will be reasonable accommodations for employees for whom a safe workspace, consistent with their health concerns, cannot be ensured. Remote work must be broadly supported in support of social distancing in workspaces and lowered transport ridership and parking needs.
4. The interactive accommodations process is a highly time-sensitive process compared to other administrative determinations.
   - Implement a fast-track, streamlined COVID Accommodation approval process for employees who do not have disabilities - but who have compromised / lowered immune systems or other medical susceptibilities to COVID-19, to perform their jobs remotely. Dedicate one or two skilled staff other than Accommodation Specialist and ADA Coordinator to process these non-disability requests.
   - Provide an additional skilled staff to support the Accommodation Specialist and ADA Coordinator to timely respond to a greater number of, and more complex needs for, reasonable accommodation requests from staff / faculty with disabilities.
   - Accommodations may be needed for persons with disability-heightened sensitivity to environmental conditions/temperature if HVAC system controls are altered.
   - If employees are placed on staggered / alternating shifts, there will be a potential conflict with medication schedules and dietary needs, requiring reasonable accommodations.
5. Support and equip (including with software) students, staff and faculty with limited internet and/or technology to be able to work remotely.

6. Provide clear, specific, widely communicated and enforced social distancing practices for workspaces: persons with lowered immune system health concerns must be given priority safe locations to work.

7. Budget Cuts / Purchasing Freezes must not negatively impact accommodation purchases and related accessibility needs (ASL interpreters / CART, audio description, adaptive equipment, etc). Costs in these contexts will not create an undue burden.

PUBLIC HEALTH, MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Medically informed COVID-19 safety conditions / protocols under which various employees with lowered immune system or other health / disability concerns can safely work - will be necessary and essential to the reasonable accommodation interactive process.

2. Will the University provide masks with filtration systems that capture COVID-19
   - To some staff, faculty, students?
   - All students, staff, faculty who encounter persons at higher-risk?

3. Masks with clear fabric for users of sign language and lip-reading, and all/any persons they communicate with?

4. Provide accommodation guidance for medical conditions that preclude wearing a mask.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

1. Need consistency and clarity on campus wide policies regarding COVID-19/social distancing in order for the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) (formerly “Office of Disability Services”) to effectively determine necessary accommodations for disabled students.

2. Students with lowered immune system health concerns must be given priority safe locations to work/study/learn.

3. Establish assigned times for use of facilities
   - Student use of dining halls and other high traffic areas
   - Must contemplate potential conflicts with medication schedule or dietary needs as accommodations.

4. Establish structured queuing at registrar, dining, bursar, bookstore, etc.
   - Add space markers to sidewalk & hallways that are detectible for blind / low vision persons.
• Use Apps to assist service / delivery /wayfinding that may not be accessible, or safe for those with lowered immune systems.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

“FREE Wellness, Creativity, and Advocacy Resources in the Time of COVID-19”
Disability Issues Brief: The ADA and Face Mask Policies, Southeast ADA Center, July 30, 2020