

August 14, 2017

Dear Professorial and Instructional Staff at Teachers College:

At TC, we are proud of our long-standing commitment to diversity and equity. For more than twenty years an important part of this mission has focused on welcoming and attracting people with disabilities to participate equally in our community. While the Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities (OASID) provides important leadership in the provision of reasonable accommodations and the removal of physical and attitudinal barriers, meaningful access for people with disabilities can only be achieved through the dedication, attention and the concerted effort by every member of our community to this work.

As faculty, your attention to accessible course content is essential. Choices you make in videos, texts and documents, and other supplementary course materials and educational experiences can enhance or detract from equal access for students with disabilities. Please keep in mind the principles of universal design and select materials that are accessible to the widest possible audience. Last year we suggested that you look at:

(<http://udloncampus.cast.org/home#.V2I5JxMrLnA>).

For example, videos that are uncaptioned or inaccurately captioned should be avoided. Reading materials that are not available in alternative formats or accessible through screen reading technology should likewise be avoided. OASID can, on a case by case basis, retroactively convert inaccessible course material to accessible ones. However, there are important reasons for you to choose accessible course materials as you plan for the upcoming semester. Some students with disabilities choose not to identify themselves as such or do so only after the semester has begun. In addition, it requires time and resources to convert inaccessible course materials. The end results may be that students with disabilities experience inequity and frustration. They may also fall behind their peers, and your lessons may not be as effective as you had planned.

Last year we also advised you that TC had formed a Digital Accessibility Committee focusing on exploring and developing options for the College, and that you would be receiving guidance from that committee in the near future. By accessing the link below, you can avail yourself of the information available thus far:

<https://tc.instructure.com/courses/3217/details>

This material is available to all of the TC community through their Uni login. In the meantime, please reach out to OASID if you have any questions about the accessibility of the materials you're selecting.

Another important concern for equal access is to provide testing accommodations when appropriate on exams and quizzes that are delivered in an on-line format. Canvas is one of our platforms that permits you as the course instructor the ability to provide a customized testing environment (such as additional time) for individual students so that students with disabilities can be provided the accommodations they have been deemed

eligible to use. We can work together to ensure all students can participate fully and equally in the Teachers College learning community.