

# Best Practices Task Force Plan

## The Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials in Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities

November 2010

**Task Force One:** Best Practices in the delivery of AIM, focusing on timeframe and cost. Additional considerations involved in providing low-incidence, high-cost materials (Braille, tactile graphics, Nemeth, DotsPlus, STEM, etc.)

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### Framing and Assignments for the Task Force

Like the other task forces, it operates under the provisions of Section 772 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008). In its work, it should be informing the Commissioner's responsibilities to conduct a study to:

`` (i) assess the barriers and systemic issues that may affect, and technical solutions available that may improve, the timely delivery and quality of accessible instructional materials for postsecondary students with print disabilities, as well as the effective use of such materials by faculty and staff; and

`` (ii) make recommendations related to the development of a comprehensive approach to improve the opportunities for postsecondary students with print disabilities to access instructional materials in specialized formats in a timeframe comparable to the availability of instructional materials for postsecondary nondisabled students.

`` (B) Existing information.--To the extent practicable, in carrying out the study under this paragraph, the Commission shall identify and use existing research, recommendations, and information.

The Task Force is charged with carrying out its work, keeping in the mind the following considerations under 772(b)1(c)(ii), with primary focus on items (I) and (VI).

- (I) how students with print disabilities may obtain instructional materials in accessible formats--
  - (aa) within a timeframe comparable to the availability of instructional materials for nondisabled students; and
  - (bb) to the maximum extent practicable, at costs comparable to the costs of such materials for nondisabled students;
- (II) the feasibility and technical parameters of establishing standardized electronic file formats, such as the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard as defined in section 674(e)(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, to be provided by publishers of instructional materials to producers of materials in specialized formats, institutions of higher education, and eligible students;
- (III) the feasibility of establishing a national clearinghouse, repository, or file-sharing network for electronic files in specialized formats and files used in producing instructional materials in specialized formats, and a list of possible entities qualified to administer such clearinghouse, repository, or network;
- (IV) the feasibility of establishing market-based solutions involving collaborations among publishers of instructional materials, producers of materials in specialized formats, and institutions of higher education;
- (V) solutions utilizing universal design; and
- (VI) solutions for low-incidence, high-cost requests for instructional materials in specialized formats.

## **Work Plan**

By the January meeting of the Commission, the Task Force plans to draft a report covering the areas of focus noted above, keeping in mind the overall objectives of the Commission. The report will primarily cover the issues related to low-incidence, high-cost instructional materials in specialized formats, as follows:

- Identify low incidence populations
- Identify specialized formats
- Define "high cost"
- Discover newly emerging initiatives, techniques or technologies with some promise of lowering cost/speeding production
- Document the value and import of these materials to students

After doing such study, the Task Force needs to create materials that will inform the eventual development of recommendations under 772(b)1(c)(i).

- (i) In general.--The Commission shall develop recommendations--
- `` (I) to inform Federal regulations and legislation;
  - `` (II) to support the model demonstration programs authorized under section 773;
  - `` (III) to identify best practices in systems for collecting, maintaining, processing, and disseminating materials in specialized formats to students with print disabilities at costs comparable to instructional materials for postsecondary nondisabled students;
  - `` (IV) to improve the effective use of such materials by faculty and staff, while complying with applicable copyright law; and
  - `` (V) to modify the definitions of instructional materials, authorized entities, and eligible students, as such terms are used in applicable Federal law, for the purpose of improving services to students with disabilities.

### **Ideal Outcomes**

- All students with disabilities, including those from the low incidence population, receive the appropriate accessible instructional materials (AIM) they need, on time.
- Students with disabilities receive appropriate instruction in utilizing AIM most effectively. For example, tactile graphics is one format for which students might need instruction in order to receive the most benefit.

- Proposed solutions incorporate flexibility to handle individual student needs.
- Proposed solutions incorporate flexibility to handle changes in AIM itself (new formats, revisions to existing standards).
- Provision is made to ensure that the most appropriate format is provided to the student, so that students are not required, due to limited availability of the needed format or cost considerations, to accept a less appropriate or less useful format.
- Proposed solutions incorporate flexibility to handle changes in technology.