

RESOLUTION AGREEMENT

Alfred University Case No. 02-17-2408

In order to resolve Case No. 02-17-2408, Alfred University (the University) assures the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), that it will take the actions detailed below pursuant to the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 104, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by recipients of Federal financial assistance. This agreement does not constitute an admission of liability, non-compliance, or wrongdoing by the University.

Assurances of Nondiscrimination. The University hereby reaffirms its commitment to ensure that people with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that of their nondisabled peers to participate in the University's programs, benefits, and services, including those delivered through electronic and information technology, except where doing so would impose an undue burden or create a fundamental alteration.

Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility. For the purposes of this Agreement, the accessibility of online content and functionality will be measured according to the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA and the Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Applications Suite (WAI-ARIA) 1.0 for web content, which are incorporated by reference.

Adherence to these accessible technology standards is one way to ensure compliance with the University's underlying legal obligations to ensure that people with disabilities are able to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same benefits and services within the same timeframe as their nondisabled peers, with substantially equivalent ease of use; that they are not excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any University programs, services, and activities delivered online, as required by Section 504 and its implementing regulation; and that they receive effective communication of the University's programs, services, and activities delivered online.

Remedies and Reporting Requirements

- 1) Proposed Policies and Procedures Regarding New Online Content and Functionality. By January 15, 2018, the University will submit to OCR for its review and approval proposed policies and procedures ("the Policy for New Content") to ensure that all new, newly-added, or modified online content and functionality will be accessible to people with disabilities as measured by conformance to the Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility set forth above, except where doing so would impose a fundamental alteration or undue burden. Although not required by OCR, the University reserves the right to also address academic freedom issues and how the University will address such concerns in the Policy for New Content. Given that the University is implementing a new Content Management System that will be operational in April 2018, it also reserves the right to modify the

Policy for New Content if necessary and appropriate once the new technology is in place. The University will discuss such changes with OCR if and when this eventuality arises.

- a) When fundamental alteration or undue burden defenses apply, the Plan for New Content will require the University to provide equally effective alternative access. The Plan for New Content will require the University, in providing equally effective alternate access, to take any actions that do not result in a fundamental alteration or undue financial and administrative burdens, but nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with disabilities receive the same benefits or services as their nondisabled peers. To provide equally effective alternate access, alternates are not required to produce the identical result or level of achievement for persons with and without disabilities, but must afford persons with disabilities equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs.
- b) The Plan for New Content must include sufficient quality assurance procedures, backed by adequate personnel and financial resources, for full implementation. This provision also applies to the University's online content and functionality developed by, maintained by, or offered through a third-party vendor or by using open sources.
- c) Within thirty (30) days of receiving OCR's approval of the Policy for New Content, the University will officially adopt, and fully implement the amended policies and procedures.

Reporting Requirement: Within 45 days of receiving OCR's approval, the University will submit to OCR the approved policies and procedures, evidence of their adoption and distribution, and a description of how they are being implemented.

- 2) Undue Burden and Fundamental Alteration. For any technology-related requirement in this Agreement for which the University asserts an undue burden or fundamental alteration defense, such assertion may only be made by the President or by a person the President designates, such as the Vice President for Business and Finance of the University or by another individual designated by the President who has budgetary authority. If the University claims that a requirement would constitute an undue burden, that decision will be made after considering all resources available for use in the funding and operation of the service, program, or activity, and must be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion, including the cost of meeting the requirement and the available funding and other resources. The written statement will be certified by the determining official. If such a determination is made with regard to undue burden or a fundamental alteration, the certifying official will describe in the written statement how it will provide equally effective alternate access, *i.e.*, other action that would not result in such an alteration or such burdens but would nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with disabilities receive the same benefits or services provided by the University as their nondisabled peers.

- 3) Review of Existing Content and Functionality. By January 15, 2018, the University will designate an internal team (the “Review Team”) for OCR’s review and approval who will conduct a review of all content and functionality on its website, including, but not limited to, the home page, all subordinate pages, and intranet pages and sites, to identify any online content or functionality that is inaccessible to persons with disabilities, including online content and functionality developed by, maintained by, or offered through a third party vendor or an open source. The Review Team will have sufficient knowledge and experience in website accessibility for people with disabilities to carry out all related tasks, including developing a Strategic Action Plan. The Review Team will use the Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility set out above, unless the University receives prior permission from OCR to use a different standard as a benchmark. During the review, the University will host a focus group and invite members of the public with disabilities, including parents, students, employees, and others associated with the University, and other persons knowledgeable about website accessibility, regarding the accessibility of its online content and functionality.

Reporting Requirement:

- (a) By January 15, 2018, the University will submit the credentials of its proposed Review Team to OCR for review and approval. OCR will evaluate whether the proposed Review Team has the requisite experience and knowledge to carry out an appropriate review and to develop a Strategic Action Plan.
 - (b) Within ninety (90) days of receiving OCR’s approval of the proposed Review Team, the University will submit to OCR documentation of the steps taken by the Review Team and a detailed Strategic Action Plan, a description of the input received from the focus group, and a detailed accounting of the results of the review.
- 4) Strategic Action Plan. As referenced above, within ninety (90) days of receiving OCR’s approval of the proposed Review Team, the University will submit to OCR for its review and approval a proposed Strategic Action Plan to address all inaccessible content and functionality identified during the University’s review. The proposed Strategic Action Plan will set out a detailed schedule for:
 - (a) addressing problems, taking into account identified priorities, with all corrective actions to be completed within 18 months of the date OCR approved the Corrective Action Plan;
 - (b) setting up systems of accountability and verifying claims of accessibility by vendors or open sources; and
 - (c) setting up a system of testing and accountability to maintain the accessibility of all online content and functionality on an ongoing basis.
 - 5) Within 30 days of receiving OCR’s approval of the proposed Strategic Action Plan, the University will officially adopt and implement the Strategic Action Plan.

Reporting Requirement:

- (a) Within 45 days of receiving OCR's approval of the Strategic Action Plan, the University will submit to OCR documentation establishing that the approved Corrective Action Plan is being implemented according to the approved schedule.
 - (b) Reports will be due six months thereafter until the Corrective Action Plan has been completed.
- 6) Notice. By or before January 15, 2018, the University will submit to OCR for review and approval a proposed notice to persons with disabilities (Notice) regarding how to request the webmaster or other appropriate person to provide access to (or notify the University regarding) online information or functionality that is currently inaccessible. The proposed Notice will also include information or an accessible link to information instructing people how to file formal grievances under Section 504. Within 10 days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Notice, the University will officially adopt and prominently post the approved Notice on its home page and throughout its website (including all subordinate pages and intranet sites).

Reporting Requirement: Within 15 days of receiving OCR's approval of the University's proposed Notice, the University will provide documentation to OCR regarding the locations and content of its published Notice.

- 7) Training. No later than February 15, 2018, and annually thereafter, the University will deliver website accessibility training to all appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to: content developers, webmasters, procurement officials, and all others responsible for developing, loading, maintaining, or auditing web content and functionality.

Reporting Requirement:

- (a) For each training session required by this Agreement, until such time as OCR closes the monitoring of this Agreement, the University will submit to OCR documentation that it has been delivered.
- (b) The documentation will include a list of invitees and attendees, including titles; a description of the delivered training content; and the presenters' credentials for giving such training.

The University understands that by signing this Agreement, it agrees to provide the foregoing information in a timely manner in accordance with the reporting requirements of this Agreement. Further, the University understands that during the monitoring of this Agreement, if necessary, OCR may visit the University, interview staff and students, and request such additional reports or data as are necessary for OCR to determine whether the University has fulfilled the terms of this Agreement and is in compliance with the regulations implementing Section 504, at 34 C.F.R. §§

104.4 (a) and (b), and 104.43. Upon completion of the obligations under this Agreement, OCR shall close and dismiss this case.

The University understands and acknowledges that OCR may initiate administrative enforcement or judicial proceedings to enforce the specific terms and obligations of this Agreement. Before initiating administrative enforcement (34 C.F.R. §§ 100.9, 100.10), or judicial proceedings to enforce this Agreement, OCR shall give the University written notice of the alleged breach and sixty (60) calendar days to cure the alleged breach.

This Agreement will become effective immediately upon the signature of the University's representative below.

11/1/17

/s/

Date

Mark Zupan
President
Alfred University