

Resolution Agreement
Hartnell College
Case Number 09-17-2507

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), initiated an investigation into allegations that the College (“the recipient”) violated Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 104, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its implementing regulation at 28 C.F.R. Part 35. Specifically, the complainant alleged that the recipient’s website contained barriers to access for people with disabilities, thereby denying them an equal opportunity to participate in the recipient’s programs, services, and activities and denying them effective communication necessary for full participation in the recipient’s programs, services, and activities.

Prior to the completion of OCR’s investigation, the recipient agreed to resolve the issues of this investigation pursuant to Section 302 of OCR’s Case Processing Manual (CPM). This resolution has been entered into voluntarily between the parties and does not constitute an admission that the recipient is not in compliance with Section 504, Title II, and/or their implementing regulations. Accordingly, to ensure compliance with Section 504 and Title II and their implementing regulations and to resolve the issues of this investigation, the recipient voluntarily agrees to take the actions set forth below.

Assurances of Nondiscrimination. The recipient hereby reaffirms its commitment to ensure that people with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that of their nondisabled peers to participate in the recipient’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) 1.1 for web content, which are incorporated by reference.

Adherence to these accessible technology standards is one way to ensure compliance with the recipient’s underlying legal obligations to ensure 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 of the recipient programs, services, and activities delivered online, as required by Section 504 and Title II and their implementing regulations; and that they receive effective communication of the recipient’s programs, services, and activities delivered online.

Remedies and Reporting

In order to resolve accessibility issues with the current website, the recipient will replace the current website with all new webpages that comply with WCAG 2.0 AA guidelines and content that is accessible.

- 1) Proposed Policies and Procedures Regarding New Online Content and Functionality. By May 4, 2018, the recipient will submit to OCR for its review and approval proposed policies and procedures (“the Plan 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.
 - a) When fundamental alteration or undue burden defenses apply, the Plan for New Content will require the recipient to provide equally effective alternative access. The Plan for New Content will require the recipient, 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 recipient’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 Plan for New Content, the recipient will officially adopt, and fully implement the amended policies and procedures.
 - d) Reporting: Within 45 days of receiving OCR’s approval, the recipient 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 recipient asserts an undue burden or fundamental alteration defense, such assertion may only be made by the President of the College who has budgetary authority 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, 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 recipient as their nondisabled peers.

- 3) Replacement of Existing Webpages. By May 4, 2018 the College will propose for OCR's review and approval, a Corrective Action Plan to replace all existing webpages on its website, including, but not limited to, the home page, all subordinate pages, so that all online content and functionality is accessible to persons with disabilities, including online content and functionality developed by, maintained by, or offered through a third-party vendor or an open source. To accomplish this project, the College will secure the services of vendors and service providers with sufficient knowledge and experience in creating and maintaining website accessibility for people with disabilities to carry out all related tasks, including developing and executing the proposed Corrective Action Plan.
 - A. Reporting: OCR will evaluate whether the draft Corrective Action Plan proposed according to Paragraph 3 has appropriate elements and allocates sufficient resources to meet the goals of the Plan. Within 30 calendar days of receiving OCR's approval of the draft Corrective Action Plan, the College will submit to OCR documentation that it has adopted the Corrective Action Plan, and will provide evidence that it is in the process of retaining qualified vendors and service providers to implement the plan according to the schedule.
 - B. The proposed Corrective Action Plan will set out a detailed schedule for 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, setting up systems of accountability and verifying claims of accessibility by vendors, service providers, or open sources; and setting up a system of testing and accountability to maintain the accessibility of all online content and functionality on an ongoing basis.
- 4) Audit of New Content and Functionality. As a part of the Corrective Action Plan, the College will audit all content and functionality of each of the College's new webpages as they come on-line, including, but not limited to, the home page, all subordinate pages, and school websites, 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 audits will use the Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility set out above, including a manual check for keyboard functionality and compatibility with commonly used assistive technology, unless the College receives prior permission from OCR to use a different standard as a benchmark. During the audits, the College will also seek input from members of the public with disabilities, including parents, students, employees, and others associated with the College, and other persons knowledgeable about website accessibility, regarding the accessibility of its online content and functionality.

- A. Reporting: Within 15 calendar days of each webpage coming on-line the College will submit to OCR documentation of the steps taken during the testing/audit, a description of the outreach it undertook and the input it received, and a detailed accounting of the results of the audit.
 - B. Reporting: Within 45 calendar days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Corrective Action Plan, the College will submit to OCR the approved Corrective Action Plan, and documentation establishing that the approved Corrective Action Plan is being implemented according to the approved schedule. Reports will be due every 3 months thereafter until the Corrective Action Plan has been completed.
- 5) Notice. By March 15, 2018 the recipient will submit to OCR for review and approval a proposed Notice to persons with disabilities regarding how to request the webmaster or other appropriate person to provide access to (or notify the recipient 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 internal grievances under Section 504 and Title II. Within 10 days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Notice, the recipient will officially adopt and prominently post the approved Notice on its home page and throughout its website (including all subordinate pages and intranet sites).
- A. Reporting. Within 15 days of receiving OCR's approval of the recipient's proposed Notice, the recipient will provide documentation to OCR regarding the locations and content of its published Notice, and ensure the applicable notice is linked from every page.
- 6) Training. By March 30, 2018 and annually thereafter, the recipient 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.
- A. Reporting: For each training session required by this Agreement, until such time as OCR closes the monitoring of this Agreement, the recipient will submit to OCR documentation that it has been delivered. 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.
- 7) The recipient understands that by signing this Agreement, it agrees to provide data and other information in a timely manner. Further, the recipient understands that during the monitoring of this Agreement, OCR may visit the recipient, interview staff and students, and request such additional reports or data, including simulated website accounts and passwords, as are necessary for OCR to determine whether the recipient 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 Title II, at 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.130 and 35.160, which were at issue in this case. Upon completion of the obligations under this Agreement, OCR shall close and dismiss the case.

- 8) The recipient 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 recipient written notice of the alleged breach and sixty (60) calendar days to cure the alleged breach.

_____/s/_____
Willard C. Lewallen, Ph.D.
Superintendent/President

02/12/2018
Date