



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

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October 5, 2022

By email only to: john.mcvay@wallawalla.edu

John McVay, Ph.D.
President
Walla Walla University
204 S. College Avenue
College Place, WA 99324

Re: OCR Docket No. 10-19-6909
Walla Walla University, Washington

Dear President McVay:

This letter is to advise you of the resolution of the directed investigation that the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) initiated in Walla Walla University (University). OCR investigated whether the University's online programs, services, and activities exclude qualified persons with disabilities from participation in, deny them the benefits of, or otherwise subject them to discrimination under any program or activity, in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 104.4.

OCR enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 104, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department.

OCR conducted tests April 8, 2021, October 14, 2021, December 9, 2021, April 12, 2022, August 24 and 30, 2022, of the University's website and online programs and determined, as of the initial testing date, that there were some barriers to access for people with disabilities in online programs and activities on some pages, while other pages were barrier-free. The pages selected by OCR for testing included approximately 15 pages representative of the University's overall online programs and activities, focusing on pages of critical importance to students and members of the public. OCR reviewed the University's homepage; different templates; the most highly-trafficked pages; and other pages of importance, listed below. OCR does not review all of a covered entity's web pages because a website is not static and web pages are always changing. Thus, it is most important for OCR to carefully test those pages that are of critical importance to the ability of students or members of the public to access the University's programs or activities.

Through its testing of representative pages and OCR's communications with the University, OCR determined as of August 30, 2022, that the University had remediated all identified barriers on the web pages listed below, if any, which had previously impeded the ability of people with disabilities to access the University's online programs and activities:

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

- The Homepage (<https://www.wallawalla.edu/>);
- The Engineering page (<https://www.wallawalla.edu/academics/areas-of-study/engineering/>);
- The Admissions page (<https://www.wallawalla.edu/admissions-and-aid/>);
- The Financial Aid page (<https://www.wallawalla.edu/admissions-and-aid/student-financial-services/financial-aid/>);
- The Student Privacy page (<https://www.wallawalla.edu/academics/student-academic-services/academic-records/student-privacy/>);
- The Why We Wear Masks page
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTbVvAkkAu8&feature=youtu.be>);
- The Athletics page (<https://uwolves.com/>);
- The Calendar page (<https://www.wallawalla.edu/calendar/>);
- The COVID-19 Response and Information page
(<https://www.wallawalla.edu/news/covid-19-response-information/>);
- The Visit WWU page (<https://www.wallawalla.edu/admissions-and-aid/visit-wwu/>);
- The Disability Support Services page (<https://www.wallawalla.edu/resources/student-support-services/student-development-center/disability-support-services/>);
- The Disability Services Intake Registration Form page
(<https://www.wallawalla.edu/resources/student-support-services/student-development-center/disability-support-services/support-services/intake-registration-form/>);
- The Preventing Discrimination and Harassment page
(<https://www.wallawalla.edu/resources/human-resources-payroll/employee-resources/handbook-policies/discrimination-and-harassment/>);
- The Housing Accommodation Request page
(<https://www.wallawalla.edu/resources/student-support-services/student-development-center/disability-support-services/documentation-guidelines/housing-requests/>); and
- The Give us Feedback page (<https://www.wallawalla.edu/forms/feedback/>).

To memorialize its commitment to maintain the accessibility of its website and online programs, on September 28, 2022, the University signed the enclosed Agreement, voluntarily resolving the directed investigation pursuant to Section 302 of OCR's Case Processing Manual. When fully implemented, the Agreement will address the evidence obtained and all of the allegations

investigated. OCR will monitor the implementation of the Agreement until the University is in compliance with the terms of the Agreement and the statute and regulation at issue in the case.

This concludes OCR's directed investigation. This letter should not be interpreted to address the University's compliance with any other regulatory provision or to address any issues other than those addressed in this letter. This letter sets forth OCR's determination in an individual OCR directed investigation. This letter is not a formal statement of OCR policy and should not be relied upon, cited, or construed as such. OCR's formal policy statements are approved by a duly authorized OCR official and made available to the public. An individual may have the right to file a private suit in Federal court whether or not OCR finds a violation.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. If OCR receives such a request, we will seek to protect personally identifiable information that could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy if released, to the extent provided by law.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 987-1402 or tamara.perry@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Tamara Perry
Attorney Advisor

Enclosure

Courtesy copy by email only to:

Scott Ligman
Associate Academic Vice President
scott.ligman@wallawalla.edu