

Investment Fund for Core Needs (IFCN)

Entry #196

A. PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Title: Creating a Culture of Accessibility: Universal Course Design & Assistive Technology Resource Center

Project Lead Name: Sherri Micheli
Office for Students with Disabilities

Project Lead email address: smicheli@brockport.edu

Amount Requested: \$82350

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Name of Sponsor 1: Katy Wilson
Enrollment Management and Student Affairs

Name of Sponsor 2: Jim Haynes
Academic Affairs

Name of Sponsor 3:

A-1. Description of the Initiative

The proposal's intent is to promote an environment of universal accessibility and design through the creation of an Assistive Technology Resource Center. This Center will support the needs of students with disabilities, staff/faculty with disabilities, all teaching faculty to ensure their courses are legally compliant, as well as community groups like Camp Abilities, Special Olympics, etc. The Center's mission will be to address mandatory requirements that all courses (traditional face-to-face, hybrid, and online) comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on accessibility. Both ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 civil rights laws that protects individuals with disabilities. They give individuals with disabilities equal opportunity to benefit from all of the programs, services, and activities offered by a public institution. Additionally, these individuals cannot be excluded from or subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal funds. Universal course design will provide an atmosphere of inclusion to all students notably those with diverse language and learning styles.

(www.ada.gov/cguide)

To support campus wide universal accessibility and design, the Center will focus on three areas: professional development for faculty, technical support, and necessary technologies for open accessibility. Professional development opportunities will consist of universal accessibility, design and pedagogy, access to the SUNY Accessibility Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and hands-on

workshops. Through these trainings, faculty will discover why universal design and accessibility are important to student success and how to create course materials, text, graphics, videos, and Blackboard course shells that are fully accessible.

Due to civil rights laws students are not required to disclose their disability to instructors. Presently numerous courses are not fully accessible and there is not enough campus support/resources to make sure courses meet the needs of a diverse campus community and provide an inclusive environment for all. This proposal includes technical support to assist with preparing course materials including text, PDF's, graphics, braille printers, and captions for video and faculty recorded presentations. Course material should be open and accessible to students at the same time in accordance with ADA/504 laws.. Our goal is to have materials ready prior to a course being offered.

With the growth of online and hybrid course offerings at Brockport and the College's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan to support these teaching methods, course accessibility is essential. With online and hybrid courses students can spend a majority of their time learning working independently, without traditional face-to-face in-class assistance or interaction with teaching faculty.

This proposal is considered a Core Need as to ensure all courses are universally accessible and requires a long term solution that will Build a Better Brockport and ensure student success.

A-2. Impact Statement: What change will this project deliver in the short term? What are the expected longer term impacts?

Long term impacts include courses being accessible and legally compliant therefore avoiding discrimination complaints with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) as well as potential lawsuits. Listed below are links that discuss relevant court cases when classes were not made accessible to students.

Here is a link to the settlement between Penn State and the National Federation of the Blind:

<http://accessibility.psu.edu/nfbpsusettlement>

The below link covers the story of how Harvard and MIT were sued for failure to provide captions for online courses:

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/13/education/harvard-and-mit-sued-over-failing-to-caption-online-courses.html?_r=0

B. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

B-1. To be a Great College at which to Learn

According to the strategic plan, "A great place to learn entails full inclusivity for all students", 'embraces different modes of instruction", and "has a learning environment with structures, tools, and conditions that support the needs of every learner".

Having an assistive technology resource center to ensure course accessibility will allow students to have equal access to the learning environment. Students with disabilities will be able to watch captioned

videos, receive course materials in an appropriate alternate format, and have access to equipment to foster their own success. Faculty will learn about universal course design and be able to implement these legally mandated measures across all course format types (in-person, online, and hybrid).

B-2. To be a College engaged with its Community

An assistive technology resource center will show the greater community that Brockport is committed to creating a culture of accessibility. Prospective students and their families will be able to see the measures Brockport is taking to ensure universal design and course accessibility. Having a Braille machine and tactile map of campus will be a huge resource to students, faculty, and staff that are blind or visually impaired. It will also allow us to serve the needs of community groups including Camp Abilities and the Special Olympics. Having an editing station for the production of closed captions will assist Deaf students and faculty, as well as other populations like those who have English as a second language. Captions can help these individuals have a better grasp of spelling and the English language, in general. The College will also be in a position to help outside groups/organizations that need to provide services, but do not have the resources or means to do so.

B-3. To be a Sustainable Institution for the 21st Century

As stated in the Strategic Plan, "To be a Sustainable Institution for the 21st century means being aware of and responsive to different modes of teaching and learning". As assistive technology resource center will promote inclusion of all learning styles.

Having the appropriate technology available on campus to ensure course accessibility will save the College money in the long-term. Currently, when course materials need to have captions, the materials need to be sent off campus. This is not only time consuming, but costly. One video can cost several hundred dollars. We would also be able to produce accessible materials for outside agencies and community partners. This would foster a great sense of collaboration as well as give the College a means for generating revenue.

B-4. To be a Great College at which to Work

A Great College at which to work, means having "a healthy campus climate and a culture of excellence where its employees have pride, enjoy working, and have trust in the institution and each other".

Additionally, the strategic plan states, "Faculty, staff and students will

partner to advance goals related to inclusion, creating an environment where all members of

our community are respected, valued and included. The creation of an assistive technology resource center will allow Faculty to be confident in their ability to create legally compliant course material and the satisfaction in knowing that their courses can meet the needs of diverse student styles.

C. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND BUDGET

C-1. Identify the specific activities to be funded from the Investment Fund, estimated time-line for implementation, and for activities anticipated to be ongoing, plans for continued funding.

Item 1: Professional staff members: a Directory/Faculty Educator (which should be the instructional design specialist here on campus) as well as an Assistive Technology professional staff member

Item 1 Amount: \$50000

Item 2: Video Editing System to create closed captions (includes laptops and PC's for text, graphics) - also includes hardware/software accessibility and a laptop surface pro with accessories

Item 2 Amount: \$5400

Item 3: Assistive technology including a desktop CCTV, portable CCTV, Braille machine, large print keyboards, ergonomic keyboards, and alternate/trackball mice,

Item 3 Amount: \$14000

Item 4: Tactile map of campus

Item 4 Amount: \$3000

Item 5: Travel/Professional Development/Student Employment Funds

Item 5 Amount: \$10000

Item 6:

Item 6 Amount: \$

Item 7:

Item 7 Amount: \$

Item 8:

Item 8 Amount: \$

Item 9:

Item 9 Amount: \$

Item 10:

Item 10 Amount: \$

TOTAL EXPENSES, ALL ITEMS: \$82400

Matching Fund: \$69000

In-Kind Services: Provide FTE and name of personnel who have committed to in-kind services.

Ann Pearlman - Senior Instructional Design Specialist could be the Director of the Assistive Technology Resource Center. Her salary is already incorporated into the Brockport budget. Additional "in-kind" services and equipment that can be provided through

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D. ASSESSMENT PLAN:

D-1. What are the anticipated outcomes and specific measurements for success?

This proposal's assessment plan will use the Open SUNY Course Quality Review (OSCQR) Rubric that is designed to assist with improving course design and evaluating accessibility. Open SUNY developed the accessibility standards section of the OSCQR instrument, under the guidance of their Office for General Counsel, to meet ADA compliance requirements.

This will allow Brockport to most effectively meet the learning needs of all students.

The Center can track the number of closed captioned materials produced on campus. The College will see an increase (annually) in the number of materials available with closed captions across campus.

Assessments can also be given during faculty trainings to ensure compliance and proper understanding of making courses accessible. With the appropriate resources in place, an accessibility checklist can be created and given to faculty. This checklist will allow them to compare all of the listed accessibility measures to their course design so faculty can determine if their classes are legally compliant.

E. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

E-1. Please provide any additional information to assist in the review of the proposal, including why the initiative cannot be funded from divisional resources.

Link to information regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

https://www.ada.gov/ada_intro.htm

Sources for equal access:

<http://er.educause.edu/articles/2017/1/ada-compliance-for-online-course-design>

AND

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/11116002-b.pdf>

Upload up to three supplemental files here (not required): [On file]

Signature of Project Lead: [on file]

Email: smicheli@brockport.edu

Signatures of sponsors are on file in the Administration and Finance Division.

Sponsor 1 Comments:

Sponsor 2 comments: Approved by attached email 'Haynes approves Micheli.pdf'

Sponsor 3 Comments:

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