Western Oregon
UNIVERSITY

Staff Senate Minutes

December 2, 2025 (2:00-3:30pm)
Meeting location - Calapooia Room in the Werner University Center 130
https://wou.edu/ces/conference-and-event-services/meeting-spaces/werner-university-center/22870-2/

Welcome

- Conversation opportunities for personal and professional updates with guests and Senators

Staff Senate follows Simplified Robert's Rules

- Under simplified rules, it allows for a little less formal communication, still providing everyone opportunities to bring forth their ideas.

In-Attendance: Rip Horsey, Ambre Plahn, Gregg Vineyard, Sandra Holland, Emily Herb, Kodee Harwood, Melissa Eddings, Ellie Baker, Maya Guerra

Absent: Tessa Paulsen, Robyn Lopez Melton,

Guests: Paul Dorres, Amelia Wulf, Kathleen Jensen

Approval of this agenda

- Approved as is

Approval of past meeting minutes

- November 18th Minutes approved

Guest Speakers

- Emily Herb, Human Resources, Director, Faculty & Staff Access Services
  - Digital Accessibility Requirements 101 Presentation (attached at the end of the minutes)
    - Work began in the summer of 2023 initially as a policy review internal to WOU and compared to other Oregon universities. During this time, the federal government announced new ADA legislation regarding digital accessibility requirements for all government agencies at the state and federal level effective 4/24/2026. This is now a mandate stating that all digital content must be always made available during period, not just when a student or staff is in need.
    - Mandatory training will begin in January 2026 and is expected to end by April 2026. Each month will focus on a different digital accessibility training focus. Trainings will be offered in various modes.
    - Questions:
      - Is there a benchmark for where WOU is at with regards to where we are complying with the new policy to gauge how far we have to go in order to be compliant by April 2026?
        - No, MarCom is working with an outside agency to audit our website with the goal of overhauling our website to meet the new

Staff Senate Minutes

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standards.
- Will the departments have to review every one of their forms to ensure they comply with digital accessibility?
  - Yes, everything the university uses and puts out on their website, etc. will have to be updated to meet the new standards.
- Does everyone have to attend every training opportunity, or can it be specific to the individual who works directly with the training topic?
  - No, the folks who are directly involved with that work should be the ones attending the training. However, anyone is welcome to attend every training course just to familiarize themselves with the changes if they want to.
- Staff Senate has an archive on our website of past years information. Do we have to update that information to meet the new standards?
  - Not necessarily, we should check with the retention records requirements from HECC and then truly archive the information that is no longer needed to be held.
- How will students learn to adhere to the new standards regarding social media usage for departments?
  - One option would be to open social media training to students

Reports
- Committee Reports
  - Shared Governance
    - Next meeting December 10, 2025
  - President's Cabinet
    - Next meeting December 10, 2025
  - University Council
    - Next Meeting: February 11, 2026
  - Other - Administrative Equity, Staff Connections, University Advisory Committees, etc.

Vice President's Corner
- Other shared governance information, elections, reminders, etc.
- Recruitment for Staff Senate
  - Classified vacant seat - still looking
  - NASA is sending a new spaceship into space to see if there are any aliens out there. The goal is to simply tell them how sorry we are for everything. The name of the ship is Apollo-G

Secretary/Treasurer's Updates
- Financial, business-related, fun facts, random questions, etc.

Unfinished Business
- Discussing SMART Goals and Strategies for 2025-2026

Staff Senate Minutes

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- ○ Mentorship program updates
- ● Reviewing the "Distribution of Funds Recovered from Indirect Cost"
  - ○ Discuss, listen, and ask more questions from the staff's point of view

New Business

- ● Performance Reviews
  - ○ Human Resources will soon offer staff training
    - ■ Discuss topics we would like to review in the training
      - ● If there are any topics that you would like to see more training for, please email any of the executive staff members and we can add this to our list of topics for HR.
- ● Future staff training partnership presentation by Malissa Larson, Dean of Students & Associate Vice President, Student Affairs
  - ○ "Worries to warnings: Student Support Spectrum"
  - ○ Hopefully, planning in January but not during a staff senate meeting. The idea is to host a zoom webinar/training that staff senate would be in support of and help organize. Possible dates are January 13 or 27. Consensus around the room is opting for January 13. Rip will work with Malissa to get this scheduled.

Announcements and Reminders

- ● Announcements
  - ○ Digital Accessibility Requirements 101
    - ■ Newsletter section with a Did you know? And tip of the week
    - ■ WOU digital accessibility webpage and more info is coming soon
  - ○ Wolf Web will be shutdown on 12/31/25. Experience will be the new system
  - ○ Agenda item suggestions can be made to staffsenate@wou.edu or wou.edu/staffsenate
- ● Important Training Reminders
  - ○ Business Office
    - ■ Campus-Wide Trainings-Watch for emails from Cheri Darby and Sandra Holland
    - ■ Check-Runs will be held on Tuesday, December 23 and Tuesday, December 30
  - ○ Check out the @WOU Newsletter for more optional events, departmental updates, and training opportunities
- ● Kudos/Recognition
  - ○ December Staff Recognition Nominees:
    - ■ Kodee Harwood
    - ■ Lauren Kennedy
    - ■ UCS – Their entire team has been incredibly helpful and quick to resolving issues that come up recently.
- ● Public Comments - Anything for the good of the order?

Upcoming

- ● Next meeting: January 20, 2026, @ 2 pm
- ● Werner University Center (WUC) room 130

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- Guest: [TBD] - General Counsel (Craig Ashford) and Director of Campus Public Safety (Mike Hanson); dialogue around federal and state legal updates

Adjourn

WOU Digital Accessibility Policy

Staff Senate - December 2, 2025

Access@WOU Spring 2024 - Winter 2025

- **Tina Fuchs -** Vice President of Student Affairs
- **Desiree Noah** - Chief Human Resources Officer
- **Dominique Vargas** - Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- **Rian Gayle** - Director, Disability Access Services
- **Stacey Rainey -** Assistant Director, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services (DAS)
- **Emily Herb** - Director, Faculty and Staff Access Services (HR)

How We Started

- Seeking guidance (Emily and Stacey)
- Seeking help with the Equity Assessment action items (Dominique and Tina)
- Seeking clarity and alignment between DAS and HR (Desiree and Rian)

Guiding Principles

From the Strategic Plan Vision Statement:

"Our vision is for Western Oregon University to be a model of intentional inclusion and accessibility."

Fostering Accessibility:

At Western Oregon University, we work to ensure inclusivity and eliminate barriers in our physical, social, and learning environments. We are dedicated to continuous improvement so that every member of our community can engage, contribute, and succeed.

Guiding Principles

Diversity Action Plan Goals: Climate, Recruitment & Retention of Employees, Recruitment & Retention of Students, Facilities & Physical Plant

Equity Assessment Themes: Diversity & Inclusion, Communication & Technology, Accountability, Physical Environment & Safety, Community, Leadership

Guiding Principles

Equity Assessment Action Plan Initiative

Accessibility is a funding priority for Western Oregon University

- Ongoing long-term initiative
- Accountability Leader(s) General Counsel and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Secretary & Special Assistant to the President; Responsible Parties: Facility Services, Capital Planning and Construction, Office of Disability Services, University Computing Solutions. Consider a joint initiative between University Technology Advisory Committee and University Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee.
- **Timeline to be updated**
  - **2023-2024: Develop physical and digital accessibility policies, Committee(s) formed to develop policies, Policies drafted and reviewed, Public Comment, Approval, Implementation plan**
  - **2024-2025: Physical and digital accessibility policies rolled out**
  - **2024-2025: Committee established to review the 2014 accessibility audit, Review audit, Determine next steps to begin to improve university accessibility, with initial recommendations to Cabinet by the end of Spring 2025**

The Path is Policy

[Oregon Public University Synthesis](#)

Compared Oregon Public Universities

- Unified Accessibility Web Page
- Workplace Accommodations Policy
- Student Accommodations Policy
- Digital Accessibility Policy
- Inclusive and Accessible Events Guidelines
- Accessibility Committee

Digital Accessibility Policy Timeline

- **April 24, 2024** Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) New Rule on Web Content and Mobile App Accessibility for Title II Entities
- **Summer Term 2024** Access@WOU completes accessibility policy audit
- **October 18, 2024** Access@WOU presents at University Technology Advisory Committee (UTAC) about Digital Accessibility
- **February 21, 2025** UTAC presents Digital Accessibility Policy draft at Winter retreat
- **Spring Term 2025** Access@WOU expands membership
- **Summer Term 2025** Access@WOU submits policy and begins implementation

Access@WOU 2025

- **Tina Fuchs -** Vice President of Student Affairs
- **Desiree Noah** - Chief Human Resources Officer
- **Dominique Vargas** - Executive Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- **Evan Source** - Executive Director, Government Relations
- **Maureen Brakke** - Executive Director, Marketing & Communications
- **Tom Litterer -** CIO and Director of University Computing Solutions
- **Chelle Batchelor** - Dean of Library and Academic Innovation
- **Judy Sylva** - Associate Provost Academic Effectiveness
- **Dan Rockwell -** Director, WOU Center for Teaching & Learning
- **Rian Gayle** - Director, Disability Access Services (DAS)
- **Emily Herb** - Director, Faculty and Staff Access Services (HR)
- **Stacey Rainey -** Assistant Director, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services (DAS)

The Digital Accessibility Policy

"While we meet the legal requirements set forth under Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act and align with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards, our dedication goes beyond compliance. We strive to proactively remove barriers, continuously improve digital accessibility, and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in the academic, cultural, and civic life of the university."

WCAG 2.1 AA

WCAG stands for the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

What it is: It is the internationally recognized technical standard for digital accessibility. It was developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the main international standards organization for the World Wide Web.

Level AA (Target Standard): This is the required benchmark for almost all global legislation, including the upcoming ADA rules. It addresses the most common and significant barriers for users with disabilities and ensures our content is usable by the vast majority of people.

"Web Content and Mobile Apps"

What it covers: It is not just about our main website. It covers **all our digital content:**

- Public websites and student/faculty portals
- Mobile applications (apps)
- Electronic documents (emails, PDFs, Word documents, PowerPoints, Spreadsheets)
- Course content and Learning Management Systems (LMS)
- Social media posts

Responsible Parties

"Ensuring accessibility of web content and mobile apps provided or made available by WOU is a responsibility shared by all WOU administration, faculty, staff, student government, and students creating content or sharing on behalf of the university."

Examples:

Faculty - course content (in person and online), emails, videos, documents

Staff - websites, vendor websites, documents, portals, software

Students - shared course content, student organization content, social media

Scope

Digital Content Accessible from the Outset: We must be proactive. We can no longer rely on providing an accommodation after a user reports an issue. Digital content must be born accessible.

Course Content is Covered: This explicitly includes all password-protected course content (in our LMS, documents, videos, etc.).

Third-Party Vendor Responsibility: If we contract with a vendor for a service (e.g., a student portal, a library database), the legal responsibility for its accessibility still rests with the University. We cannot delegate our ADA obligation away.
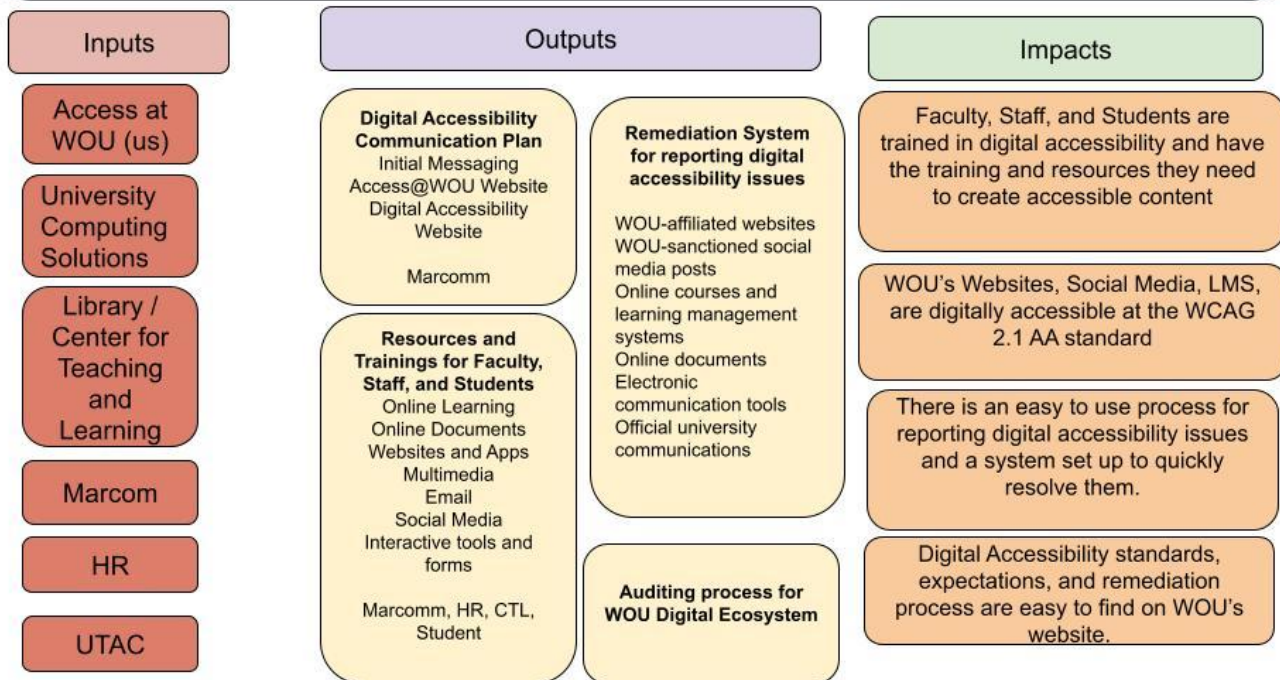
Policy is the Tip of the Iceberg

- ADA Requirement goes into effect April 24, 2026
- Digital Accessibility is EVERYONE's responsibility
- Training
- Remediation
- Auditing

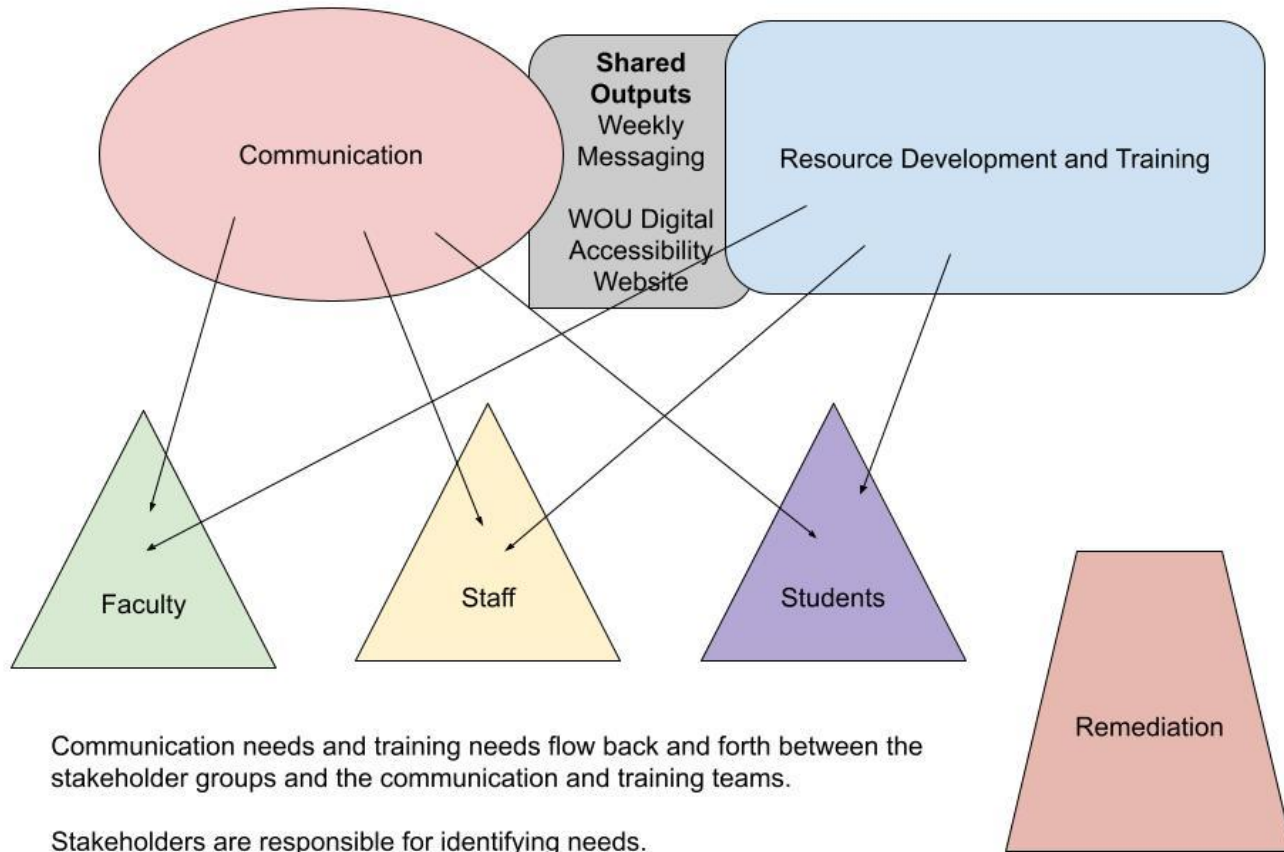# Digital Accessibility Policy Implementation at WOU

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complete digital accessibility at the WCAG 2.1 AA standard will be required at Western Oregon University by April 2026. Western Oregon University is in the process of adopting a Digital Accessibility Policy. The goal of this project is to implement the Digital Accessibility Policy.

Western Oregon University's vision is to be "a model of intentional inclusion and accessibility" (Strategic Plan Vision Statement). One of WOU's four core values is "Fostering Accessibility."

Inputs

- Access at WOU (us)
- University Computing Solutions
- Library / Center for Teaching and Learning
- Marcom
- HR
- UTAC

Outputs

Digital Accessibility Communication Plan
Initial Messaging
Access@WOU Website
Digital Accessibility Website

Marcomm

Resources and Trainings for Faculty, Staff, and Students
Online Learning
Online Documents
Websites and Apps
Multimedia
Email
Social Media
Interactive tools and forms

Marcomm, HR, CTL, Student

Remediation System for reporting digital accessibility issues

WOU-affiliated websites
WOU-sanctioned social media posts
Online courses and learning management systems
Online documents
Electronic communication tools
Official university communications

Auditing process for WOU Digital Ecosystem

Impacts

Faculty, Staff, and Students are trained in digital accessibility and have the training and resources they need to create accessible content

WOU's Websites, Social Media, LMS, are digitally accessible at the WCAG 2.1 AA standard

There is an easy to use process for reporting digital accessibility issues and a system set up to quickly resolve them.

Digital Accessibility standards, expectations, and remediation process are easy to find on WOU's website.

Training Schedule

- Training begins January 2026 and continues through April 2026
- Each month will have a different digital accessibility training focus:
  - Text based
  - Audio and Video
  - Images
- Website and Social Media accessibility training during all four months
- New Accessibility Website and Digital Accessibility Website will have online training and resources

Communication

Shared
Outputs
Weekly
Messaging

WOU Digital
Accessibility
Website

Resource Development and Training

Faculty

Staff

Students

Remediation

Communication needs and training needs flow back and forth between the
stakeholder groups and the communication and training teams.

Stakeholders are responsible for identifying needs.
Communication and training teams provide support.

Where We Are

- [Best Practices for Accessible Events with Interpreting and/or Captions](#)
- DRAFT [WOU Policy of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability](#)
- DRAFT [WOU Policy on Information Technology Accessibility](#)
- DRAFT **Accessibility Checklist for Events and Programs**