

Bakersfield College Accessibility Plan

DRAFT THREE

April 10, 2024

Establish Accessibility Committee.

Accessibility affects everything that we do at Bakersfield College. The depth of the taskforce work has brought into focus the need to have a core established group that can address accessibility initiatives officially, not just as a temporary taskforce. The primary recommendation of our committee is to transform the taskforce into an established campus committee. The work of this group needs to be codified into an official committee sanctioned by the Academic Senate and provide an annual report to the Faculty Senate and College Council. It is notable that in 2020, the Bakersfield College Academic Senate supported the development of such a committee and the College Council did not finalize this committee creation. Notably, several California Community Colleges have established Accessibility committees. Furthermore, the taskforce argues that beyond dedicated campus staff in DSPS and counseling, there needs to be a faculty/ staff/student/manager coalition that is advising on matters campuswide. We offer the subsequent justifications for the permanent establishment of an Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Stabilize accessibility efforts. The establishment of a college wide committee is particularly vital because change in administrative leadership should not destabilize accessibility efforts. If a different college president is hired, and they do not want to focus on accessibility this temporary work could be decommissioned, or it can go somewhere else. The establishment of a committee would allow the work to continue. It is notable that this process worked for the Kern Community College District level accessibility efforts. Kern CCD started as a task force and then they worked towards making it an actual committee. The committee would also provide a platform for accessibility advocates; Bakersfield College has some super stars in staff, faculty, and administration when it comes to accessibility work, and they need a common place to advise and collaborate.

The Kern CCD Accessibility Committee has different needs than Bakersfield College. District efforts overlap with Bakersfield College but do not always meet our campus accessibility needs and we need a core group that speaks to the needs of our campus. The challenge with being a taskforce is that accessibility lives in multiple places on campus. Accessibility is always more than what folks are immediately thinking, that has been the experience of those who have been involved in campus accessibility work overtime. Many think that accessibility is a thing and you do it like running a race, and once you cross the finish line it is done, which is an inaccurate analogy. Accessibility is an ongoing hermetic process that never ends. A college does not just make things accessible, and the job is done. It is a constant process of engaging in how to

make our institutions' opportunities available to everyone and being vigilant in learning about and following the principles of accessibility.

Comply with Changing Laws. Title II and ADA updates are ongoing. In addition to the implementation phase of the pilot of the California Community College Chancellor's office of ACMM (Accessibility Capability Maturity Model) there needs to be a committee where ongoing concerns can be addressed with the input from students, administration, staff, and faculty.

Bakersfield College serves a large diverse population. Bakersfield College has substantial enrollment numbers, nearly thirty thousand students. Throughout the county there are dozens of locations where classes are offered in the community. Rural needs: City Serve, Shafter, McFarland, Delano, Wasco, Job Spot (Southeast Bakersfield), Lamont and Arvin. Early College at dozens of high school campuses throughout Kern County. There are also thriving extension campuses in Delano, Southwest Bakersfield and soon in Arvin. The size and scope of the various populations that Bakersfield College serves demonstrates the need for its own dedicated committee.

Build a network between the accessibility and technology work happening throughout the campus. There are all these different avenues where this work is happening, but Bakersfield College is not leveraging all those groups together in the best conceivable way. Many areas focus on accessibility work including DSPS, the Education department, the Business department, web services, the library, Distance Learning taskforce, our ASL program, and Instructional Technology. If this committee continues, it can provide a voice to some of the things that are happening in the corners of the college and compiling that work in one place is a way to create awareness and compliance. The committee could help collaborate on an annual audit of verifying the accessibility of certain things such as instructional materials, senate documents or professional development. A lot of staff, faculty and administration know they have done some accessibility work, but they do not see the larger scope and the interconnectedness. An advisory committee would allow conversations about the difference between what DSPS does and what is considered college effort. What needs to happen for accessibility just because it is the right thing to do.

Accessibility Compliance Apathy & Resistance

Invest in Accessibility. In many instances, Bakersfield College uses contractors to ensure our materials are accessible. Our task force thinks changing the culture of our campus requires an investment in staff that support campuswide shifts to accessibility rather than depending on free online tools and volunteers. CSEA and CCA should be actively involved in conversation about job creations to help support and sustain the existing campus needs. At the least, hiring student assistants to aid in verification of documents that can be aiding staff and faculty would be immediately useful. The ADA climate report indicated the need for more support in both staffing, and brick and mortar buildings.

Create instructional videos. Over the last six years there has been huge resistance, but that has lessened over time, bringing us to this moment where people seem open to accessibility conversations. Bakersfield College is still missing the boat somewhere, and one way to help get out in the world would be promotional videos about what it means to be accessible, what benefits the students when something is automatically accessible, and they are not running into barriers. To make faculty and employees more aware of how their actions affect other people, because they are not doing it to be mean, it's just that it's never a part of their everyday life they are thinking about.

Compulsory Professional Development. We should be able to require everyone to take some training related to accessibility. This training could be part of a campus wide engagement effort, at an all staff meeting like opening day.

Accessibility as Part of Evaluation. Adding accessibility into the evaluation process to better comply with ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges). The Taskforce includes CSEA and CCA members who understand that this suggestion will need to be bargained with unions. However, to decrease the ADA verification burden on the staff, building this into workplace core expectations would ensure ongoing compliance. Furthermore, getting all the documents and converting for our disabled students could be easier if faculty and staff understood what makes materials accessible. We need more awareness to try to get equal access for every person on campus. The faculty handbook is woefully outdated and should be adjusted to include responsibilities and expectation of accessibility. Distance Education taskforce has advocated for processes to exist for faculty, we argue that handbook conversations and clear responsibilities to all employees.

Accessibility Reference Sheets. Add to websites, worksheets for document creation for word, pdf, and PPT. If someone generated a quick reference sheet when staff are creating their materials, they may be willing to just reference that and help them get started or review previous trainings. Though this approach is not as in-depth as professional development training, it could be used as a refresher.

Accessibility day awareness day/campaign. An awareness campaign, where we partner with the library or other campus groups doing this work. An event could have computers that are set up with the technology, the software is already on school issued computers. The goal of the event would be to let people experience what it is like to explore a class that has not been made accessible versus one that is so they can really see how challenging that can be.

Continue Best Practices

Provide templates. The Bakersfield College Academic Senate has provided templates for agendas, meeting minutes and reports that come to the Academic Senate. All the committee co-

chairs were provided with these materials. It would be strong for administration to also utilize this practice of basic word documents to have a start.

Support Professional Development Opportunities. The Bakersfield College campus should continue to offer PD and emphasize in advertising that these are not unique to online faculty, but all instructional faculty understand accessibility. The campus has strong PD provided for accessibility strategies for the learning management system Canvas and how to make documents accessible. The ongoing offerings, not just at FLEX, provide ongoing support for everyone that works on campus. Including these workshops as part of programming to New Faculty Orientation and Adjunct Workshops are strong approaches that should be continued.

Provide Ongoing Pathways to Accessibility Certificates. The Bakersfield College campus should support both faculty and staff earning certificates in accessibility that create a standard of expected skill and knowledge. Notably, the California Community College Chancellor's Office is financially paying for staff to take part in asynchronous training through [WebAIM](#). Furthermore, in the Fall of 2023, the Department of Education at Bakersfield College developed a two-course sequence for accessibility. The certificate is titled, "Inclusive and Accessible Digital Content Certificate of Completion (NC)"

This noncredit program provides applied information and practice in creating and modifying inclusive and accessible digital content. Anyone who posts or sends information online can apply the skills practiced throughout this program. Skills that will be mastered include creating and modifying accessible documents, media, spreadsheets, presentations, pdfs, and emails as well as the use of accessibility checkers. These skills and the experience gained in the program may increase employability in office settings, e-commerce, education, and online-based industries. Upon completion of the required courses with a grade of 'P', the student will be awarded a Certificate of Completion.

EDUCB60NC: Inclusive and Accessible Digital Content I

Course Objectives

1. Create documents using proper and accessible heading styles, links, tables, captions, and alternative text.
2. Apply cell styles, cell names, and header cells.
3. Utilize accessibility checkers in various software applications.
4. Utilize accessible templates when creating documents.
5. Modify the design and layout of a document while maintaining accessibility.
6. Create and send accessible and readable communications (i.e. E-mail).
7. Modify font, color, lines, shapes and other formatting tools while maintaining accessibility.
8. Utilizing third-party tools to check for accessible web content.

Course SLOs

1. Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to create, check, and modify accessible documents using various basic software applications such as Microsoft Word.

2. Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to create, check, and modify accessible spreadsheets using various basic software applications such as Microsoft Excel.

3. Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to create, check, and modify accessible presentations using various basic software applications such as Microsoft PowerPoint.

4. Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to use accessibility practices create and send accessible and readable communication (i.e. E-mail).

EDUCB61NC : Inclusive and Accessible Digital Content II Course Objectives

1. Evaluate and analyze PDF accessibility.
2. Generate an accessible PDF from word processing software.
3. Create and modify an accessible PDF.
4. Develop a captioned video.
5. Develop an audio transcript.
6. Create and modify accessible PDF forms.
7. Create and modify accessible other digital information such as infographics and flyers.

Course SLOs

1. Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to create and modify accessible files, including forms, in portable document format (.pdf) using accessibility checks.

2. Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to create and modify video and audio to comply with current accessibility standards regarding transcripts and captions.

3. Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to create and modify a variety of types of digital content to comply with current accessibility standards.
