Disability Resource Center

www.missouristate.edu/disability

CHANGING HOW WE PERCEIVE DISABILITY

For Faculty and Staff
The Disability Resource Center (DRC) collaborates with faculty and staff to accommodate students with disabilities.

However, we are striving to create a paradigm shift in our work. We are providing more resources and consultation to our faculty and staff to assure that our curriculum, programs and services are proactively inclusive.

Our student population is becoming more and more diverse, including different learning styles, languages, abilities and cultural backgrounds. Individuals do not take in and process information in the same way. Consequently, teaching methods need to reflect our increasingly diverse campus culture. By incorporating universal design into our teaching, programs and services, everyone benefits including those with disabilities. Missouri State recognizes and values this change in our work. Consequently, the DRC is proud to be a unit within MSU's Division for Diversity and Inclusion.

We are available to assist faculty in reviewing their curricula and suggesting teaching strategies with the goal of creating courses that are more inclusive and proactively accessible, minimizing the need for individual accommodations and maintaining all essential academic elements.

We encourage you to review our new mission and philosophy. Join us in our endeavors to create inclusive, equitable, usable learning environments.

— KATHERYNE STAEGER-WILSON, DIRECTOR
Our mission
In conjunction with the Community Principles and overall mission of Missouri State University, the Disability Resource Center appreciates disability as an integral part of the University experience. We are committed to providing equal access and opportunity to all campus programs and services for persons with disabilities. Through collaboration and support of the entire campus community, the Disability Resource Center promotes disability pride, self-determination of the student and universally accessible design principles, so that everyone has full access to University life.

Core values
- Human variation is natural and vital in the development of dynamic communities.
- Disability is a social/political concept that includes people with a variety of conditions who share common experiences.
- Inclusion and full participation are matters of social justice.
- Design is powerful and profoundly influences our daily lives.
- Universal design is essential for achieving inclusion and full participation.
- Creating usable, equitable, sustainable and inclusive environments is a shared responsibility.

"If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place."

—Margaret Mead
“I highly recommend inviting the Disability Resource Center to assist with planning any project or event. They can contribute a wealth of information and ideas. They played a large part to ensure the Foster Recreation Center is accessible to all patrons.”

— CINDI BARNETT, DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS RECREATION

“The Disability Resource Center consulted with us to provide input and feedback as we were making University websites universally designed. ... We all like to do things that help people do their jobs, and the Web is an online venue for that. Making websites for accessibility — making them available in a format that everyone can use — helps everybody.”

— SARA CLARK, DIRECTOR OF WEB AND NEW MEDIA

“Universal design is the whole reason the Bear CLAW (Center for Learning and Writing) exists. The old writing center was barely functional. We had so many chairs and tables it became a maze for people with different disabilities. ... I consulted with the (DRC) director during the development phase to ensure color schemes would be easily seen and aisles were wide enough for ease of access. ... Everyone in the (DRC) office is friendly, knowledgeable and easy to work with.”

— MICHAEL FRIZELL, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LEARNING SERVICES

“I didn’t know (universal design) existed, but I was interested in creating courses where students didn’t need special accommodations. ... I wanted to make a course in such a way that no students needed accommodation, that all of them could learn. ... Universal design — this ideal I have that all students have the same access to learning — actually improved everything about my classes.”

— DR. MARC COOPER, HISTORY PROFESSOR

ONLINE: Get the whole story! Learn more about the people above and their thoughts on accessibility and universal design. [www.missouristate.edu/spotlights](http://www.missouristate.edu/spotlights) (search for keyword “Disability”)
DRC is your resource

Accommodating learning

Due to the design of a University course, program or service, students with disabilities may experience barriers to their full and meaningful participation. If students would like to request an environmental or course adaptation, they may do so by contacting the Disability Resource Center. Students who request these accommodations should do so for every semester they are sought.

Students will be asked to provide documentation supporting their disability and the accommodations they have requested. The DRC will create an accommodation memo to be shared with instructors by the student, outlining the accommodations that should be provided. Accommodations are a cooperative arrangement in which the student plays a vital part; an arrangement between the student, instructor and the DRC. For a full statement of our accommodation policy, procedures and to learn more about our commitment to universal design, please see www.missouristate.edu/disability/.
Universal design and the socio-political model of disability

Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. It benefits people of all ages and abilities.

"DESIGN CREATES CULTURE. CULTURE SHAPES VALUES. VALUES DETERMINE THE FUTURE."

– ROBERT PETERS

Embracing new constructs

In the past, many disability resource providers built their service and philosophical constructs on the tenets of the medical or rehabilitation model. Although this has been effective in most cases in providing programmatic access and accommodations for individuals one person at a time, it reinforces a “separate but equal” system rather than full inclusion within a community of peers. It does not provide an avenue for the development of self-determination or disability pride for the person receiving services. This model does not take into account that the environment and the curriculum design often limit the full participation of people with disabilities.

The interactional/socio-political model works extremely well with the principles of universal design and universal design for learning. For the first time, true societal, environmental and learning barriers, which historically were not acknowledged by the old medical model, are now placed in their proper perspective. It is the environment, as well as societal and institutional beliefs, which limit our ability to be successful and spontaneous throughout our individual life journeys.

The mission and purpose of the Disability Resource Center is driven by principles of universal design and the socio-political model of disability. Through ongoing exploration and consultation provided to faculty, administration and departments within the University, the Disability Resource Center strives to promote this systemic change. This ideology is best explained by the information on the right, produced by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD).
## Conceptual models of disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Model (OLD)</th>
<th>Interactional/Socio-Political Model (NEW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability is a deficiency or abnormality</td>
<td>Disability is a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being disabled is negative</td>
<td>Being disabled, in itself, is neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability resides in the individual</td>
<td>Disability derives from the interaction between the individual and society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The remedy for disability-related problems is cure or normalization of the individual</td>
<td>The remedy for disability-related problems is a change in the interaction between the individual and society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The agent of remedy is the professional</td>
<td>The agent of remedy is the individual, an advocate, or anyone who affects the arrangements between the individual and society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CAROL J. GILL, CHICAGO INSTITUTE OF DISABILITY RESEARCH
Think about those with disabilities and other diverse groups during the planning stages of your course, program or event. How welcoming and usable is the environment for everyone who may participate? Here are some basic suggestions for universal design.

- Focus on course content, then design.
- Outline your agenda at the beginning of your presentation so that participants expect and receive a framework.
- Provide information in order of importance or in chronological order.
- Allow for simple navigation within your course or website.
- Select course management tools carefully.
- Ensure that all of your materials can be easily provided in alternative formats.
- Post presentation notes, handouts and summary notes on an accessible website so participants can obtain them prior to the lecture.
- Make handwritten information available in a text format.

- Use a teaching methodology that incorporates all learning styles.
- Provide visuals with verbal descriptions. If the content is visual, make it auditory.
- Choose color and font carefully for your online course and website.
- Model and teach good discussion board etiquette.
- Share examples and rubrics for assignments.
- Provide students choices when making assignments/projects.
- Provide feedback and corrective opportunities often.
- Create a practice exam.
- Have high expectations for all students.

Adapted from Project PACE, University of Arkansas – Little Rock

For a more detailed checklist, please go to, [www.missouristate.edu/atc/checklist.htm](http://www.missouristate.edu/atc/checklist.htm)
**Reframing disability in your curriculum**

As the University moves toward a model of inclusive excellence, we must embrace disability as an integral part of our diversity and recognize the importance of instilling this information in our teaching and in our students. The DRC staff is available to consult and explore how you can infuse this rich history and culture into your curricula.

A few items to consider include:

- What is it like to live with a disability?
- How does our society perceive disability?
- How much do you know about disability culture and history and do you share this information when you teach diversity in your course?
- How does disability intersect your field of study?
- Do your students know about these issues in disability studies?

---

**Access Technology Center**

The Access Technology Center (ATC), a vital part of the Disability Resource Center, strives to collaborate with others to proactively design courses and programs to be as inclusive as possible. The ATC can consult with faculty and staff to create more inclusive learning environments through:

- Providing education on universal design and sharing how faculty/staff may utilize universal design features in their daily work.
- Researching the latest technology to enhance learning environments at MSU, making them more inclusive and usable for all.
- Consulting and providing faculty development leading to the creation of learning environments that can be proactively inclusive so students experience fewer barriers to their equitable participation.
- Providing outreach opportunities to our local community.

For more information on resources the ATC may provide you, go to [www.missouristate.edu/atc/](http://www.missouristate.edu/atc/).
How do I know what I should do for a student with a disability?

Students with disabilities who experience barriers to their full participation should register with the Disability Resource Center. If the student is registered with our office, the student will be provided an accommodation memo. The student should share the memo with you and discuss the barriers they are experiencing. The memo will outline the accommodations that you will need to provide.

What if a student requests something that is not on the accommodation memo?

Contact the Disability Resource Center. It is not always possible to predict the precise interaction between a student’s disability and a specific course requirement; as a result, it may be necessary to amend the memo. In consultation with you and the student, the Disability Resource Center will be able to advise you as to what might be the best environmental/academic adaptation.

Should I waive assignments and course requirements for students with disabilities?

No. Students with disabilities should be held to the same standards as any other student. Accommodations should not alter the course or program in any substantive manner.

Do field experiences have to be accessible to students with disabilities?

Yes. Equal access must be provided to all components of a class or program even if it is not a required element. This would include labs, field trips, transportation provided by MSU and internships.

If I don't feel comfortable providing an accommodation or I feel it alters the nature of the course/program, whom should I contact?

Please contact the DRC. If an accommodation alters or compromises fundamental course or program goals, you have the right to appeal the provision of those accommodations; however, recommended accommodations should be provided until the appeal is resolved.

A faculty member should first address his/her concerns through discussions with DRC staff and may initiate a formal appeal of a recommended academic accommodation by submitting a written statement to the Provost, clearly documenting the fundamental academic goals and demonstrating that the recommended accommodation compromises those goals.
If universally designing my course isn’t legally required, how would approaching my work from a universal design perspective make a difference to me?

Our programs and services must be accessible and usable to everyone. However, how you provide equal access is not necessarily defined. Universal design offers a seamless approach to providing access, which allows the University to be in compliance while implementing approaches to design that are more usable by everyone.

Incorporating the principles of universal design into a class enhances the accessibility of the curriculum to a variety of diverse learners: minority students, second-language learners, returning students, students with disabilities, etc. While re-envisioning the design of a course may seem overwhelming at first, experience has shown that once faculty members experience the increase in student engagement and learning that is achieved through a universally designed curriculum, there is little desire in returning to the traditional lecture format.

Could incorporating principles of universal design compromise the integrity of our programs at Missouri State University?

Universal design is not about removing the challenge of a course or degree plan. In fact, a socio-political perspective would take issue with the idea that things need to be easier for people with disabilities to succeed.

Reducing the challenge would be contrary to this philosophy. Sometimes people get the idea that proponents of universal design are saying that environments and courses should be designed so that everyone should succeed. This is a misinterpretation.

Our goals are the same as the goals of the University. We want to engage all learners in ways that support and increase their fluency with the subject at hand. We want all students to get the full experience.

The Disability Community is the largest historically excluded group that anyone can become a member of at any time....It is also the fastest growing community on college campuses around the United States.

—Vogel, Summer 2011, Insight Into Diversity
You may find this brochure in an alternative format on our website at www.missouristate.edu/disability or you may contact our office to request a different format.

Learn more about universal design and how you may apply it to your work at www.missouristate.edu/ud/.

Disability Resource Center

CARRINGTON, 302
901 S. NATIONAL AVE. SPRINGFIELD, MO 65897

Web: www.missouristate.edu/disability
Email: DRC@missouristate.edu
Phone: 417-836-4192
TTY: 417-836-6792

KATHERYNE STAEGER-WILSON, MSW, LCSW, DIRECTOR
TABITHA HAYNES, B.S., ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
MEGAN SHADRICK, M.A., M.S., COMS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ACCESS TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Missouri State University adheres to a strict nondiscrimination policy and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, veteran status, or on any basis (including, but not limited to, political affiliation and sexual orientation) not related to the applicable educational requirements for students in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the University. Prohibited sex discrimination encompasses sexual harassment, which includes sexual violence. DSV 070 13