

Faculty Senate Digital Accessibility Questions (November 6, 2025)

Save the Date: January 8-9: USM Digital Accessibility Spring Clean-up effort with dedicated local resources at SU to assist faculty with revising materials for digital accessibility.

- What materials have to be digitally accessible? In particular...
 - Response (Melissa Thomas): SU's website, content within emails, SU Today posts, social media posts, mobile apps, software applications, electronic course materials within MyClasses, and more
 - What about materials that fall under the definition of 'archived web content?'
Response (Ken Kundell): Based on what I heard at the UMS Accessibility Spring meeting, anything that is (not private) publicly available must be accessible. Note: In the context of old meeting minutes, I suggest moving inaccessible/non-reviewed material off-line and posting a statement like "available by request". When material is requested, it should be accessible. Need to check with legal but you may be able to provide a disclaimer like "only available in original form".
 - What about materials on MyClasses courses from previous semesters?
 - Response (Melissa Thomas): Materials from past semesters within MyClasses do not need to be digitally accessible. However, once a course is copied for a new semester, the materials should be revised for digital accessibility.
- What counts as 'good enough' when it comes to UDOIT scores? Is there some target UDOIT percent that we must reach?
 - Response (Melissa Thomas): We have not established a target UDOIT percentage. Current course scans (154 in Fall 2025) have ranged from 38% to 100% but have an average score of 88% and total score of 82%. These numbers are as of 11/8/2025.
 - The course with 38% can increase their score dramatically by one artifact, the syllabus, within MyClasses to address two issues: (1) links with nondescriptive text and (2) revising the document to use heading styles instead of using formatting such as bold to indicate sections of the syllabus.
 - Response (Melissa Thomas): The UDOIT tool will indicate how many issues within the report are:
 - Easy to Fix which includes descriptive text for links, page headings, and manually formatted text instead of using styled headings
 - High Impact which includes descriptive text for links, image alternative text, video captions, and color contrasts

- To be real: I would like to know the minimum requirement that prevents faculty and/or SU from getting sued. Obviously, 100% is the goal, but that is probably not feasible for a lot of faculty.
- What is the plan if the university and/or individual faculty are not fully compliant by the deadline?
 - (JJC) The deadline represents a milestone, not a cliff. We're required to demonstrate ongoing good faith efforts toward compliance. This means documented progress, regular audits of course materials, and consistent use of available tools and support services. The USM expects institutions to show they're actively working to improve accessibility rather than achieving perfect compliance on a single date. We're building systems for continuous improvement: the January Spring Clean-up, instructional design partnerships, UDOIT scanning, and incremental remediation of materials each semester. What matters legally is that we can document our process, show improvement over time, and respond promptly when specific accessibility issues are identified. Faculty who engage with the tools, work with their instructional designers, and make steady progress on their highest-impact issues will be well-positioned. The risk comes from ignoring the requirement entirely, not from being at 85% instead of 100% on the deadline date.
- What should faculty do if they are not fully compliant by the deadline? Is it better to remove student access to non-compliant educational materials or to leave it available to students, even though it is not compliant?
 - Response (Melissa Thomas): This initiative is a continual and ongoing initiative, even beyond the deadline. Faculty **do not need to remove student access to non-compliant educational materials**. Instead, we are advocating for an iterative process whereas audits are conducted as faculty prepare for a new semester and to work through the concerns and issues incrementally. Start with running the UDOIT tool in MyClasses, partner and work with their Instructional Designer liaison to address the course materials needing assistance and establish what can be done by the faculty and what additional support is needed. For example, ID&D has several options related to closed captioning support for videos.

Additional context from Dr. Candace Henry in email to Chrys Egan after attending the 11/10/25 USM Digital Accessibility Session for Deans. Question that was posed by Chrys and Maarten Pereboom:

- How many SU students are in need of digital accessibility? (The answer may help us motivate faculty to support our students beyond the threat of legal compliance)

Response (Candace Henry): Currently, the Office of Access & Accommodations (OAA) is serving 872 students. About 300 of those registered students have needs that are related to technology. More broadly, our office serves between 12–13% of the total student population. Nationally, however, data from the National Center for Education Statistics and AHEAD indicate that between 18–21% of college students identify as having a

disability, suggesting that there are likely additional students on our campus who would benefit from accessible digital materials but may not be formally registered with our office.

Beyond these numbers, digital accessibility is an essential component of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Designing accessible digital content benefits not only students with documented disabilities but also English Language Learners, students with temporary injuries (for example, someone who breaks a hand and cannot use a mouse), and others who navigate diverse learning environments.