Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementation Guidebook for Student Development Programs and Services

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Contents

Introduction to the PASS IT Project ................................................................. 1
How to Use This Guidebook ........................................................................ 1
Introduction to Universal Design ............................................................... 2
Introduction to Universal Instructional Design .......................................... 3
Universal Design Principles for Student Development Programs and Services .......... 7
Universal Learning Support Design ............................................................. 13
Voices From the Frontline: First-Person Accounts From Student Services Professionals ...... 16
Scenarios ......................................................................................................... 39
Implementation Tools .................................................................................. 42
Presentation Tools and PowerPoint Presentations ........................................ 51
References ..................................................................................................... 55
Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education

Jeanne L. Higbee and Emily Goff
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A free download of the accompanying text to this guidebook can be found at http://cehd.umn.edu/passit/docs/PASS-IT-Book.pdf
Introduction to the PASS IT Project
Emily Goff and Jeanne L. Higbee

The Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation (PASS IT) project began as a collaboration at the University of Minnesota among faculty and staff of the former General College (Higbee, Lundell, & Arendale, 2005), the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (CRDEUL; http://www.cehd.umn.edu/crdeul), and the staff from the Disability Services Office. PASS IT builds on a previous grant project funded through the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education (grant # P333A990015), Curriculum Transformation and Disability (CTAD; Higbee, 2003; see http://www.gen.umn.edu/research/ctad for Workshop Facilitators Guide and other resources).

The goal of the PASS IT project, which is funded by the U. S. Department of Education (grant #P333A050023ACT1), has been to enhance access, participation, and success in higher education for students with disabilities by providing professional development for postsecondary administrators, faculty, and staff related to the theory and practice of Universal Design (UD) and Universal Instructional Design (UID). Project deliverables include:

• A scholarly book (Higbee & Goff, 2008; http://www.cehd.umn.edu/passit/docs/PASS-IT-Book.pdf)
• This guidebook as well as another guidebook for implementation of Universal Instructional Design in classroom settings (Goff & Higbee, 2008 a & b)
• An extensive bibliography (http://cehd.umn.edu/passit/resources.html)
• A resource list for “Disability, Higher Education, and the Law” (http://cehd.umn.edu/passit/resources.html)
• An explanation of assistive technologies and related tools (http://cehd.umn.edu/passit/resources.html)
• A forthcoming video

Please refer to the PASS IT Web site (http://www.cehd.umn.edu/passit) for further information and to download PASS IT resources free of charge.

How to Use This Guidebook

This guidebook was created as a companion to Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education (http://www.cehd.umn.edu/passit/docs/PASS-IT-Book.pdf), which provides lengthier introductions to Universal Design (UD), Universal Design for Student Development (UDSD), Universal Design for Learning Support (UDLS), and Universal Instructional Design (UID), as well as chapters pertaining to theoretical foundations and issues related to implementation (e.g., barriers to student disclosure of a disability, coordination of efforts between academic affairs and student affairs, “the digital divide”). The purposes of this guidebook are twofold: (a) to encourage individual administrators and student services and student affairs staff members to implement UD by providing tools created by professional colleagues in a broad array of service areas and sharing their insights, and (b) to provide support for professionals in the areas of postsecondary disability services and staff development who want to provide training in the implementation of UD. Following the sections that serve as an introduction to UD, UDSD, UDLS, and UID, the guidebook offers first-person accounts from PASS IT
Summer Institute participants who have implemented UD on their own campuses. The guidebook closes with tools that can be used by individuals implementing UD in a wide variety of settings, scenarios for initiating conversations regarding the implementation of UD, PowerPoint slides for making professional development presentations on the topic of UD, and a reference list. A more extensive bibliography is downloadable from the PASS IT Web site (http://cehd.umn.edu/passit/resources.html).

This guidebook is made available electronically as well as in print format for ease of use with screen readers and also to provide connections to related electronic resources.

**Introduction to Universal Design**

PASS IT refers to institutional transformation because too often institutions overlook their own responsibility in examining how they operate to exclude people of historically underrepresented social identities, including people with disabilities (see Chapter 2 by Evans & Chapter 3 by Hackman in Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education). Universal Design (UD) began as an architectural concept, a proactive response to legislative mandates as well as societal and economic changes that called for providing access for people with disabilities (Center for Universal Design [CUD], 2007) by rethinking how spaces are designed rather than providing modifications and accommodations “on demand” or after the law requires them. UD promotes the consideration of the needs of all potential users in the planning and development of a space, product, or program—an approach that is equally applicable to architecture or education. It also supports the notion that when providing an architectural feature—or educational service, for that matter—to enhance accessibility and inclusion for one population, we are often benefiting all occupants or participants. One of the most often cited examples is the curb cut, which is used by people on roller blades or skate boards, parents pushing strollers, travelers hauling luggage, people making deliveries with hand carts, and others, as well by people with disabilities. Similarly, many people benefit from the provision of automatic doors, elevators, drinking fountains at several heights, door handles instead of knobs, and so on.

The principles of Universal Design (CUD, 1997), are: (a) equitable use, (b) flexibility in use, (c) simple and intuitive use, (d) perceptible information, (e) tolerance for error, (f) low physical effort, and (g) size and space for approach and use. These principles have been adapted to education through a number of models that emerged in the last decade, including Universal Design for Learning (UDL; Center for Applied Special Technology, n.d.; Rose, 2001; Rose & Meyer, 2000), Universal Design for Instruction (UDI; Scott, McGuire, & Shaw, 2001, 2003), and Universal Instructional Design (UID; Silver, Bourke, & Strehorn, 1998). We do not see these models as competing, but rather as complementary—all with much to offer. This guidebook focuses specifically on one of these models, UID.
Perhaps the best way to explain UID is to begin by brainstorming about the diversity of students participating in higher education today and some specific challenges that may at times be related to students’ myriad and intersecting social identities, but that in reality may be experienced by many students of varying backgrounds at any time. Examples of potential barriers to academic achievement might include test anxiety, slow reading speed, distractibility, poor time management, organizational deficits, and lack of access to computers or to the Internet. Each of these examples could be linked to one or more disabilities, but could also pose serious threats to academic success for students who do not have disabilities as well. Implementing UID involves considering all of the possible strengths and challenges that students bring to the educational experience and then designing programs, curricula, and courses in a way that reduces or eliminates potential roadblocks. UID’s guiding principles, which are based on the work of Chickering and Gamson (1987), can assist in achieving this goal. They include: (a) creating welcoming classrooms; (b) determining the essential components of a course; (c) communicating clear expectations; (d) providing timely and constructive feedback; (e) exploring the use of natural supports for learning, including technology, to enhance opportunities for all learners; (f) designing teaching methods that consider diverse learning styles, abilities, ways of knowing, and previous experience and background knowledge; (g) creating multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge; and (h) promoting interaction among and between faculty and students. The following paragraphs provide some concrete examples related to implementing each of these principles. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive, merely illustrative. Further examples are provided in the first-person accounts featured in the PASS IT guidebook for faculty and instructional staff (Goff & Higbee, 2008a).

**Welcoming Classrooms**

When students perceive that they are considered “different” and believe that any differences are interpreted as “deficits” by others, it will be difficult to feel welcome and to participate fully in the classroom. (For discussion of the medical model of disability that implied deficit and other issues related to social justice in the classroom see Chapter 2 by Evans & Chapter 3 by Hackman in Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education). It is important that the instructor expresses a commitment to equal access and provides the opportunity for students to share concerns privately and confidentially. Thus, standard syllabus statements such as those related to serving students with disabilities are important (see Chapter 6 by Pedelty in Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education), but may not go far enough to encourage students to disclose an aspect of social identity that they consider highly personal. (For further discussion of barriers to disclosure see Chapter 30 by Alexandrin, Schreiber, & Henry in Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education and the film Uncertain Welcome, http://cehd.umn.edu/passit/videos/uw-low.html).

Providing time for student introductions on the first day of class can be another means of making all students feel welcome, but can put considerable pressure on students who are shy, students whose cultural heritage might prohibit the sharing of
some kinds of information, and students who realize upon a quick visual scan of the classroom that there are not many or any other students of their race or ethnicity (or of any historically underrepresented group, for that matter) present. Instructors need to be cognizant of the challenges that ice breaker activities pose for some students and consider disclosure, communication styles, mobility, and other issues when designing these activities.

**Essential Course Components**

There are numerous factors that can play a role in determining essential course components, which should be easily translated into course objectives. For some fields of study professional standards may dictate essential components, while for other courses that serve as prerequisites it is necessary to provide the foundation needed for the classes to follow. Some essential components will be content based, while others may be skill based. For example, in an introductory psychology course content-based objectives might include that students will “become acquainted with prominent psychological theories and the theorists who espoused them” and “be able to define key psychological concepts.” Skill-based objectives could include that “students will use higher-order thinking skills to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate course materials and real-life problems.” In some courses essential components may include developing proficiency in completing physical tasks (e.g., drawing blood in a nursing clinical), while in other courses the focus may be academic skills such as writing or computation.

**Clear Expectations**

Listing course objectives on the syllabus is but one way that teachers can communicate expectations. Syllabi should also document exactly how each component of the course is measured and weighted in the final course grade. Either in the syllabus or on separate assignment sheets, grading rubrics must be specified at the point the assignment is made or the forthcoming test is announced. In Chapter 10 of *Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education*, Delong discusses her own questions as a student trying to decipher assignments, and then her journey as an instructor assigning writing.

**Timely and Constructive Feedback**

When instructors fail to provide timely feedback, it is not surprising that students begin to see assignments as “busy work” or fail to see the connection between taking quizzes or exams and demonstrating mastery of course content. If grading rubrics are spelled out clearly in advance, it becomes a simple matter to create formats for providing feedback. In Chapter 11 of *Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education* Duranczyk and Fayon provide examples of rubrics based on mathematical standards for use in college algebra.

When developing the schedule for a course, it is important for instructors to consider their own needs as well as those of students. Papers, essay exams, portfolios, and other assignments that will require extensive grading time should be assigned at a point in the academic term when the faculty member will be able to commit the necessary time to provide feedback to assist student learning. If that period of time does not exist, then instructors should reconsider why they are giving the assignment. What will the student learn if adequate feedback is not provided in a timely fashion? Is the assignment really an essential component of the course?
Diverse Teaching Methods

Research (e.g., Higbee, Ginter, & Taylor, 1991) indicates that many students prefer learning through visual and interactive means to reading text and listening to lectures. Thus, at the college level there is often a mismatch between how faculty members teach and how students learn most effectively. Learning is also reinforced when students have the opportunity to learn the same information in multiple ways and through repeated exposure to the same material. Regardless of students’ individual learning style preferences, all students benefit from the use of multiple modalities to disseminate knowledge.

In Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education, several chapter authors describe alternative teaching styles, including inquiry-based learning in physics (see Chapter 5 by Higbee, Chung, & Hsu); metaphoric thinking in art (see Chapter 7 by James & Kader); simulations in legal studies and history (see Chapter 8 by Miksch & Chapter 9 by Arendale & Ghere); and computer-assisted instruction in mathematics and psychology (see Chapter 12 by Kinney & Kinney & Chapter 13 by Brothen & Wambach). Each of these teaching styles can also be used in conjunction with more traditional teaching methods.

Natural Supports

Natural supports for learning can take many forms. Frequently technological supports come to mind, such as those provided by course Web sites; online bibliographies, readings, videos, and other resources; and assistive technologies such as screen readers and voice synthesizers (see PASS IT Web site for further information on assistive technologies http://cehd.umn.edu/passit/docs/techHandout.doc). However, as Duquaine-Watson pointed out so eloquently in Chapter 34 of Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education, titled “Computing Technologies, the Digital Divide, and ‘Universal’ Instructional Methods,” for some students these technologies serve as challenges or barriers rather than supports. Appropriate training must be provided for students who have not encountered these technologies previously, and in a way that is nonthreatening and free of embarrassment or inadvertent disclosure of financial or other status.

Other forms of supports can include teacher-crafted study guides; handouts, including of PowerPoint slides used for lecture; small-group exercises and other activities to illustrate course concepts (e.g., simulations); in-class reviews for tests; and opportunities to retake or correct tests or revise papers. When considering appropriate supports, it is important to establish that the purpose of the support mechanism is to encourage learning.

Multiple Modes to Demonstrate Knowledge

Means of assessing knowledge or skill development are not limited to testing procedures. Just as there are many forms of tests (e.g., essay, short answer, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, true-false, matching, problem-based, open-book, take-home, computer-generated, practical or clinical demonstrations), there are also myriad other ways to demonstrate learning. For example, simulations can be used as a teaching tool or natural support, but they can also be used as an assessment device. Traditionally, faculty use tests and papers more commonly than other assessment mechanisms such as oral reports, presentations, and projects (whether individual or group); games; or
the development of multimedia or various art forms such as music, story telling, poetry, dance, or other performance, or photography, drawing or painting, collage, and so on. One strategy is to enable students to demonstrate what they know by incorporating many different types of assignments and exams into the course syllabus. Another method is to provide choices and encourage students to use the methods that will best highlight their unique talents and ways of knowing, and that also may better reflect the types of activities that will demonstrate their achievements in the world of work. Some faculty are wary of providing these choices because of the inherent difficulty in comparing “apples and oranges” for grading. However, if clear grading rubrics are designed and communicated to students in advance, this need not be a barrier to more creative approaches.

**Interaction Among and Between Students and Faculty**

In the early weeks of a course it is important to structure any discussion and small group activities to ensure that everyone participates. Beginning with dyads and triads enables students to become better acquainted with just one or two other students first. Providing a specific task with clearly stated directions and outcomes and goals benefits all students and promotes participation. Later, as students grow more familiar and comfortable with one another and with course content, a more free-flowing approach may be possible, but initially creating activities that literally require participation by each member of the group can help establish desired patterns of behavior. Faculty must also remain observant during these discussions to be sure that all students are included and that their viewpoints are valued.
Universal Design Principles for 
Student Development Programs and Services

Jeanne L. Higbee

For purposes of this guidebook, the term “student development programs and services” is defined broadly to include admissions, orientation, financial aid, advising, counseling, first-year experience programs, activities related to career exploration and placement, learning centers, tutorial services, academic assistance programs, residence life, Greek life, student activities and student union programs, judicial affairs, and any other services and programs that complement students’ experiences in the classroom. We propose the following “Universal Design Principles for Student Development Programs and Services”:

1. Create welcoming spaces: PASS IT participants brainstormed a wide variety of suggestions for ensuring that students feel welcomed and valued. Reception areas should be cheerful, with friendly staff readily accessible, and spaces for students to congregate informally or to wait comfortably. Illustrations and photographs on all print publications and decorative artwork and posters as well as Web sites should reflect the diversity of the students, faculty, and staff at the institution. Offices should have extended hours or flexible schedules of operation so that students with diverse time commitments including to work and family have equal access to all services. Although we understand the role that making and keeping appointments can play in teaching responsibility and preparing students for life after college, we also recommend the availability of walk-in appointments not only for students in crisis, but also for when students experience an unanticipated change in their own schedules. Online calendars for making appointments can make this process available to anyone at any time of day. Offices should be designed to be accessible to all learners and staff members, with desks, counter tops, storage spaces, and signage at appropriate heights and easy entry and navigation within the space. Alternative formats of all materials, such as publications and handouts in Braille and large print, should be readily available at any time, rather than requiring advance notification. Web sites should be tested for accessibility and ease of navigation.

2. Develop, implement, and evaluate pathways for communication among students, staff, and faculty: Communication should be encouraged through methods that are accessible to all, with appropriate accommodations (e.g., telecommunication devices for people who are deaf) readily available. When possible, information should be shared using multiple and varied methods and technologies, and when appropriate or necessary mechanisms should be in place to ensure that messages are received, preferably through some form of return receipt. When considering electronic forms of communication, it must be recognized that all students do not have equal access to campus computer labs because of other time commitments, and may not have a computer or access to the Internet at home. For some students these are unaffordable luxuries rather than standard household equipment and services. Every effort should be made to create pathways to make electronic communication accessible to all students.

3. Promote interaction among students and between staff and students: When channels for communication have been established, the next step is to
Figure 1. Intersections of Universal Design applied to instruction, student development, and learning support

**Application of Universal Design to Pedagogy and Student Services**

**UID: Instructional**
1. Create a welcoming classroom environment
2. Determine the essential components of the course
3. Provide clear expectations and feedback
4. Explore ways to incorporate natural supports for learning
5. Provide varied instructional methods
6. Provide a variety of ways for students to determine knowledge
7. Use technology to enhance learning opportunities
8. Encourage faculty-student contact
(Fox & Johnson, 2000)

**UDSD: Student Development**
1. Create welcoming spaces
2. Develop pathways for communication
3. Promote interaction among students and between staff and students
4. Ensure equal opportunities for learning and growth
5. Communicate clear expectations
6. Use methods that consider diverse learning styles
7. Provide natural supports for learning
8. Ensure confidentiality
9. Define service quality

**ULSD: Learning Support**
1. Welcoming and respectful space
2. Clear mission and procedures
3. Varied delivery of resources and services
4. Natural supports for learning
5. Technology
6. Multicultural values
7. Opportunities to engage
(Opitz & Block, 2006)
encourage their use. Interactions with staff and faculty outside the classroom contribute to student satisfaction and retention because these interactions lead to students feeling a sense of connection to the institution and foster the belief that someone cares about them. But these relationships are easier to develop for some students than others. There can be “interaction strain” on the part of both students and faculty and staff to engage in conversations; some individuals lack confidence when trying to use alternative forms of communication in order to converse with someone with a disability. Too often educators see their role as trying to “help”, but this approach can be condescending toward people with disabilities and can result in unequal treatment of students with disabilities. Instead, we should seek mutually beneficial relationships.

4. Ensure that each student and staff member has an equal opportunity to learn and grow: Barriers to full participation should be assessed, examined, and removed wherever possible. Barriers may be physical, intellectual, or attitudinal. They may be created by the individual or imposed by external sources. A wide variety of institutional assessments can be used to measure campus climate. Meanwhile, individual assessments can measure factors related to student success. From a Universal Design (UD) perspective, these assessments should not be limited to those related to disability. For example, any student can have debilitating test or mathematics anxiety and a wide array of measures—both formal (e.g., test attitude inventories) and informal (e.g., the mathematics autobiography)—is available to ascertain whether this is a problem for the individual. Lack of motivation can also be an issue for anyone, but the source of the problem may be anything from unclear career goals to lack of autonomy to the perception of dissonance between individual and institutional goals. One step that is key to ensuring equal opportunity for all is to take the time to get to know the individual and to refrain from making snap judgments or engaging in stereotypes.

5. Communicate clear expectations to students, supervisees, and other professional colleagues utilizing multiple formats and taking into consideration diverse learning and communication styles: Expectations related to performance—whether from the standpoint of employment or academic requirements and standards—must be clearly defined. No one can be held to expectations that have not been made explicit. Stating requirements orally is not adequate. Many individuals—both with and without disabilities—do not retain information well when it is communicated only by word of mouth. But not everyone learns most effectively from reading text, either. Providing a “mind map” can be a useful alternative to standard text; the two formats can complement one another.

6. Use methods and strategies that consider diverse learning styles, abilities, ways of knowing, and previous experience and background knowledge, while recognizing each student’s and staff member’s unique identity and contributions: Individuals should have the right to determine how they identify and define themselves, rather than being labeled by others. Each of us has something different to offer, and it is important that our contributions are valued. Whether developing a tutor training program, a career exploration workshop, social programs for the residence halls, or a lecture series for the campus community, it is imperative to consider all possible participants and to think creatively about how everyone might be included.

7. Provide natural supports for learning and working to enhance opportunities
for all students and staff: Natural supports can come in many different forms. For example, for committees—whether of administrators and staff or student groups—meeting agendas and minutes are natural supports that can assist everyone in knowing what to expect and how to prepare in advance of a meeting and in following the progression from one subject to another and staying on task during the meeting. Additional handouts such as those to accompany PowerPoint slides can supplement the discussion and aid participants in retaining the content of the meeting. Documenting key points via notes on flip charts or overhead transparencies or by typing them and simultaneously projecting them on a screen can also enable participants to correct any misunderstandings in the content of what has been said or add further clarification. These notes can serve as the foundation for the minutes of the meeting, which can then be made available to those unable to attend. Similar practices can support tutoring sessions and other services offered to students. Another example of a natural support that might be used in a learning center or counseling, placement, or advising office is automatically-generated electronic appointment reminders for both the student and the staff member.

8. Ensure confidentiality: This is important to everyone, but for individuals with disabilities, even when confidentiality is supposedly assured, when programs and services are not universally designed the public provision of separate accommodations reveals that the individual is somehow “different.” In the film Uncertain Welcome (http://cehd.umn.edu/passit/videos/uw-low.html) students with disabilities discuss some of the reasons why they choose not to disclose their disability, including that they cannot always assume that their confidentiality will be protected.

9. Define service quality, establish benchmarks for best practices, and collaborate to evaluate services regularly: These Universal Design Principles for Student Development Programs and Services can guide the implementation of best practices and can be used as the basis for establishing institutional, programmatic, and individual goals and objectives. The next step is to establish a mechanism and timeline for regular evaluation, both by students and by colleagues.

These principles are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. The overlap in ideas and concepts is not unintentional. But woven together these principles create a framework for inclusion for student development programs and services and can serve as a “safety net” to ensure that no student is lost in the shuffle. Furthermore, these guiding principles considered side-by-side with those created for instruction and learning support provide a multifaceted institution-wide approach to inclusion.

Our goal in presenting these Universal Design Principles for Student Development Programs and Services is not to imply that we are introducing anything that is new or unique or revolutionary, and yet implementing these guidelines in a very intentional way can be transformative. Individually and collectively we can make a difference if we really take the time whenever we engage in the planning process to consider the following questions:

“How can we ensure that everyone who wants to participate will have the opportunity to do so?”
“What steps can we take to ensure that everyone will feel included?”
“What do we need to do to ensure that everyone will benefit to the greatest extent possible?”
The Universal Design Principles for Student Development Programs and Services are merely guidelines for good practice. What may distinguish them from other similar standards is that they were created with inclusion at their core as the one unifying goal that binds them together.
Figure 2. Diagram showing three sets of complementary principles of Universal Design, Universal Instructional Design, and Universal Learning Support Design

Architectural

Principles of Universal Design, Copyright © 1997, NC State University, The Center for Universal Design
1. Equitable use
2. Flexibility in use
3. Simple and intuitive use
4. Perceptible information
5. Tolerance for error
6. Low physical effort
7. Size and space for approach and use


Facets to Universal Design in Higher Education

Instructional

Principles of Universal Instructional Design (UID; Fox & Johnson, 2000, p. 43)
1. Create a welcoming classroom climate
2. Determine the essential components of the course
3. Provide clear expectations and feedback
4. Explore ways to incorporate natural supports for learning
5. Provide varied instructional methods
6. Provide a variety of ways for students to demonstrate knowledge
7. Use technology to enhance learning opportunities
8. Encourage faculty-student contact

Principles of Universal Learning Support Design
1. Welcoming and respectful space
2. Clear mission and procedures
3. Varied delivery of resources and services
4. Natural supports for learning
5. Technology
6. Multicultural values
7. Opportunities to engage

Learning support

Note: The application of the Principles of Universal Design, which were conceived and developed by the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University, to instruction and learning support does not constitute or imply acceptance or endorsement by the Center for Universal Design.
Universal Learning Support Design
Donald L. Opitz and Lydia S. Block

Note: This section is adapted from Chapter 16 in Pedagogy and Student Services for Institutional Transformation: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education, which can be retrieved at http://cehd.umn.edu/passit/docs/PASS-IT-Book.pdf

Although postsecondary educators have made significant headway in disseminating and implementing adaptations of Universal Design (UD) principles in instruction, their focus on the classroom does not account for the entire range of students’ college learning experiences and environments. Clearly, if we intend to minimize barriers and maximize students’ access to learning more holistically, we must ensure that the wide range of learning support offices, programs, and services also support UD principles. We define nine broad areas of learning support, as follow:

1. Core administrative services: Learning support can include the widest range of campus services that deal with the very logistics of being a student on campus: admissions, student records, financial aid, accounts receivable, registration, transcripts, and degree conferral. Indeed, if these core administrative services maximize students’ sense of welcome, access, and engagement, they can only promote students’ satisfaction, sense of belonging on campus, and, ultimately, their academic achievement. Campus administrators are increasingly recognizing how simplifying their delivery of services positively impacts the quality of students’ learning experience.

2. Transition programs and services: Another growing trend in learning support is to straddle the division between student affairs and academic affairs in efforts to promote students’ successful transition to college life and expectations. First-year experience programming, for example, may include a variety of welcoming activities, summer bridge programs, orientation, convocation ceremonies, Web-based communities and portals, and freshman seminars. A growing recognition of transfer and adult students’ unique needs has led to tailored services for these distinct cohorts. Institutions are also increasingly attending to student transitions within and beyond their degree programs. Sophomore seminars, upper-division seminars, weekly departmental colloquia, and learning communities all embody this trend.

3. Academic skills development: A panoply of programs and resources that focuses on developing students’ academic skills constitutes another core area of learning support. These include subject-based tutoring, writing consultation, Supplemental Instruction (SI), skills workshops, library workshops, testing and assessment, learning centers, printed and Web-based resources, professional clubs, leadership programs, and student research opportunities. Increasingly, institutions are approaching academic skills development in more integrated and holistic ways through across-the-curriculum approaches to writing and mathematics instruction, learning communities, and curricula that purposefully integrate skill development and content.

4. Career and community learning: Increasingly important for post-graduation survival, career and community learning programs provide students with opportunities and resources to connect their classroom learning to the “real world.” These opportunities take on a wide variety of formats: career counseling and workshops; career centers; community and service learning centers; internship, cooperative, and “externship” programs; volunteer placement;
teaching and research apprenticeships; and graduate school preparation workshops. In the context of adult, neighborhood-based, and online degree programs, career and community learning may also occur through satellite campus programs and resources located within students’ own workplaces and communities.

5. Engagement, social community, and living: Regardless of whether students live on campus, commute, or learn online, and regardless of students’ abilities, research has demonstrated that a sense of connection to campus on both the academic and social levels is critical to student retention. In response to national recognition of this fact, colleges and universities have instituted offices and centers devoted to student engagement. Other significant providers and partners in this work are residential life offices and the wide array of student communities, cultural centers, and organizations often supported by student affairs personnel.

6. Health and recreation: By promoting students’ physical, emotional, and spiritual health, campus health services, crisis centers, counseling services, and ministry offices constitute a further closely-related set of learning supports. In addition, intercollegiate and intramural sports, recreation centers, and recreational clubs all foster students’ physical health and engagement.

7. Advising: Academic advising and a variety of other advising activities are critical supports to students’ learning and development. Three predominant models for academic advising are (a) advising performed by a professionally-trained staff within distinct units; (b) advising performed by tenured and tenure-track faculty members; and (c) a blend of both—for example, advising that begins with a professional staff advisor and concludes with a faculty advisor or mentor. Other types of advising may include roles for peer mentors, student affairs personnel, research supervisors, community members, and alumni.

8. Disability services: Traditionally, campuses have had at least one staff member designated as the campus consultant for students with disabilities. Large universities may have a department of staff. Disability services can be housed in any number of campus divisions or offices. One place that disability expertise can be found with greater frequency is within a learning center, learning commons, or academic skills center. Emerging models of service provision situate disability services personnel as consultants to the entire campus and partners in efforts to implement UD strategies in settings for instruction and learning support.

9. Holistic learning communities: A variety of offices and programs do not fall neatly into one or another category because of the comprehensiveness of their programming and resources and close partnerships with curricula. Examples include some campus women’s centers, multicultural centers, honors colleges, and living and learning communities.

As in the case of instruction, practitioners can benefit from a set of guiding principles and strategies for implementation. Some have already used Universal Instructional Design (UID) to guide their efforts, but we wonder whether lock-stock-and-barrel applications of architectural or instructional principles are sufficient or even appropriate for all areas of learning support. To take an example, instruction-specific language, like the second UID principle—“determine the essential components of the course”—may not always translate to services like a learning commons dedicated to supporting students’ self-directed study as opposed to achieving a course-specific learning outcome. Other UID principles bring similar challenges for their application to areas of learning support. Here we need to reconsider, then, the relevant principles that
apply to the design of learning supports. Thus, we propose seven principles of Universal Learning Support Design (ULSD) inspired by our discussions with participants at the first PASS IT Summer Institute.

We must first bear in mind that the Center for Universal Design’s seven principles (www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/pubs_p/docs/poster.pdf) undergird all design considerations. Particularly where the resource is physical space, administrators and staff must, in our opinion, first attend to architectural design before other aspects. To return to our earlier example, the dominant feature of the learning commons—an innovative design integrating many traditionally distinct services—is its highly multipurpose space. Although staff members may be present to offer a variety of support and consultation, access to key learning resources is integrated into the commons’ physical design: the layout of study carrels, tables, and computer workstations intended for various kinds of study activity and often self-service access to online resources and assistive technology. However, attention must then be given to nonphysical and ephemeral features of the commons like social interactions between students and staff, printed and online information, and administrative functions that take place behind the commons’ public space.

In our discussion with colleagues at the PASS IT Summer Institute, we arrived at a set of principles that, for us, enhances the application of architectural and pedagogical concepts to learning support functions and environments. We developed these principles further by taking into consideration Blimling, Whitt, and Associates’ (1999) principles of good practice in student affairs. We view the following principles as “works in progress” to be adapted in ways appropriate for the distinctiveness of individual programs and services:

1. Welcoming and respectful space: Features of the spaces, resources, and services are welcoming, respectful, and comfortable to students having the widest range of characteristics and abilities. All representations of the spaces are welcoming and respectful.

2. Clear mission and procedures: The purpose of resources is clear and the procedures for their use are easy to follow regardless of the students’ experience, knowledge, language skills, and abilities.

3. Varied delivery of resources and services: Varied, nonstigmatizing means of delivering resources and services foster equitable and flexible use by students. Varied delivery meets the needs and interests of students having the widest range of experiences, characteristics, and abilities.

4. Natural supports for learning: Resources and services foster students’ holistic learning and engagement in a developmental manner. Staff members are trained to accommodate the diverse learning styles of students. Services empower the students using them.

5. Technology: Technology resources enhance opportunities for all students to be engaged and learn. Technology assists in implementing other ULSD principles.

6. Multicultural values: All aspects of learning support embrace the broadest characteristics, backgrounds, and interests of students. Students’ knowledge and experience are incorporated into design elements and improvements.

7. Opportunities to engage: Space, resources, and services promote students, regardless of their characteristics, to be engaged in learning. Positive interactions among students and staff are fostered by resources, services, and programming.
Voices From the Frontline:  
First-Person Accounts From Student Services Professionals

The following section includes first-person accounts from postsecondary professionals from across the U.S. who are using Universal Design (UD) in their work setting. The first four narratives are from student services professionals in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) at the University of Minnesota. They provide an in-depth account of how they applied the principles of UD in CEHD’s orientation, first-year experience program, TRIO programs and services, and advising. The accounts that follow come from participants in the 2007 PASS IT Summer Institute and reflect the wide array of programs that fall under the umbrella of student services.

Anthony Albecker  
TRIO Student Support Services, CEHD  
University of Minnesota

As an academic advisor in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, I have a blended caseload of 225 students consisting of mostly freshmen and sophomores. Most of them are first-generation, from underrepresented student populations, and are still deciding on a major. The academic advising model in the department I work in is grounded in developmental advising principles. M. C. King succinctly captured the essence of developmental advising. “Developmental academic advising recognizes the importance of interactions between the student and the campus environment, it focuses on the whole person, and it works with the student at that person’s own life stage of development” (quoted from http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/dev_adv.htm).

Developmental advising in itself embodies many Universal Design principles in that it focuses on providing a varied delivery of resources and services, provides natural supports for learning, promotes multicultural awareness and sensitivity, and offers opportunities for students to engage their academics and college experience. The following examples and reflections related to Universal Design in Academic Assistance Programs (AAP) evolved from the relationships and active participation I initiated across college and campus environments with the purpose of holistically meeting the needs of the students I serve.

The University of Minnesota and the College of Education and Human Development offer multiple layers of Academic Assistance Programs that cater to the diverse needs of students, by discipline area, general writing and math support, or a specific student group, such as the Multicultural Academic Excellence Office, First Nations, and so on. I am most closely connected with and thus well-positioned to share experiences and reflections regarding working with TRIO Student Support Services.

TRIO Student Support Services (TRIO SSS) at the University of Minnesota serves as an academic resource center for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO SSS offers a wide array of services to include academic advising, Supplemental Instruction (SI), and additional educational opportunities outside of the classroom. SI offerings vary from semester to semester; however, SI courses for chemistry and psychology are common. Course instructors, SI instructors, TRIO advisors, and many times an undergraduate teaching assistant work in concert to create natural supports for learning and a varied delivery of resources and services. Instructors and AAP staff
(including TRIO advisors) maintain close communication and assess student progress on a regular basis—in some cases monthly, if not more often. The open communication allows all involved to be aware of trends, issues, or gaps that are taking place within the curriculum.

This collaboration allows faculty and staff to meet the needs of students through brainstorming. For example, in fall 2008 a majority of students in an introductory chemistry class and accompanying SI class were having difficulty with a particular chemical sequencing. The instructor became aware of this due to low performance in this area during a weekly quiz and communicated this to the AAP staff and SI instructor. Both were then able to discuss new ways in which to present the chemical sequence in a way that allowed more students to gain competence. In this case, it was a matter of both instructors using additional multimedia to provide visualizations of this particular chemical reaction. This collaboration fosters a natural support for learning, provides students with a varied delivery of resources and services, and creates a welcoming and respectful learning environment through the collaborative spirit that is intrinsic to TRIO SSS.

TRIO SSS also provides students numerous opportunities to engage concepts from their disciplines in experiential ways. One experiential learning opportunity was to offer students enrolled in introductory sociology and multicultural relations classes the chance to attend an evening field trip to a Science Museum exhibit titled “Race.” The purpose of this trip was to help students engage in the concept of race as a social construction and provide an opportunity for students to engage in conversation with each other to tease out this concept. Other coordinated SI trips in the past year were to the Science Museum for students in a human anatomy and physiology class and to a Frida Khalo exhibit at a local museum available to students in arts and humanities courses. In order to help minimize barriers, transportation and tickets for these events were subsidized, and as an incentive, students had the option of getting extra credit by completing a reflective assignment related to these trips.

Limitations to experiential activities of this nature include cost and time considerations. Subsidizing transportation and ticket costs can become expensive. At the same time, not subsidizing these costs could be prohibitive for participation by students on fixed budgets. Time is another potential barrier. Most of these events take place in the evening so as not to interfere with day classes, but may interfere with student work schedules or family commitments and impact the number of students who can attend.

Overall, the combination of SI courses and planned experiential learning opportunities offered through TRIO SSS embodies many of the principles of UD. One benefit not explicitly stated is how the collaboration between instructors, SI facilitators, and advisors builds in mechanisms for a welcoming environment. Additionally, field trips and other experiential learning opportunities provide neutral and new ways for faculty-student, student-student, student-advisor, and advisor-faculty connections. This added communication creates and helps maintain a culture that embraces a continuity of care.

Amy Kampsen
First-Year Experience Programs, CEHD
University of Minnesota

Most colleges and universities across the nation employ some form of structured support programming for their first-year students. The National Resource Center for
the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (www.sc.edu/fye) provides a link to information on many of these programs. The programming across campuses varies and includes, as examples, first-year experience courses, freshman seminars, learning communities, learning and living communities, and bridge programs. The structure and goals of these first-year experience programs support the principles of UD in student services.

Betsy Barefoot (2000) summarized the overall research-based objectives of first-year programs as follows:

- Increasing student-to-student interaction
- Increasing faculty-to-student interaction, especially out of class
- Increasing student involvement and time on campus
- Linking the curriculum and the co-curriculum
- Increasing academic expectations and levels of academic engagement
- Assisting students who have insufficient academic preparation for college (p. 13)

With these objectives, first-year experience programs create an opportunity to develop avenues for interaction between and among faculty and students and allow for increased communication. Many of the programs include courses taught by faculty who are also the students’ advisors or include a learning community where instructors work with one another on building curriculum that represents a common theme between the courses. Within this framework, natural support systems may be formed, creating an environment that facilitates academic and social engagement. The crux of UD in student services and learning support is the use of diverse methods and strategies that will benefit different learning styles, abilities, background, experience, and so on. Most of the first-year programs purport to consider students holistically and design the program to fit a diverse body of learners, varying methods and activities to benefit all students equally. Below is an example of a newly designed first-year experience program and how it will adhere to UD principles for student services.

**CEHD First-Year Experience Program**

The College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota has developed a first-year experience program universally designed to engage a highly diverse population of new students in meaningful and purposeful learning as soon as they enter college. The program includes a required First-Year Inquiry (FYI) course and learning community linked courses. The fall semester FYI course is divided into six sections and taught by a team of 18 faculty from diverse academic disciplines. The curriculum is designed to enhance multicultural and multidisciplinary learning and provide opportunities for civic engagement. Students from various subpopulations, such as TRIO (program for low-income, first-generation college students and students with disabilities) and Commanding English (an academic support program for non-native English speakers) are integrated into the course along with other students of varying levels of college preparedness and abilities. The students have many opportunities for active engagement with one another through course discussions and required out-of-class activities. Students also have assigned advisers who facilitate discussions on typical advising topics such as time management, choosing a major, utilizing campus resources, and so on. They also provide individual advising utilizing a developmental, holistic approach to meet the unique needs of each student. In the spring semester, students register for a cross-disciplinary learning community package that links together curriculum and assignments, requiring collaborative and active approaches to teaching and learning. The courses in the learning community are linked by guiding concepts and
addressed through various methods and approaches as utilized by faculty within the different disciplines.

In accordance with UD principles, the structure of the program is designed to create a welcoming space for first-year students by establishing a sense of community among faculty, students, and advisers. There is increased interaction between faculty, advisers, and students that fosters communication pathways and relationships that may help students feel more connected to the college and the campus. The cross-disciplinary and team-oriented approach to teaching and learning allows for student exposure to various teaching methods and styles that capture the learning styles of a diverse body of learners. In addition, there is a particular topic of inquiry addressed across all disciplines during fall semester, which is intended to expose students to different ways of knowing as filtered through their own experiences and background. In fall 2008, the common theme across all sections was, “Can One Person Make a Difference?” The common book was An Ordinary Man: An Autobiography by Paul Rusesabagina, who visited students at a midsemester event. The incorporation of group advising hours as part of the FYI course and the submission of periodic Academic Progress Reports by faculty to students and advisers provide natural supports for all students. The faculty and advisers involved in this program have shown a commitment to multiculturalism and to creating a cultural climate that provides a welcoming, safe, and nurturing teaching and learning environment. All faculty and advisers involved in implementing the first-year experience program have received training in UD principles and methods, making this program a purposeful model for equal access to success for all students, regardless of ability, background, or learning styles.

Carole Anne Broad
Orientation, CEHD
University of Minnesota

Freshman orientation is a challenging and often stressful time for many students and staff at any college or university. A large amount of important information must be communicated to a group of newly-graduated high school students in a short amount of time. Applying the concepts of Universal Design to this event is crucial to help all students start out with a welcoming, positive, and inclusive experience of the university.

As an advisor for the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, I have been assisting with freshman orientation for the college for the past 5 years. I will describe the general flow of our orientation at the University and in CEHD, highlight several UD principles we incorporate, and point out the benefits of UD to students. Lastly I will make recommendations for further UD practices to be considered in freshman orientation.

At a large institution like the University of Minnesota, freshman orientation is a 2-day, overnight event. The first day of orientation is conducted mainly by the University’s central Office of Orientation and First-Year Programs, informing the new students of some of the central functions of the University that apply to all students, such as financial aid, libraries, and transportation.

The first contact for CEHD advisors with the orientation students is on Day 1 of the 2-day orientation, near the end of the day, the “college meeting.” This takes place at the student union and is our first opportunity to meet the students who are enrolling in our college and majors. Creating a welcoming space for our freshmen starts here via small groups of eight students at round tables. Though situated in a
large room of some 50 to 80 students, this table configuration encourages interaction among students. Multiple formats are used to communicate information including short, interactive exercises, a PowerPoint presentation, written information in folders, and time for general questions and answers facilitated by the advising staff. The dean welcomes the group with a clear articulation of the college’s mission, then translates this into a high school student’s understanding by having current students give personal examples of how the college has lived its mission in their experience. Later, the large group disperses into small, major-focused groups, led by advisors, for more personal and individualized information sharing. These student-centered small groups of 10 to 12 students led by their advisor often follow an agenda determined by the students’ questions and concerns rather than by a set agenda. This smaller setting allows those whose communication style might be undermined in a large group to speak up and share. I have often asked the members of these small groups to share not only their names and major interests but also more qualitative information such as their greatest concern in coming to the university, or what role their high school guidance counselor played. I also ask them to fill out a short form with questions about housing, work, and finances and more substantive ones such as:

1. Who is the strongest supporter of your college education?
2. Which members of your family have a college background?
3. Do you have any special concerns?

The role of the advisor and expectations for students are communicated in a general way on Day 1 and then elaborated upon on Day 2. During Day 2 the students are with us in our college building all day until they are registered for their classes. Our welcoming space includes advisors and student workers serving as greeters and providing free T-shirts and treats at break time. Specific information on classes and registration is communicated in writing and in Web site presentations. Although our registration process is done in a computer lab, each student receives individual help through the low ratio of one advisor to four students and the abundance of undergraduate assistants who work closely with us. In addition in some years we have scheduled mini lectures given by faculty from some of our popular classes, like psychology. This is a great opportunity to tap into multiple ways of knowing about a course for the students and is always a positive experience for faculty, staff, and the students. Students who need even more time or attention are welcomed into our private offices that day or, if they live locally, are encouraged to return for an individual appointment if they wish. Students receive an “advising syllabus” that contains all the pertinent information about the advising process, expectations and responsibilities for both student and advisor, and technology information including links to many supporting programs.

Concerning inclusivity and multicultural values, we are fortunate to have rigorous standards of advising practices that include professional development training for all advisors in many related areas such as disability services, diversity issues, mental health concerns, and others. Indeed, the mission of the College of Education and Human Development embraces many UD principles:

The new College of Education and Human Development is a world leader in discovering, creating, sharing, and applying principles and practices of multiculturalism and multidisciplinary scholarship to advance teaching and learning and to enhance the psychological, physical, and social development of children, youth, and adults across the lifespan in families, organizations, and communities.
The benefits of these UD practices for orientation students are many. A sense of respect, connection, and caring is established. For the most part student evaluations of our orientation demonstrate that students get the information they need. Students needing extra help are served without necessarily identifying themselves as such. Recommendations for other inclusion practices at freshman orientation might include an online version for most of the content, a 1-day option for working adults and students with children, and specific training in UD principles.

Many more practices, technologies and innovations could be listed. Each institution ultimately will base its adaptation of UD practices on the mission and commitment of the institution. This is the first place to start in incorporating any UD practices into freshman orientation or any other such programs.

Mary Ellen Shaw  
Academic Advising, CEHD  
University of Minnesota

Successfully applying the principles of Universal Design to academic advising involves thoughtful examination of the institution’s advising philosophy, the structure or model of advising in place, the space available for and physical accessibility of advising services, and the hiring, training and professional development of individual advisers. A developmental advising approach fits well with UD in advising, in stressing the importance of the advisee-adviser relationship, where the adviser companions and challenges the student through the process of self-discovery, goal-setting, and learning to utilize institutional resources successfully. Ideally, advisers utilizing UD approaches are partners with the academic faculty, providing a comprehensive and student-centered academic experience to all students.

In order for advisers to utilize a developmental advising approach consistent with UD principles, they need to have caseloads consistent with really getting to know their students, and they need to be assigned to students for a long enough time to support the students’ development. Ideally, the advising relationship should begin with new student orientation. In our college, we assign students to advisers working with specific majors, recognizing that students may be still exploring or not entirely committed to the major they wrote down on their college application. For this reason, our advisers are also generalists and able to work with a variety of pre-major students. Some students choose to transfer to a different college at our university at the end of 2 or 3 semesters, and others will choose a major path different from the one their initial adviser works with in our college, so a change of adviser is common by the student’s junior year. Some other students enter our college through a specific supportive program, such as our Commanding English program for students whose first language is not English, or our TRIO Student Support Services program for low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities. Students in these programs will remain with their program adviser for their first 2 years. Other students in our college, coming in preparing for a major and then successfully entering that major, will be able to stay with their initial adviser for their entire college career. Caseloads for our advisers average around 300, with lower loads for advisers with a higher proportion of pre-major students or those in supportive programs, as more frequent contact is mandated for these students, and higher loads where more advisees are successfully in their majors, finishing their final 2 years of coursework. Case loads are low enough to allow students to meet with their adviser in an
appointment within a day or 2, unless it is during the peak 3 weeks of registration.

Advisers need to have adequate physical space for private conversations with students. In our program, advisers have private offices that are spacious enough for students with mobility limitations, adequately lighted, and furnished comfortably. Advisers often invest in personalizing their space with rugs, lamps, and comfortable chairs. The hallways outside adviser offices are inviting and personalized with large bulletin boards shared by two advisers. Each adviser has an up-to-date computer with excellent technical support available, and an individual phone and phone number with private voicemail service. Advisers respond within a day or 2 at the most to student inquiries by phone or e-mail. Contact information about the advisers is posted on our College Web site, with brief biographical statements and photos of each adviser, to facilitate student access. Individual advisers also provide their incoming first-year students with an advising syllabus, making this available on the Web. It is important that advisers communicate clear expectations for both adviser and student roles and that these expectations be communicated early during freshman orientation. A resource such as an advising syllabus, available in both printed and online forms, can contain this information as well as key contact information and calendars.

Appropriate hiring, training, and professional development are critical to having an advising staff that is able to utilize developmental advising practices consistent with Universal Design. We hire advisers who have a minimum of a master's degree, often in congruent fields such as Counseling and Student Personnel Psychology or Educational Psychology, though we have other advisers with academic degrees and teaching experience whose career paths have taken them into student services. All advisers hired have at least 2 years of academic advising experience and can articulate an understanding of student development and of diversity. We have ongoing training available to advisers, both in our College and at the University, providing them with understanding of resources on campus, and of academic programs and policies. Over the past decade, a robust campus-wide association of advisers, the Academic Advising Network, has provided ongoing networking, professional development, and awareness of resources that cross colleges, such as diversity services and counseling services that serve students. A parallel career counseling network has developed in the past 5 years; currently, efforts are underway to connect these two networks, recognizing that a better integration of academic advising and career services serves students well. For individual advisers, taking advantage of these learning resources has been voluntary, but advisers need to articulate their knowledge and utilization of resources to benefit students as part of yearly performance evaluation expectations and also in the review for promotion. In CEHD, there has been a high level of participation and leadership in the campus-wide networks for academic advisers and career counselors.

Advising that is consistent with Universal Design principles is greatly strengthened by strong relationships between professional advisers and faculty members, especially where the faculty members are also aware of and employing Universal Instructional Design (UID) principles. In CEHD, a significant number of the faculty involved in the integrated first-year curriculum have been trained in UID, and have also worked closely with the academic advising staff for a number of years. We currently have a robust Web-based communication system available to the first-year curriculum faculty involving an academic alert, which can be sent out at any time in the semester, a sixth-week report of student progress, and a tenth-week report of student progress. The academic alerts produce an e-mail to the student with a copy to the adviser with a message about what the faculty member's concern is. The two progress
reports also generate e-mails communicating a grade-to-date and recommendations for improvement to all students in the first-year curriculum; advisers can choose to receive a copy of the e-mail reports or a compiled report of the grades and messages sent to their advisees. When students are experiencing difficulties, advisers follow up and let the faculty members know what is going on, to the extent it is appropriate given the individual student’s situation. The goal here is to provide intervention as early as possible in the semester, rather than waiting until final grades reveal sometimes irreversible academic difficulties.

There are exciting campus-wide developments currently underway at the University of Minnesota to improve the student experience and student success, including an online graduation planner and a proposal of a Web-based advising tool that would provide advisers and others interacting with students with important information about the students’ characteristics and needs, along with a means of documenting contacts that go beyond a single office or even college. We have had such a tool in CEHD for several years, which has allowed advisers and career counselors in our student services unit to work as a team on behalf of individual students. Having a campus-wide tool will support the Universal Design approach of being student-centered rather than program-centered. Within appropriate student confidentiality limits, services that touch students’ lives can be working as a single team, with the individual academic adviser providing a “home base” to students as they move through the system.

Cynthia Seltzer
Academic Advisor
Northeastern University

The Office of Student Services in the College of Health Sciences at Northeastern University provides academic counseling, orientation, and academic success programming, and coordinates the Introduction to College course. I advise about 525 nursing students, freshman through senior year, in the College of Health Sciences. This includes everything from orientation advising to graduation clearance and assistance with board applications after graduation. I meet with all first-year students at least twice in their first year, all sophomores at least once, and all juniors at least once. I also work with students on an individual basis about academic difficulties, personal issues, requests for changes in program or major, financial problems, and medical leaves.

Varied Delivery of Resources and Services

Technology has created myriad ways to reach students. Personal meetings are still critical, both in a group and individually. Offering students a variety of types of ways to meet their advisor including group meetings, walk-ins, and scheduled appointments is important. My office allows students to set up their own appointments in available slots on my calendar; they can do this from any computer at any time of day or night.

Using technology cannot replace personal meetings, but it is an effective way to make announcements, answer quick questions, and develop a bond. Students can contact me by phone or e-mail. My office is also always trying to think of new ways to reach our students. Some new ideas include developing a page in Facebook and MySpace that students can link to; using text messages as reminders; sending mass messages through a student portal; creating an office blog; scheduling Instant Message (IM) appointments for questions that would otherwise be answered via e-mail; providing podcasts; and holding Skype conversations, especially for students studying
abroad. Confidentiality always becomes an issue when developing new ideas over the Web, and it is also important to transition sensitive conversation to an in-person discussion at an appropriate time. It is important to remember that college is expensive, and not all students can afford the latest technology to access a computer and all the toys discussed.

**Multicultural Values**

Many of my students decide that they want to be a nurse after some sort of a medical experience, either their own medical problem or that of a family member. Therefore, a lot of my students do have ongoing medical issues—physical, psychological, or a combination. It is important to look at each of these students in terms of their strengths and the abilities that they will bring to the profession based on their experiences. One thing that I always remind students who come to see me because they are having a medical problem is that one day they will be able to tell their patients, “I understand how you are feeling” and know that they really will understand, and practice their profession in a way that is influenced by this understanding. This helps students in a few ways. One is that it gives them a positive slant to their perceived disability, and shows them a way that their current difficulty can be viewed as a strength. Another is that it shows that I have confidence in their ability to be successful, even if they are not completely sure of themselves at the moment. Finally, it reminds them that there are other people whom they will meet who will have similar challenges, to help normalize their experiences.

**Recommendations**

- Invite someone who is knowledgeable to talk to your office about UD. Even using one staff meeting to hear what an expert has to say about the ideas and strategies can improve students’ experiences.
- Conduct an evaluation to find out from your students what things have really helped them about your office’s set up and approach to working with them, and what areas could use improvement.
- Embrace new technologies for reaching students. Although it can be harder for someone who did not grow up with technology to use these new strategies, many students are very comfortable with them, and their comfort facilitates advising. Consider using undergraduate work-study students to distribute nonconfidential messages with new technologies, and ask them for suggestions for new methods of reaching students.
- Ask your supervisor for professional development time to learn about new theoretical perspectives in advising. Attend conferences and workshops when they are available. As you would tell your students, do not wait passively for someone to give you the information that you need; be responsible for your own learning!

**Kim Moorning**  
*Director of Instructional Technology Services*  
Medgar Evers College

My fulltime responsibility is to train faculty with using technology and multimedia in the classroom environment. I also manage the Blackboard course management system and teach in the Computer Information Systems department within the School of Business. I initiate programs, conferences, workshops, seminars, and symposia to
advance the use of technology for teaching and learning. In my primary job function, I serve all of the students because they all need access to technology for academic purposes.

**eScholar and Smart Classroom Certification Programs**

Two major programs that I initiated and that have incorporated at least some aspects of UD were the eScholar program and the Smart Classroom Certification program. The eScholar program is broken into two components: (a) eLearning for students, and (b) eTeaching for faculty. Both programs are a combination of workshops, manuals, Web resources, news communications, and events that provide information about academic technology and accessibility at the college. The Smart Classroom Certification program is tied to the design of college classrooms that are equipped with technology and multimedia that meet the needs of differently-abled students. The faculty attend a 2-day workshop to ensure that they are adept at using the equipment and understanding student learning styles and challenges. In these workshops we communicate clear expectations to students and faculty and report back to academic administrators.

**Instructional Technology Center**

When we designed the Instructional Technology Center we made sure to use architectural blueprints, which included access for all students. We have a ramp, television monitors, ceiling speakers, and computers. Faculty and students of all abilities are able to utilize the room fully with minimal difficulty. One major challenge to implementing UD is funding. The room is small in size and in staff for the number of students we serve, which has grown exponentially since we built the room 3 years ago. We have increasingly more students logging onto the college’s Web site, communicating with student advisors, using the college campus after classes, and seeking information to support learning through our course management system. The department is a service department. We have developed, implemented and created pathways for communication among students and staff, students and faculty, and students and administration. We have found that we have fewer complaints and more requests for service because students know that we are capable of meeting their diverse needs. At the core of our existence is the need to ensure that each student has an equal opportunity to learn and grow.

**Teaching**

My background in education leadership gives me a foundation for understanding how students learn. I have a comprehensive understanding of pedagogy from both the teaching and learning perspectives. I always use multimedia learning content and technology in and outside of the classroom because it is the best way to utilize different modalities. I show students a welcoming atmosphere by discussing my sensitivity to their needs in a general manner so that no students are made to feel singled out. I use our Blackboard course management system for every class, and inform students that they can contact me at any time for any reason. I support and supplement the teaching and learning by providing additional resources and links to outside materials. I work with each student individually and maintain these relationships even after the course ends. I administer a learning styles inventory assessment so the students will understand their own learning style and know how to communicate their needs effectively. I integrate teaching methods, and encourage the students to engage in dialogue in class and in discussion forums, and work in groups. Students are required
to participate actively in all classes and are given credit for doing so. I inform them in advance that my additional supports require their additional commitment.

I suggest that faculty, staff, and administrators consider making their office and work spaces more student friendly in a diverse manner. We should have open space in our areas for students who will frequent the office. We should not clutter every area of our offices so that visitors will not feel cramped. This helps to create a welcoming atmosphere, and encourages students to engage with faculty and staff outside of the classroom. I encourage all faculty to teach based on students’ learner styles, not the teacher’s preferred teaching style. This way they stand a better chance of reaching all learners. I encourage them to embrace technology as a tool in education, not as the educator. I also recommend that they remember the age in which they are teaching and the skills of their students. In short, this is where I suggest to faculty that they “use methods and strategies that consider diverse learning styles, abilities, ways of knowing, and previous experience and background knowledge, while recognizing each student’s and staff member’s unique identity and contributions.”

Tom Hanley
Technology Coordinator
Saint Louis University

I have implemented UID in the TechIntern Program, an autonomous, student-managed program within Information Technology Services at Saint Louis University that supports faculty, staff, and students for technology services. The TechIntern program employs more than 120 students throughout the academic year to provide various technology services to the University community from Web development to network and infrastructure support to lab consultants. My role involves providing the students and the program an administrative structure of support without interfering in exploration and learning of managing their program to provide support and service. I normally act as an advisor seeking opportunities to engage the students in varied activities that encourage engagement. While technology is the core of the program, the program and the students are not limited to just technology issues, but may engage in activities where technology may only be a component.

While UID addresses open access, creating inclusive learning environments, and removing barriers that restrict student engagement and learning, its focus tends to lean more toward faculty and pedagogy. In the past year I have worked with the TechInterns (students) to broaden their perspective of the concepts and theories that support UID. Rather than address specific programs, I have worked to engage and challenge the students to explore how they can adopt UID into their overall view of how support for technology should be constructed to be inclusive. I feel very strongly that by addressing UID in this manner the students will be better equipped to utilize and demonstrate UID practices across the program as a normal practice versus addressing one or two informative sessions or programs.

One example of how I did this was the introduction of the online program “Webbie” to the techs. Like the familiar program “Bobbie,” this program allows the individual to view Web sites and learn of the barriers the Web often creates for students with visual disabilities. Unlike “Bobbie” the program displays the Web site as the student with the disability would be able to view and access it. The techs were appalled by the results and gained a greater understanding by actually experiencing the barrier. From this experience they were able not only to identify with the problem, but were
motivated to seek out opportunities to resolve and correct this problem for not only their own Web sites but others on the campus.

Programming for UID is extremely important. I believe we can effectively initiate attitudinal and perceptual changes that I believe will have greater and long-lasting results. I would encourage others to create opportunities with students to challenge their awareness of this issue and broaden their understanding. I believe that by working in this manner, opportunities for understanding the precepts of UID will increase and more importantly will go with these students as they move through their academic process and into the work force after graduation.

Elizabeth Hill  
Program Director of Teaching Enhancement  
Saint Louis University

Under general supervision of the director, I develop new (nontechnology) programs to support faculty and graduate students in the development of skills and knowledge of pedagogical approaches and provide oversight and assessment of existing Center for Teaching Excellence programs. I create workshops that give faculty the opportunity to take a fresh look at their teaching strategies or offer an alternative way to integrate Ignatian pedagogy through the implementation of UID strategies. Faculty benefit in that they may find a fountain of rejuvenation through the integration of UID; they may also have another tool to pull from their “bag of tricks” when trying to find another way to connect more fully with more of their students. In terms of assessment, the Center for Teaching Excellence could offer to do small group information sessions at the end of the semester to learn the students’ perception of these various techniques. I offer UID as a workshop for maximizing student-faculty connections to faculty and graduate teaching assistants; consider how to use UID strategies to integrate Ignatian pedagogy; and use UID principles to develop a workshop to help faculty empathize with students with different learning styles.

Implementing Universal Design in Student Services

One of my responsibilities is to develop programs to support faculty and graduate students in developing their teaching skills. Every year, our center offers a Certificate for Teaching Excellence. Generally, graduate teaching assistants attend 10 seminars over the course of a year. I teach one of the seminars and the following is a description of a seminar that I would like to present that would bring to the forefront the issue of different learning styles and how different teaching styles may not work well with some students’ learning styles. What follows is a first-person account of how that session might occur:

Welcome. I am pleased to see you all here today. My name is Beth Hill and I am Program Director for Teaching Enhancement here at SLU and a former graduate teaching assistant. To get started, I would like for us to have an opportunity to get to know each other. I would like for you to give your name and tell us about one of the best teaching moments you experienced in the classroom as a student. Before we get started, let me assure you that the refreshments will be with us throughout the next 2 hours and the bathroom is down the hall to the right. If you have any questions, please ask.

Many of us have probably heard of the phrase, the “millennial student.” Last May 2007, the Center for Teaching and Learning at SLU offered a program on the millennial
student in the classroom and the audience learned that millennial students like to be plugged in and actively involved in their education. This is a type of learning style. Some students prefer to learn through pictures, others through sound, some through reading and writing, and others through a combination of all three types. The strategies we use to teach may turn on or turn off students, depending on their preferred learning styles. Consequently, I believe there is value in knowing the learning styles of students in the classroom. Today, you are my students. I would like for you to identify your own learning style by using the VARK questionnaire. VARK stands for visual, audio, read/write and kinesthetic. Which one, do you imagine, is your preferred learning style? (I list them on the board. At this point, I direct the students to go to their computers and type in VARK. When they arrive at the Web site, I direct them to click on Questionnaire and take the VARK assessment.)

Now that you have completed the VARK, what is your preferred learning style? (I list their learning styles next to their names on the board.) How does this match up with the kind of activities you enjoyed when you were a student? What does this tell you about why you liked or disliked a given class in the past? (After a short discussion, I give each of the students an activity that would force them to respond using a less preferred learning style. After the activity, I ask them to join with others who have the same learning style and talk about their experience, designating one member to report their findings.)

What was your experience? (After each group shares their experience, I debrief by asking a few questions connecting learning styles with teaching styles.) Which learning style would you have preferred to use to complete this assignment? Think a moment about your own teaching style. Does your teaching style favor a particular learning style? Back in your groups, take 10 minutes to brainstorm a variety of activities and assignments that you might consider in your respective classes to recognize the four learning styles. Hand in those ideas that you would like to share with others and I will copy and list them on the CTE Web site as a product of today’s teaching seminar.

Kenneth Marquez
Office of Student Affairs
Adams State College

The Office of Student Affairs provides advocacy, support, service, and guidance for students on the Adams State College campus. Students who have concerns or questions about personal or academic issues as well as the quality of campus services are welcome to utilize this office. I see students who are dealing with:

- Complete withdrawal from campus
- Disabled student services
- Approved absences
- Disciplinary appeals
- Athletic appeals
- Administration of probation/suspension policy
- Immunization records
- Student complaints
- Student leadership

One way that I am integrating UD into the work on my campus is by presenting several workshops on UD to the division of Student Affairs Directors in an attempt to
introduce them to the principles and to encourage more instructors to incorporate these concepts into their work.

Action 1 – Present principles and UD concept to group in three mini workshops during bi-weekly meetings. Purpose is to generate a greater understanding of the model without overwhelming the group.

Action 2 – Have each area explore one to three goals within their areas that begin to initiate the model into their daily responsibilities.

Action 3 – Set small benchmarks to establish a base for determining if the changes made a difference.

Action 4 – Follow up with each director/area to review implementation strategies and/or progress.

Action 5 – Evaluation of any and all concepts put into place.

My recommendations for other student services professionals would be to start out small as not to overwhelm the staff. This area of Student Services is so big that it may take many steps to implement even the smallest of changes. It appears to me that the desire to dive into each of the service areas can be easy to do. One must take a hard look at creating a general model and then focus on the specific.

Michael J. Sidoti  
Assistant Director, Disability Resource Center  
Northeastern University

The Disability Support Service’s offices provide resources for students with “ADA qualified” disabilities that allow for equal access to college courses, programs, services, and buildings and in doing so support and enhance students’ academic, personal, and professional growth and development.

For the past 11 years I have worked with students with disabilities (primarily learning disabilities and AD/HD) in higher education at medium and large, public and private research universities as well as at the community college level. One of my primary goals is to ensure that students with disabilities have access to their academic and physical environment through use of a variety of accommodations, tools, and strategies. Equally important to implementing reasonable accommodations for students (in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act), in addition to teaching learning strategies and techniques for academic success, I incorporate knowledge of social justice theories in my work. For example, I always keep in mind that I am working with a person comprised of multiple identities, not just of disability alone. Knowing this, I realize that each student has a combination of different backgrounds, ways of knowing, and experiences, and has been shaped by the cycle of socialization with some or all identities or a combination thereof being privileged or marginalized within the United States.

My understanding of stages of social identity development allows me to advise and support students more universally and effectively, reaching out and meeting students where they may be, keeping in mind that a student is a whole person with various needs and styles associated with cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, ability, and socioeconomic identity and background. I support students by determining and making available options that students can choose from that will maximize their learning experiences and may include but are not limited to advising and counseling, problem
solving, strategies instruction, and accommodation determination and implementation.

I have found that creating a welcoming space, promoting multicultural values, communicating in a multimodal fashion including the delivery of resources and services, building in natural supports for learning and technology, and ensuring opportunities for engagement are all very important actions in fostering Universal Design (UD) in disability services. The simplest way to begin implementing UD as I have done is to choose one principle that is concrete, low risk, and easily attainable or easy to accomplish. For example, to begin to create a welcoming space I purchased and hung a multicultural calendar in my office. I also hung a bulletin board that I use to fill with statements that recognize and value diversity, particularly depicting language and ideas that acknowledge the existence of oppression experienced by a number of social groups. Statements that are on my bulletin board (in the form of bumper stickers) include but are not limited to “Another Man Against Violence Against Women”, “Recognize White Privilege—Ask me How?” “End Racism”, and “Bi-Gay-Lesbian-Transgender Safe Zone.”

Once I establish a strategy that fosters one UD principle as described above, such as creating a welcoming space (and notice that in creating a welcoming space, I also met the principle of promoting multicultural values), I move to another principle, brainstorm ideas and opportunities that address the principle, identify necessary resources and institutional support needed to accomplish implementation (admittedly challenging at times to gain support or attain the resources), and set a timeline for implementation. When all seven principles are met with at least one strategy, I then take on the responsibility, challenge, and opportunity to build on each of the principles I have established, further broadening and deepening the concept of UD in practice. And so, I go back to the first one—creating a welcoming environment—and implement additional strategies that will enhance a welcoming environment. Thus, my work in implementing UD is a continuous process. In the following two sections, I would like to share some specific examples that I have put into practice, addressing other principles and in some cases more than one at the same time.

**Communicating in a Multimodal Fashion**

Recognizing that students like myself are learners with a variety of styles and needs and of multiple identities (abilities, multiple backgrounds, experiences, and ways of knowing), I present information that is simple and concrete in a multitude of ways and in ways that embrace diversity. To this end, I actively listen, acknowledge and validate students, and am sensitive and flexible in my approach in order to ensure that I address their needs. Regarding information delivery, I provide it in any combination of visual, auditory, or hands-on format.

For students meeting me for the first time who seek accommodations, I typically incorporate a visual, auditory, and hands-on approach when explaining the accommodation process. I go over procedures verbally, review them in print while highlighting key steps, and have the student complete at least one step in the accommodation process while in my office. Because the process involves the completion of request forms that are available online or in print, I have students choose a format and complete at least one form prior to leaving my office.

For students who routinely see me for instruction on strategies, I use approaches that best meet student needs, which may be a combination or a singular approach drawing from visual, auditory, or hands-on formats. Over time, I also build in opportunities for self-reflection and application. For example, students who work with
me around time management and planning eventually must identify the tools that best fit their style and need and then demonstrate to me the usage or application of the strategies and techniques we cover in our sessions. My advising, counseling, and teaching approach incorporates techniques drawn from experiential learning models and feminist ideology. Students are actively engaged and have a voice.

**Natural Supports for Learning**

Natural supports foster student independence, self-advocacy, and empowerment. When students have a variety of options from which to choose or decide which best meets their needs naturally available, it not only fosters independence but also actively engages students in their own decision making process, hence empowering them. One example of natural supports is having assistive technology (e.g., text-to-speech, organization and planning software) available on campus-wide computers giving all students (not just those with disabilities) access to a variety of additional tools and resources that support the student learning process. Lights are naturally in all of our buildings, so why not technology that supports all learners? Natural supports for learning often create a welcoming environment and allow opportunity for engagement. Assistive technology as a tool encompasses at least four UD principles in one.

**Evaluation**

To evaluate the value and effectiveness of implementing UD, I plan to develop a student survey and distribute it annually. The survey will encompass a variety of questions related to the principles of UD that allow me to assess not only student satisfaction but also student access and academic success.

Many of the UD principles can be incorporated into practice with ease. It is important to identify which ones are easily attainable with minimal challenges or need for upper-level administrative support and to brainstorm ideas, opportunities, and strategies for implementation. Creating a welcoming space or environment may be a principle where small changes can take place without any major implementation barriers. While some ideas and principles may involve major institutional change, many will not. For those that do, it is important to develop a plan, attain support, and prioritize and implement steps over time.

**Gail Himes**  
**Director of Disability Support Services**  
**Green River Community College**

I work in Disability Support Services at Green River Community College. My chief responsibility is to ensure that everyone has equal access to all of our College programs and activities. This goal is achieved through the following actions:

1. Conduct intake interviews with currently enrolled and prospective students who are interested in obtaining accommodations.
2. Evaluate disability documentation and determine if accommodations are needed to ensure equal access.
3. Provide information on how to utilize accommodation.
4. Inform students of campus services that provide academic assistance, remediation, and basic needs assistance.
5. Provide academic advising and case management.
6. Serve as a resource to the entire campus community—offer training to faculty.
and staff regarding disability law, issues and resources; act as a consultant regarding ADA guidelines.
7. Collaborate with local schools and service agencies to ensure student success.
8. Purchase state-of-the-art assistive technology, provide training and easy access throughout the college.

Green River Community College has about 10,000 students; about 30% are students of color. The student population we serve in our Disability Support Office is also quite diverse. Over the past year my accommodations coordinator and I have provided services to over 500 of our 10,000 students. Of these, approximately 32% have learning disabilities, 20% have psychiatric disabilities, and 23% have chronic health issues; these percentages reflect the main issue and do not take into account multiple diagnoses. As is true for the institution as a whole, approximately 30% of the students we serve are people of color. Nearly a fourth of the students we serve are returning to college after sustaining a work-related injury or being displaced from a job.

It is difficult to find time to incorporate new ways of doing things into my work scope. However, in order to incorporate UD more fully into the work that we do, I will develop a campus access flyer and signage for new and returning students. Currently we do not provide adequate information on how to access our college as evidenced by the number of times student services staff are asked “how to” enroll. This lack of information leads to a great deal of confusion for the student, who may receive multiple answers. Many staff do not know how to enroll students in our college. In addition, much of the written information is too detailed and therefore overwhelming for individuals who are not visual learners or who may have learning disabilities. My goal is to develop a decision tree with options and short instructions. This information guide will be available throughout campus and on our Web site. A larger version will be posted in several strategic areas throughout campus. The effectiveness of this information guide could be determined by asking staff to count the number of times they are asked how to enroll in our college and conducting a pre- and post-count implementation.

My second goal is to make our Disability Support Services Web site more welcoming for students. I plan to do this by rewriting our initial Web page. This page will include a welcoming statement letting students know that we care about them and that we are here to provide the services and accommodations they need to be successful in college. I plan to include diversity artwork, as well as a link to DSS staff pictures, some brief background information, and our philosophy of helping students succeed. In addition, I plan to group our information and offer links. We currently have about 15 options on the initial page; this is very confusing and makes it difficult to access information. I also will add more resource links such as specific disabilities, support groups, and so on, and a special link for faculty information. The effectiveness of these changes could be measured by showing students the “old” versus the “new” Web site and asking their opinions related to accessibility and Universal Design. I would also suggest finding ways to stay organized because the work is demanding and fast paced.
Alfred M. Souma  
Coordinator of Disability Support Services  
Seattle Central Community College

I coordinate support services for students requiring accommodations as well as consult with faculty and staff about ways to make their services more accessible. This is accomplished on a one-to-one basis. I addi-tion, I provide quarterly workshops to faculty on topics such as accommodating students with psychiatric disabilities, learning disabilities, low vision, deafness, or other disabilities. I also provide direct one-to-one counseling for students with disabilities that include personal counseling and academic counseling.

The challenge of implementing UD in my unit is limited staff resources. My unit consists of a DSS coordinator (me), one program assistant, one office manager, and staff interpreters. My specific strategy for implementing UD is to reach as many faculty and staff as I can when they gather in large settings. For example, each year during the week before classes start, our college hosts “President’s Day.” This is a day when all faculty and staff come together and discuss our collective goals as a college for the coming year. This fall, over 450 faculty and staff will gather on President’s Day. I have been invited to set up a booth at the event and I will use this opportunity to provide handouts on UD principles and engage faculty and staff in discussions. I will also inform my colleagues that I am available to discuss UD one-on-one with them. I currently have a working relationship with a mathematics faculty member that will allow me the opportunity to gather pre and post data from the class in which he has implemented Universal Instructional Design.

I believe that the challenges for most individuals who work in DSS are limited staff resources and limited time. Often DSS staff are busy resolving day-to-day matters that require immediate attention. My recommendation for delivering important information is to find those opportunities when faculty and staff are gathered together in large numbers. Some examples include all-campus gatherings such as our President’s Day event, department meetings, and pre-announced workshops.

Donna L. Dawson  
Director of the Sagan Academic Resource Center  
Ohio Wesleyan University

Our Academic Resource Center (ARC) is under the Office of Academic Affairs. The ARC houses four Centers: (a) the Writing Center, which helps students of all writing levels learn or brush up on-the how’s and why’s of effective writing and polish their writing styles—staffed by four professional adult writing tutors—three of whom are members of the English faculty; (b) the Learning Disabilities Assistance Center, which helps students coordinate academic accommodations and employ adaptive strategies—staffed by a Learning Specialist and two student assistants; (c) the Quantitative Skills Center, which provides assistance to all students who have questions in the quantitative arena and sponsors calculus labs—staffed by the Center’s director and part-time math instructor and a student mathematics major; and (d) the Academic Skills Center, which provides assistance in the areas of time management, study skills, note taking, test preparation, and test performance—staffed by two senior psychology interns who are supervised by the chair of the psychology department. The Center has a library of over 1500 volumes on writing,
study skills, mathematics, and the GRE, MCAT, and LSAT. Study handouts, computer software, and sample models of resumes and cover letters are available. Four computer stations, a quiet room for test takers, and a quiet study area in the library are available for student use.

Our mission is to help students reach their academic goals by empowering them with the skills needed to be independent learners. We stress that we are not a remedial Center. Our Center adheres to the statement that is attributed to National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) in that we try to help the underprepared prepare, the prepared advance, and the advanced to excel.

I am responsible to see that all physical needs of the ARC are provided. I oversee the publicity and most of the budgetary needs of the Center. I am responsible for overseeing and training the work-study students who act as our secretaries and receptionists.

I work with coordinating programs among the Centers and help with workshops. Communication with faculty and advisors is paramount. I am in charge of the Quantitative Skills Center and tutor students in mathematics as well as train a math major to assist me. I also conduct four voluntary walk-in calculus labs each week.

I compile a list of extra department tutoring that occurs across campus outside of our Center. I post this on the Internet, send hard copies to advisors, and have hard copies available to hand out in the Center. Currently every appointment made at our Center is made by phone or walk-ins. Our Center is only open until 5 pm in the evenings 5 days a week. We want to implement real-time appointments online so students can make appointments via the Internet 24/7. This would open another modality to students to access the Center. I plan to talk to our Web master to discuss ways of implementing this. This was not possible for us to do a few years ago because of our information system capabilities. I am considering purchasing Tutor Trac and phasing it into our Quantitative Skills Center, our Learning Disabilities Assistance Center, and our Academic Skills Center. The Writing Center may decide to come on board if it works successfully for the rest of us.

I also want to revisit our tutor training materials and revise them for the upcoming school year by collaborating with the education department on campus. I am working with the directors and specialists within our Center to design publications that link our tutoring centers together by design and format. I am working with our graphics design department. The publications are meant to be very student friendly and display logos as well as the names of the Centers.

Communication is paramount. Work with faculty, the counseling center, the library, student life, and advisors. Ask for faculty syllabi. Demonstrate your support for their efforts. Be visible in activities across campus. Newsletters involving best practices like UID could be shared. In these newsletters show how members of the faculty are taking part in these efforts. Work with the library to add books on academic skills and Universal Design. Plan workshops with residential life staff that involve academic skills. In your communications to students consider podcasts and video streaming on the Internet. Have real-time scheduling on the Internet as an option for student appointments.

Consider how your office appears to students. Offices with doors open or ajar are much more welcoming than a closed office when possible. Reception desks that are low enough for students in wheelchairs to see over are a good idea. If you are fortunate enough to be able to design a new space, make sure the doors are wide enough and rooms are large enough to accommodate students in wheelchairs. Include adjustable
desks if possible. Student engagement is key and will be facilitated if experiences are positive and respectful of their needs.

*Michael Chance*
**Learning Center Director**
**Medgar Evers College**

I am the Director of the Learning Center at Medgar Evers College. My duties are to provide academic support to the students of our college. Academic support includes tutoring in several subject areas (e.g., science, math, English, foreign languages, accounting, economics, finance, computers, regional and national exams) and also providing information to students on study skills and time management. In addition, I collaborate with other offices, like the Office for Differently Abled Services to provide academic assistance, like note takers, readers, and writers for exams for students with disabilities.

One of the strategies I have implemented is creating welcoming spaces for everyone that benefit all students. Visitors and faculty and staff will also function at a higher level in a comfortable environment. There may be some constraints due to space and other physical challenges based on location and the building in which the Learning Center is housed, but we work with the respective parties to improve access, with strategies like eliminating clutter and providing more computer technology, which includes distance learning, for everyone. Also, I provide situations that communicate clear mission, procedures, and expectations of the Learning Center to staff and all students who use the services of the Learning Center. We should always try to be inclusive, wherever we can, and think of all students when we contemplate a program of improvement for productivity in our various areas or courses.

*Miriam E. Luebke*
**Vice President for Student Services**
**Concordia University**

I am responsible for setting the expectations for quality services and the tone and culture of the center, and providing leadership for the effective achievement of these expectations. The students served by the Business, Enrollment, Advising, and Registration (BEAR) Center include “traditional-age” students and “adult” degree-completion and graduate students of diverse backgrounds (e.g., first-generation, underrepresented populations, students with disabilities, low income). The BEAR Center is the contact point for students seeking information about their student accounts, obtaining financial aid, making payments, completing academic forms, and so on. A visit to the BEAR Center can be an anxious one for many students. Discussing past-due accounts, petitioning a withdrawal after a deadline, or expressing a need for more financial aid are BEAR Center-related tasks that some students may associate with “being in trouble” or somehow “falling short.” Universal Design principles for Student Services can guide our policies and practices so that they take into account the diverse situations of our students and help students feel empowered to take responsibility for their choices.

Making the BEAR Center a welcoming place can help to diminish student feelings of apprehension and convey a sense of respect for students from varying situations. We can make sure there is someone to greet students when they enter and to answer
uncomplicated questions quickly. We can convey warmth in the décor and seating arrangements. Clear signage with friendly, positive, and unambiguous language also lends a more welcoming feel. Staff who reflect the diversity of the student body in gender, ethnicity, age, and so on, can also help students of diverse backgrounds feel more welcome.

A welcoming environment should also convey trustworthiness. Students should feel they can trust the staff and university procedures to keep their individual situations confidential. We can ensure confidentiality by keeping student records secure and conversations private. Providing private areas for discussions of individual accounts or student records supports confidentiality.

Students have a better chance of meeting expectations regarding completed forms, deadlines, minimum payments, and so on, if expectations are communicated clearly in multiple formats. Although all traditional students receive a university laptop computer and e-mail account when they enroll, not all students use the laptop and e-mail with equal frequency or facility. We can supplement official e-mail with regular mail or follow-up phone calls. In addition to the online campus news site, we can post deadline reminders and other information using visible signage around campus. We can make sure that faculty advisors are fully informed of important information so that they can communicate it to their advisees. For those students for whom reading is not a preferred mode of communication, or for students with too little time to read text instructions, we will try to develop diagrams or pictorial representations for instructions, procedures, or policies.

In order to bring about policies and practices that effectively reflect Universal Design, the entire BEAR Center staff will need to be involved in their development. Together with BEAR Center leadership, staff can define quality service practices and create benchmarks for best practices. At Concordia, this can be done in the context of weekly staff meetings, with a half-day professional development workshop providing the focal point for training on UD principles and quality service practices. Evaluation of the achievement of quality service practices would naturally involve the students it impacts. But it could also include those individuals and offices that provide support to students and observe their situations, such as faculty advisors and learning support and disability services specialists.

It is a good idea to solicit suggestions regarding quality service and welcoming environments from staff members who are also students. They experience how policies and procedures impact the student, and they can also take the institutional perspective. Recognize and celebrate staff practices already in place that reflect UD principles. Ask individuals outside the department to review communications and policies to be sure that they are unambiguous, understandable by a “naïve” (i.e., one who does not spend her days reading university policies) reader, respectful in tone, and take into account different student needs or situations.

Charles Stinemetz
Dean of Academic Affairs
Ohio Wesleyan University

My interest in UD implementation is principally across the academic program, my general responsibility. However, I also am interested in working with other divisions of our institution to work with them to incorporate some of the same UD ideas. In general, I have oversight of a large number of programs, all of which impact the academic
experience of students. I work closely with departmental programs, faculty committees, and organizational units that are involved in enhancing the academic experience (e.g., academic resource center, Honors program, summer school).

In order to integrate UD into the work on my campus I do the following:

- Recognize current UD practices of faculty and promote these ideas of best teaching practices of colleagues to the faculty body as a whole.
- Advocate for UD design in space planning and classroom design.
- Work with the Admissions program to make UD part of our recruitment strategy.
- Make new faculty aware of UD and resources to develop UD during the hiring process. This should be viewed as an attractive resource that helps secure good faculty.
- Use the VARK-Learn.com test during summer academic orientation sessions to get a better sense of the varying preferred learning styles in the entering class. Communicate this to faculty.

Effective teaching strategies are by their very nature inclusive of all students. Universal Design supports the enhancement of effective teaching on campus. As administrators concerned with student learning we should support this concept and help faculty implement this approach to teaching. However, the concept of Universal Design is not limited to just the classroom. Our campuses would benefit if we all take a more student-centered approach and work toward creating a welcoming and respectful environment for all of our students.

Amy S. Gort  
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences  
Concordia University

My background in higher education began as a biology professor. I started as an assistant professor 6 years ago and had the express desire to “do” courses in a way that was different than the ones that I took in college. Coming from a very large institution, many of my classes were in a straight lecture format with a textbook to support the material and two exams to determine the grade. While I was “successful” in those courses, I found that I did not necessarily learn the material. I found that I learned a great deal in my upper-level courses that were more focused on problem-solving, data interpretation, and other more active learning opportunities. As a young professor, this led me to be very intentional to include a variety of ways to demonstrate learning. I also got interested in using technology to support learning, including developing lecture PowerPoint presentations and using WebCT to manage and distribute course materials. My interest in technology has also led me to develop an online biology course. My participation in the PASS IT institute last summer helped to reinforce some of the activities, course components, and supports. Learning more about UD principles has helped me to evaluate my courses and those in the area of biology critically to ensure that we are continuously working to provide access to all students.

This summer I was appointed to the position of Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. As an incoming dean I have been looking for a unifying vision for the college to frame our goals for the upcoming school year. I have found, through discussions about UD, that it provides a vision for learning and the academic environment to which I believe the faculty in my college will respond. I also plan to develop some natural supports—training sessions, encouraging teaching and learning circles, collecting “best practices” to be contributed to a university Web site, and so on. Through these activities
I hope to impact a large number of students at our institution. All students take a significant proportion of their coursework in the College of Arts and Sciences through the general education curriculum. In addition, half of the 800 traditional-age students complete majors in this college. As dean I see my primary responsibility as providing leadership in the area of continuous improvement of our academic offerings.

There are two strategies for implementing UD in my college. One is through faculty development and training. I have plans for WebCT and PowerPoint workshops to train faculty in using technology to support student learning. I will find ways to reward and recognize faculty for their participation and for innovative teaching. The other strategy is to work through Academic Affairs and Student Services to institutionalize UD and to get buy-in from other colleges. My reasoning is there will be greater momentum with a larger number of people involved. I think the cross-disciplinary interactions will also support the progress. I would also like to think about other venues where this topic could be addressed such as convocations, department meetings, and faculty meetings.

After participating in the PASS IT institute last year as an individual, I found that I was able to impact my own courses and that of my immediate colleagues in biology. However, in discussions with my institutional team that participated in PASS IT this year I am much more confident about our ability to have greater impact. Each of us will have “spheres of influence” and together we have the ability to engage more meaningful conversation with other administrators. So I think having a working group of people who are committed to UD principles and the positive impact it may have is critical for progress. In many conversations, I have heard people talk about the importance of a “grass roots” process. I know that there are many faculty and administrators who would support implementation of UD principles and would understand the implications of doing so (or not doing so). I believe that any institutional shift towards UD at my institution needs to come from those individuals, not from the administration. Administrative mandates tend to be regarded with suspicion and resentment.
Working in a small group, using Universal Design (UD) guidelines as a framework to guide your discussion, discuss how you might respond to the situation described in each of the following scenarios. Then consider how the situation might have been different if UD was implemented from the outset.

**Scenario 1: Orientation**
You are asked to design an activity to help first-year students at orientation learn the locations and functions of campus buildings and offices. Because students are not required to disclose a disability during the admissions process, orientation leaders may not have any advance knowledge regarding participating students with disabilities, and in the case of “hidden” disabilities, may not at any point be aware of students’ disabilities. Describe your group’s idea for this orientation activity, which might then take the place of the traditional campus tour.

**Scenario 2: Learning Center**
In the learning center you are working with a student with a vision impairment who is taking a course for which all materials are posted on the course Web site. Unfortunately, the Web site is set up in a way that makes it virtually impossible to access the information using a screen reader. How would you go about working with the student? What other actions might you take?

**Scenario 3: Inadvertent Disclosure**
A colleague inadvertently reveals to you that a student whom you know well (whether through employment, course, or co-curricular or extracurricular activity) has a hidden disability. The student has never disclosed the disability to you. You realize that this knowledge explains a number of facets of your relationship with the student, and is likely to influence your future interactions with the student. What, if anything, do you do with this piece of information?

**Scenario 4: “Disruptive” Behavior, Version A**
During a group discussion (whether in a meeting of a student organization, staff meeting, etc.), a student with a psychological disability known only to you starts screaming at group members. Following the outburst, the student is quietly crying while the eyes of all others present for the discussion are on him/her.

**Scenario 4: “Disruptive” Behavior, Version B**
During a small group discussion (whether in a meeting of a student organization, staff meeting, etc.), a person with a psychological disability known only to you starts screaming at group members and then storms out of the room crying.

**Scenario 5: Web Design**
You realize that the Web site for your program or service is attractive, but it is set up in a way that makes it virtually impossible to access the information on the site using a screen reader.
Scenario 6: Planning Checklist
In your position you are responsible for overseeing a wide range of programs and activities for students, from social gatherings to a distinguished lecture series, and for supervising the staff and students who plan these events. What items might you include on a checklist to ensure universal access?

Scenario 7: Advising
A student who is an English Language Learner informs his academic advisor that he moved to the United States 3 years ago and is concerned because he struggles with completing exams on time. Additionally, he cannot keep up with his reading assignments, and he has difficulty understanding what he reads. He also states that he cannot keep up with note taking in lecture-based classes. He also feels lonely and is not sure what to do.

Scenario 8: Advising
An advisee has a learning disability for which he received special education services in high school. He indicates that the Individual Education Plan (IEP) from high school was not very helpful to him. He does not want to meet with Disability Services nor seek academic accommodations. He does not want “academic crutches” and wants to try to tackle college on his own. He also wants to register for five courses—one more than you have agreed to.

Scenario 9: Advising
An advisee has been a successful college student but has always needed to work very hard to keep up with reading. She often reads and rereads assignments until her textbooks are completely highlighted. Additionally, she often earns her grades primarily on the basis of her homework, reports, papers, and presentations, as she tends to perform poorly on timed exams. This term she has begun distribution requirement language studies in Spanish and feels totally lost in the course. You suspect that the student may have an undiagnosed learning disability.

Scenario 10: Advising
An advisee who has a speech impediment and stutters is enrolled in a social science class where participation is 20% of the grade. While her attendance is regular and she is caught up on assignments, she has difficulty participating in the class. She explains that she is afraid to say much because in other classes when she has made attempts to participate students have claimed that they cannot understand her. They keep asking her to repeat herself and it gets embarrassing. She also says that sometimes it takes her a while to get her thoughts together and prepare to speak without triggering her stutter and by that time the discussion has moved on to something else.

Scenario 11: A Former Advisee
One of your former advisees with a learning disability complains that his new faculty advisor is more difficult to reach than you. Also, the faculty advisor does not seem nearly as interested in him as you are. Other than approving course selection, he would rather discuss academic progress and disability and personal issues with you instead of his faculty advisor. After further conversation the student confides that the faculty advisor does not seem to understand and is “sort of disapproving” of his disability.
Scenario 12: Student Responsibility
A second-year student with ADD comes to her registration meeting without any of the preparatory work you had specifically asked her to prepare. She agreed to take an online career assessment, meet with a career center adviser, and bring a list of three possible majors, but followed through with none of the assignments. The student is insistent that she needs to register right away as it is already past her registration date and class selection is getting slim.

Scenario 13: Disability Services (follow-up to scenario 12)
A second-year student on your Disability Services caseload comes to your walk-in hours. She indicates that the relationship between her and her advisor has completely broken down. She thinks that her advisor is extremely unhelpful. Her advisor does not understand her and is unsympathetic to her ADD, which she admits causes her to be disorganized and somewhat uneven in her follow through. She has been trying to see her adviser for the past week and the advisor is unavailable. She need to register right away, is already past her registration date and class selection is getting slim.

Scenario 14: Communication Patterns
A student with multiple disabilities who communicates via an electronic speech board comes to you to complain that he is being ignored by office staff and students who chat with his personal attendant but never try to talk to him.

Scenario 15: Advising
An advisee comes to your office and tells you that he has been having a rough time this term and is suffering from depression. He talked to his family doctor and has been given a prescription for an antidepressant. He has not seen a professional counselor, has not registered with disability services, nor disclosed his situation to any of his instructors.

Scenario 16: Tutorial Services
A student has requested a math tutor for her algebra class. She says she wants to schedule a one-on-one tutoring session because the tutor she was working with on a drop-in basis has been refusing to work problems from her homework set. She is frustrated by a lack of time to complete her homework and says that she needs to start the new one-on-one sessions as soon as possible.
Implementation Tools

This section contains a number of tools that can assist student services professionals in implementing Universal Design throughout their institutions. These tools can be downloaded from www.cehd.umn.edu/passit as Word documents and adapted for the unique realities of diverse institutions. They are useful for thinking holistically about the integration of UD in a variety of institutional situations.

The first three tools are checklists that were developed by a team of postsecondary professionals at Saint Louis University. Each provides a series of reminders to ensure that the implementation of UD—at the classroom, group, or institutional level—is on target. The last implementation tool in this section is a form that was created by a team of experts in postsecondary administration from throughout the U. S. who participated in the 2006 PASS IT Summer Institute. It is accompanied by a detailed explanation that walks the user through each section of the Assessment Tool.
Does Your Curriculum Provide an Inclusive Environment?  
Is It UID Friendly?  
Complete this checklist to find out.

Universal Instructional Design (UID) ensures an inclusive environment for all students.

“The basic premise of Universal Instructional Design is that curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and applicable to students with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities and disabilities.” (Center for Applied Special Technology, n.d.)

By following the 7 principles* below, you can make your curricula accessible to all. *Adapted from Chickering & Gamson (1987) 7 Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

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<thead>
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<th>UID INCLUSION CHECKLIST</th>
<th>ACCOMPLISHED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creating a welcoming, respectful learning environment</td>
<td>Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send welcome email to students prior to start of class</td>
<td>Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create introductory exercises that are personable, friendly and encourage humor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include a syllabus statement that fosters an inclusive learning environment. (Refer to attached examples.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learn students’ names</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be open to meeting with students</td>
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<tr>
<td>During the first week of class lay the foundation to establish learning communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Let students know from the outset that the environment is inclusive and that all “voices” are heard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliment student participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop course objectives with student input</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collect information on “Student Information Sheet” (attached)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Addressing essential course components</td>
<td>Now</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide class sessions and assignments that meet intended learning outcomes</td>
<td>Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss with students the components of the course that build toward subsequent courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Communicating clear expectations &amp; providing constructive feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post comprehensive user-friendly syllabus online prior to beginning of course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post online video of instructor explaining teaching style and philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide clear written and audio explanations of course assignments online</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post grading rubrics of all assignments online at the beginning of class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start each day with an overview of the day’s objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask students to match course objectives with course content, lectures, and assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide students with completed grading rubrics including written comments in a timely manner (i.e., preferably at least one week prior to due date of next assignment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss in class general overall strengths and weaknesses of completed assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Communicating clear expectations &amp; providing constructive feedback</strong></td>
<td>Now</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask students to complete peer evaluations for team members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage students to submit assignments at least one week prior to due date for teacher and peer review before resubmitting revised assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide students with information regarding how to access support structures such as tutoring, writing center, and other out-of-class assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask students to do a one-minute paper at the end of class to outline what they learned, indicate when they were the most/least engaged, and provide comments about the day’s class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Request feedback from students on the course/instruction throughout the semester rather than only at the end of the semester</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Providing natural supports (including technology) for learning to enhance opportunities for all learners</strong></td>
<td>Now</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post all reading materials (except text books) and website links online</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post some student assignments (e.g., book reviews, movie reviews, etc.) on course site so that other students may review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide all handouts and evaluations in 12-14 pt. san serif font</td>
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<td>Provide all PowerPoint slides &amp; handouts in UID format (i.e., few words per slide, san serif font, large bold print) with no more than two slides per page for handouts</td>
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<td>Be available to students via email, phone, online course site, and in person for assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider the cost of textbooks; if possible, use original sources that can be bought at second-hand book stores, create your own packet of readings, or mention if books are available in library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish learning communities in the course to provide students with classmate resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure that all field trips, labs, and educational opportunities outside of the classroom are accessible to all students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allow for ample time for exams and assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. Using teaching methods that consider diverse learning styles, abilities, ways of knowing, and previous experience and background knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Now</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilize a constructivist approach to teaching by providing information and having students construct meaning from new information based on prior knowledge and experiences</td>
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<td>Utilize multi-modal teaching techniques including, lecture, large group discussion, small group discussion, pair and share, role playing, case studies, games, exercises, guest speakers, panels, movies, videos, podcasts, vodcasts</td>
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<td>Use open captioned videos, DVDs, and video streams</td>
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<td>Consider the learning styles of your current students and use appropriate teaching strategies</td>
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<td><strong>6. Offering multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge</strong></td>
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<td>Offer students the option of papers, presentations, PowerPoint's, online presentations, team assignments, poster sessions, role playing, websites, games, exercises, case studies, online discussions, individual and group projects</td>
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<td><strong>7. Promoting interaction among students and between you and the students</strong></td>
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List other ways you might ensure inclusion . . .
Universal Instructional Design (UID) ensures an inclusive environment for all students.

“The basic premise of Universal Instructional Design is that curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and applicable to students with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities and disabilities.” (Center for Applied Special Technology, n.d.)

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List other ways you might ensure inclusion . . .
Student Community Awareness for Universal Instructional Design
Student Checklist

Universal Instructional Design (UID) ensures an inclusive environment. By following the principles below, students can make a difference in the university community with regard to accessibility for all individuals regardless of learning style, background, culture, age, language, and ability.

1. Promote an inclusive community grounded in the concepts of Universal Instructional Design and Social Justice.
   - Advocate social justice through discussion, conversation, and action
   - Offer friendship with all students regardless of background or ability
   - Share cultural experiences and seek out opportunities to learn about diversity through the perceptions of other students
   - Question events and programs that do not promote inclusion in a professional and appropriate manner

2. Plan and develop student accessible programs and events that welcome all students.
   - Insure that event, program, and meeting locations allow all students to engage and socialize equally
   - All print materials: Posters, invitations, letters, announcements are in written in accessible formats (Large arial font, high contrast between lettering and background)
   - Support written announcements and posters with audio versions (podcasts, audio blogs and other)

3. Promote websites, online registration and surveys and other web based student information sites that are accessible for all students.
   - Images and animation: Use the [alt] attribute to describe the function of each visual.
   - Multi-media: Provide captioning and transcripts of audio and descriptions of video
   - Hypertext links: Use text that makes sense when read out of context. For example, avoid “click here.”
   - Page organization: Use headings, lists, and consistent structure. Use CSS for layout and style where possible.
   - Graphs and Charts: Summarize or use the [longdesc] (long description) attribute
   - Tables: Make line-by-line reading sensible. Summarize.
   - Frames: Use the [noframes] element and meaningful titles
   - Scripts, applets, & plug-ins: Provide alternate content in case active features are inaccessible or unsupported.
   - Check your work: Validate. Use tools, checklist, and guidelines at http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Rating (1 to 7)</th>
<th>Success Indicators</th>
<th>Barriers/Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Equitable use</td>
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<td>2. Flexible use</td>
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<td>3. Simple and intuitive use</td>
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<td>4. Perceptible information</td>
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<td>5. Tolerance for error and provision for contingency</td>
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<td>6. Low physical effort</td>
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<td>7. Size and space for approach and use</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Supportive community of learners (students, faculty, staff)</td>
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<td>9. Positive learning climate</td>
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Current Overall Evaluation Rating of the Program/Service
Circle one: 1 (lowest)  2  3  4  5  6  7 (highest)

Recommendations for Change:
Existing Resources, Staff, and Policies Needed to Implement Program/Service:
New Resources, Staff, and Policies Needed to Implement Program/Service:
Benefits of Implementing Program/Service:
Suggestions for Use of the Planning and Assessment Tool

To help illustrate use of the Planning and Assessment Tool, the following scenario is provided and used in exploring the instrument: One of the parts of the new student orientation program is learning the locations and functions of buildings at the institution. Because students are not required to disclose a disability during the admission process, orientation leaders may not have any advance knowledge regarding participating students with disabilities, and in the case of invisible disabilities, may not at any point be aware of students’ disabilities. How could the tour of the institution be inclusive for all students?

Top Section of the Assessment Tool

This section of the tool provides a place to gather together the current situation regarding the activity under review. First, the program or service is succinctly described (e.g., tour of the institution for prospective students). The next item asks for a description of the goals of this program or service. This is a critical piece because clearly identifying goals may permit the administrator to explore alternative ways to achieve the same goals through diverse means that present fewer barriers to students. The third item identifies who is currently being served. This item could include both demographic information and the number of students served. Continuing with the example of the tour, this could be the number of students who participate annually. The final item in this set identifies which resources are used currently. This item might include the types and numbers of students or staff who conduct the tours, the means and route for the tour, and what materials are used during the tour (e.g., handouts, audio visuals).

Middle Section of the Assessment Tool

This section of the tool can serve two purposes for the administrator or evaluator of the program or service. On one hand the assessment criteria can be used to analyze a policy or practice to decide if it is a candidate for change. The second purpose is to apply the same criteria again after the change has occurred to analyze the outcomes to discern if significant improvement has occurred. Each of the nine assessment criteria are drawn from the professional literature describing Universal Design of Instruction (Scott, McGuire, & Shaw, 2003). Each of the criteria with this tool presents an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the policy or practice. Column one allows for rating of each criterion. The next column asks the respondent to identify success indicators and milestones. The final column identifies the barriers and challenges with the practice before the introduction of UDI. Continuing our example of the student campus tour, some of the items in this section might be the following. One success indicator for “equitable use” would be that 95% of students become acquainted with the institution’s environment. “Perceptible information” success indicator would be achieved through making all information regarding this activity in a variety of forms (e.g., print, audio, computer text readable). A “barrier or challenge” under the “low physical effort” criterion might be that the tour cannot be easily conducted during inclement weather or is difficult for students with a physical disability. Finally, the person completing the assessment is asked to make an overall evaluation rating of the program or service.
Final Section of the Assessment Tool

This final section of the assessment and planning tool focuses attention on effective implementation of the activity. With the example used thus far, under “recommendations for change” it might one or more of the following: (a) providing access to golf-cart type vehicle for students with physical disabilities as appropriate; (b) using a bus (with wheelchair accessibility) to transport all students around the institution; (c) conducting tours along interior corridors that are wide, obstruction-free, and accessible for those in a wheelchair; (d) creating a narrated tour that could be played via audio player while moving along the route or listened to alone, and (e) developing creation of a 3-D virtual tour using the institution’s Web site or a Web site such as Second Life (Linden Research, 2007). Each of these potential responses should be keyed to fulfilling one or more of the nine assessment criteria of the middle section of the planning tool. The second item identifies existing resources that are being used to support delivery of the program or service. The next item in this section identifies “new resources and policies needed to implement” the revised program or service. Achievement of the desired student outcomes may require a combination of old and new resources. The final item in this section asks for identification of the benefits for implementing this program or service. Clearly identifying the tangible benefits to the students, staff, and institution of the practice or policy helps to ensure its continued support and implementation.

Reuse of the Tool as Assessment for Progress

After the program or service has been modified through the use of best practices, it is recommended that the form be used again. This time the primary purpose of the tool is assessing the modified practice. This step in the process provides feedback essential for further improvement and refinement. As with any other practice within academic or student affairs, the cycle of assessment, revision, and improvement is continuous. Each of the members of the Student Affairs Working Group has taken the planning tool home to their institutions. Case studies for transformation at the institution or state level are contained in the chapter by Arendale and Poch in the PASS-IT book (Higbee & Goff, 2008).

The assessment tool appears as a one-page form to save space. For actual use, it is suggested to recreate the form as a table through a word processing software program, permitting expansion of the size of the boxes to allow more or less space as needed to type or write responses.
Accessible PowerPoint Presentations
Emily Goff
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Advances in technology are making it possible for instructors to incorporate multimedia elements into almost every presentation. In many cases, these presentations are enriching the experience for learners. However, it is important to ensure that these tools are used in a way that maximizes their accessibility for learners. Microsoft’s PowerPoint has become a ubiquitous element both in the classroom and in professional presentations. There are a few guidelines that can help instructors to ensure that their PowerPoint presentations are constructed with the principles of Universal Design (UD) in mind.

First, make sure that the audience can easily read the text in the slides. This means limiting the text in each slide so that it will be large enough to be read. An often-used guideline is that each slide should contain no more than six lines of text with six or fewer words per line. Typically headers should be in 44- or 40-point font and text should be no smaller than 28-point font to be readable from the back of the room, or when reduced in size for handouts that include 3 to 6 slides per page (depending on whether lines for notes are provided). The font used for the text should be a sans serif font such as Helvetica, Tahoma, or Arial. Using black text on a white background will also increase readability and should be used in place of two-color schemes, which might be completely illegible for people who are colorblind.

Second, carefully consider the use of non-text visual cues in the presentation. Photographs, video or audio clips, and clipart are easily inserted into the presentation, but can be a distraction or even a barrier to accessibility for some members of the audience and to those who use screen-reading software to access the presentation. The use of these multimedia tools should be restricted to those items that really add to the meaning of the presentation, rather than just as “cool” or decorative elements. Any visual items should be described in detail either underneath the object or through the use of Alt-text. These descriptions should be rich enough to convey the meaning of the image to those who cannot see it, but should not interpret the visual image beyond what is readily apparent to the viewer. Any video should be closed captioned or accompanied by a written transcript, which should also be supplied for any audio clips.

Third, consider distributing handouts of the presentation, making sure to have large-print options should any of the members of the audience have visual impairments. Providing a few copies of the presentation on CD or making available online would allow those audience members who use screen readers to fully access the presentation. Providing these handouts or electronic copies of the presentation allows the audience members to follow the presentation without feeling pressure to write the copy from the PowerPoint presentation and frees them to pay more attention to the presentation and engage in related discussion. All participants benefit. Although it is important to consider sustainability issues, by printing handouts with 6 slides per side or 12 slides per sheet of paper, presenters may be using less paper than would be required by audience members to take notes.
Here is a slide that does NOT follow the guidelines:

In this case, the text is in two columns, which would be very confusing to a screen reader that reads from left to right. The small text on a visually busy background is difficult to read. There is a piece of clipart of an instructor pointing to a blackboard in front of two students in a classroom that does nothing to add meaning to the presentation.

Here is the same information from the first slide after it has been adapted to reflect UD principles:

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Universal Design in PowerPoint Presentations

- Use large, sans serif fonts
- Use nontext items only to add meaning
- Describe all nontext items
- Provide alternative formats
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In this case, the slide is black print on a white background, providing maximum readability for the entire audience. The language of the bullet points has been simplified to convey the same meaning with fewer words. The clipart has been removed and the result is a clean-looking slide that is free from unnecessary, distracting elements.

Of course, there are many cases in which visual elements can inform and enhance a presentation. In these cases, it is essential that a rich text description accompany the slide. This can be done using Alt-text or it can be included in the presentation on the following slide. Here is an example of a photo accompanied by the
description within the presentation:

Description of Previous Visual

The previous slide is a photograph of a street corner with yellow painted curbs and white striped crosswalks. At the crosswalks the sidewalk and curbs are modified so that their height descends to street level and that area is unpainted.

It is important to remember that the purpose of using PowerPoint is to communicate more effectively and easily with the audience; following the guidelines of Universal Design will ensure that the presentation is available to all members of the audience.
PowerPoint Presentations
Full Presentations available for download from:
http://cehd.umn.edu/passit/presentations.html

UD in Academic Affairs
Administration

Universal Design:
Counseling and Advising

Universal Design Principles
for Student Services

Universal Design and
Student-Centered Advising

Universal Design in
Learning Support

And many more…
References


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55


PASS IT seeks to address a compelling need in higher education by developing a corps of trainers to facilitate professional development workshops in the implementation of Universal Design (UD) and Universal Instructional Design (UID) in higher education. UID, an adaptation of the architectural concept of Universal Design, is a relatively new model for providing access to higher education for students with disabilities. Through UD and UID, staff and faculty create more welcoming spaces for all students by rethinking professional practices to develop curricula and programs that are inclusive for all learners. When faculty and staff implement UD and UID as they begin planning for a course, program, or activity by taking into consideration the strengths and challenges of all students, they reduce or eliminate the need to provide last-minute accommodations or to segregate students on the basis of individual needs.