The Syllabus Statement

Students with disabilities glean a significant amount of information about a course and their instructor from the access statement. A well designed statement indicates the faculty member's level of commitment to designing their course in a way that welcomes all students, including those with a disability, and provides guidance to those students who experience barriers.

As a **minimum**, the statement should include contact information for the Disability Services (DS) office and be placed prominently (preferably within the first page) of the syllabus.

Disability Services Recommended Syllabus Statement

Arkansas Tech University values diversity and inclusion and is committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation of all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is useable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or prevent an accurate assessment of your achievement, please meet with me privately to discuss your needs and concerns. You may also contact the Office of Disability Services, located in Doc Bryan Student Center, Suite 141, or visit their website at http://www.atu.edu/disabilities/index.php in order to initiate a request for accommodations.

Other Sample Access and Accommodation Statements

Arkansas Tech has not adopted a universal access statement for faculty to include in their course syllabi. Recognizing the difficulty in developing a statement that communicates information in a concise and positive way, a number of examples demonstrating acceptable approaches are provided for your review.

Example 1: University of Arizona

Accessibility and Accommodations: It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Services (include contact information) to establish accommodations.

Example 2: University of Central Florida

It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Notice of Accommodation from Disability Services) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting Disability Services (include contact information) to talk about academic accommodations. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

Example 3: The Ohio State University

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. (Include Disability Services contact information)

Example 4: Originator Unknown

Usability, disability and design: I am committed to creating a course that is inclusive in its design. If you encounter barriers, please let me know immediately so that we can determine if there is a design adjustment that can be made or if an accommodation might be needed to overcome the limitations of the design. I am always happy to consider creative solutions as long as they do not compromise the intent of the assessment or learning activity. You are also

welcome to contact the disability resource office (include contact information) to begin this conversation or to establish accommodations for this or other courses. I welcome feedback that will assist me in improving the usability and experience for all students.

Additional Recommendations

Use person first language. Terms such as handicapped, special needs, and disabled should not be used as many individuals find them offensive. Examples of person first language may be found at http://www.inclusionproject.org/nip_userfiles/file/People%20First%20Chart.pdf.

Avoid wording that communicates the primary reason for providing access is a compliance issue.

Avoid wording that places all of the responsibility for access on the student. Equitable access is a shared responsibility between faculty, the student, and the Office of Disability Services.

Do not place time restrictions on the student's right to request accommodations. While it's preferable for a student to identify their need early in the semester, they have the right to seek accommodations at any point during the academic term if they experience barriers in the course due to their disability.

Additional Resources:

http://www.projectshift-refocus.org/syllabus.htm

http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/praxis/tiki-index.php?page=Suggested_Practices_for_Syllabus_Accessibility_Statements