

Management's Proposal

October 27, 2026

I. Commitment to Accessibility

The state universities and the Massachusetts Teachers Association/Massachusetts State College Association ("MSCA") recognize their shared obligation to ensure equal access to educational programs and services in compliance with state and federal requirements, including Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Consistent with Title II of the ADA and Article II, Fair Practices, of the collective bargaining agreement, effective April 26, 2027, faculty and librarians shall be responsible for ensuring that digital content they create, select, publish, or maintain in the performance of their professional responsibilities meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards, as required by applicable law. The universities shall provide training, tools, guidance, and technical assistance to support faculty and librarians in meeting these responsibilities.

Recognizing that achieving accessibility, particularly the remediation of existing digital content, may require significant time and effort, individual unit member accountability for noncompliance shall be evaluated in accordance with Section VI of this proposal, including consideration of demonstrated good-faith efforts and the totality of the circumstances. Between April 27, 2027, and the end of the fall 2027 semester, the existence of noncompliant digital content shall not, standing alone, constitute willful neglect of a unit member's professional responsibility.

II. Faculty and Librarian Responsibility

Faculty shall design, develop, and maintain digital content in compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring content, such as syllabi, readings, handouts, multimedia slides and other instructional materials available electronically, is provided in accessible formats in the University's learning management system(s) or any learning management system utilized by a faculty member as well as content provided in websites, publisher provided materials or other instructional technologies. Digital content shall be in alignment with the required WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards as measured by one of the available automated digital accessibility checking tools.

Librarians shall ensure that all digital content that they create, curate, and publish complies with WCAG 2.1 AA standards. As appropriate given their roles, librarians shall work with administrators, colleagues, vendors, procurement offices, IT, and other involved parties to ensure that digital content and platforms licensed, hosted, or shared by the library also comply with these standards. Digital content shall be in alignment with the required WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards as measured by one of the available automated digital accessibility checking tools.

III. University Support

A. Faculty Fellows

Each University shall designate no fewer than two (2) Faculty Fellows with appropriate knowledge and training in digital accessibility to serve as resources to faculty during the 2026-2027 academic year. Faculty Fellows shall receive an alternative professional responsibility (APR) of no fewer than three semester hours of credit per semester. These Faculty Fellows shall:

- provide guidance and consultation on accessibility standards regarding digital course material;
- support faculty in implementing the WCAG 2.1 AA standards in their respective digital course materials, including supporting with challenging digital material that faculty and/or librarians are having difficulty making accessible;
- collaborate with academic departments to promote accessible course design in compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards and provide support in responding to faculty questions regarding digital accessibility; and
- collaborate with and make referrals to other designated accessibility support on campus, such as accessibility services and academic technology.

B. Designated Technical Accessibility Assistance

The University shall provide faculty and librarians with technical, professional support, either through the designation of a department/office or specific individual(s), who are responsible for supporting faculty and librarians in accessibility compliance. Faculty and librarians should contact technical support when:

- they experience difficulty in making digital content accessible and achieving compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards; and
- they have questions regarding compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards in general.

The provision of technical support by the University in no way obligates support staff to make digital course content accessible for the faculty member, as their primary function is to serve as a resource.

C. Use of Office Hours

During the 2026-2027 academic year only, faculty members may use one (1) of their three (3) required posted office hours each week to remediate digital course content in their office space during periods of normal activity. This use of office hours is not permitted during regular peak periods, as identified in Article XII of the collective bargaining agreement.

D. Fundamental Alteration and Undue Burden Analysis

The University shall have a process in place for making determinations regarding:

- whether compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards would result in a fundamental alteration of the nature of the course or academic objectives; and
- whether compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards would impose an undue burden.

A determination regarding whether compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards would result in a fundamental alteration or undue burden will be made by a qualified, designated university body, consistent with applicable law. Faculty and librarians shall not be permitted to make a determination regarding whether compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards would result in a fundamental alteration or an undue burden on their own and without following the procedures/process implemented by their respective university.

It is generally not acceptable to create conforming alternate versions of digital content, including course content, unless there are technical or legal limitations on updating the original course content.

IV. Training and Professional Development

A. Training

The University shall provide ongoing training opportunities to faculty and librarians on accessibility of digital content. Training shall include:

- foundational instruction on accessibility principles and WCAG 2.1 AA standards;
- focused, practical training tailored to specific types of course materials (e.g., Digital documents, video content, STEM content, LMS tools); and
- workshops and drop-in sessions designed to provide faculty with assistance and to answer questions regarding making digital content accessible and recommend applicable training.

Training shall be offered on a regular basis and in multiple formats to accommodate the schedules and needs of faculty and librarians.

B. Full-Time Faculty Service

For the 2026-2027 academic year, a faculty member's skill development and time devoted to designing, developing, and maintaining digital course content in compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards shall be regarded as participation and a portion of the contributions to the professional growth and development of the university community. For evaluation purposes, faculty will need to demonstrate that their work devoted to designing, developing and maintaining accessible digital course content was extraordinary to excuse faculty from the performance of additional service to the university.

C. Part-Time Faculty Stipend

Part-time, adjunct faculty who provide instruction only on a part-time basis shall receive a one-time payment of \$150 for attending University-approved foundational training between June 1, 2026, and March 1, 2027, focused on:

- accessibility principles and WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards; and
- building their skill in creating accessible course content and in techniques for ensuring digital course content is accessible.

V. Accessibility Monitoring and Reporting

The University may periodically evaluate digital content using automated accessibility checking tools to ensure compliance with Title II of the ADA. Such evaluations may include system-generated reports assessing compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards.

Faculty and librarians who deliver content via any digital platform not supported by the University must attest to compliance with the WCAG 2.1 AA standards and demonstrate upon the University's request compliance with the WCAG 2.1 AA standards.

These reports may be used for, but not limited to, the following:

- as a support and improvement tool;
- sharing with faculty along with guidance on remediation and available resources;
- as evidence of exemplary work being performed in the area of digital content accessibility;
- as evidence of non-compliance and neglect of a unit member's professional responsibility which may result in disciplinary action;
- as evidence of compliance or noncompliance when receiving a complaint; and
- generating a report to the Office of Equal Opportunity or used in an investigation conducted.

VI. Compliance

The universities recognize that accessibility compliance may not always be achievable immediately or perfectly for all content. Accordingly, for the remainder of the spring 2027 and fall 2027 semester, compliance shall be evaluated based on the totality of the circumstances and unit members' demonstrated good-faith efforts to achieve accessibility.

Evidence of a good-faith effort may include, as applicable:

- participation in accessibility training;
- use of accessibility evaluation and remediation tools;
- timely response to identified accessibility issues;
- consultation with designated faculty fellows or support personnel;

- significant improvement towards compliance of digital content accessibility by April 26, 2027 and continued improvement throughout the fall 2027 academic semester; and
- new digital content created after April 26, 2027 shall meet accessibility standards prior to publishing.

The existence of non-compliant digital content between April 27, 2027, and the end of the fall 2027 semester will not, standing alone, constitute willful neglect of a unit member's professional responsibility where a unit member has demonstrated good-faith efforts toward compliance.

After December 24, 2027, the existence of noncompliant digital content may constitute willful neglect of a unit member's professional responsibility.

In the event a university receives any complaint, regardless of the forum, regarding non-compliant digital content, a unit member must immediately cooperate with the university in remediating such digital content to ensure that the digital content meets accessibility standards.