



COLLEGE OF INFORMATION STUDIES

iSchool Assembly Minutes

Date: Friday, March 1st, 2024 – 9:30 to 11:00 am

Location: Jimenez Hall, Room 0220

AGENDA

Preliminaries

- Call to order

Quorum recognized.

- Review and approval of minutes from February

Minutes approved without correction.

- Review and approval of this agenda

Agenda approved without correction.

Assembly Items

- Disability Compliance & Accommodations [Emily Singer Lucio]

She is impressed by attendance at an early morning meeting (9:30).

ADA and Section 504 American Rehabilitation Act: No qualified individual with a disability should be excluded from participation in university activities.

Her office:

Guides the efforts to move beyond compliance toward seamless access (that would not require accommodations).

Addresses accessibility issues and barriers on campus—physical and programmatic barriers and instructional accommodation requests. (This includes the Purple Line.)

Collaborates with university offices to inform decision-making and ensure university compliance with state and federal mandates.

Reviews policies and procedures; provides technical assistance and direction for university policies and compliance with state and federal mandates.

This is *not* Accessibility & Disability Services—they are “completely separate things,” although they work together. (ADS provides accommodations and consults with, supports, and advocates for students, and consults with instructors to ensure appropriate accommodations.)

This is also not the Communication Access Services Unit, which provides accommodations to eligible students and departments that includes sign language interpreters, real-time transcriptions, and assistive listening device loans.

There is shared responsibility. She emphasizes that accommodations “should not give the students an unfair advantage over their classmates.” The university has an “obligation to make a good-faith effort to provide reasonable accommodations to all students with a disability, no matter when the request is made.”

Students are *not* required have a special education teacher inform other teachers about accommodations automatically with a green sheet as in American public high schools, and they can here decide to use or not to use accommodations, but these accommodations are never *retroactive*. She encourages that after receiving notification from ADS that instructors reach out to the student in question to meet and talk through accommodations to figure out what they need. (An instructor can request a meeting with students in the syllabus.)

Section 504 requires modification to courses that are necessary, effective, and present students with the “same opportunity, not a guarantee of success.”

What is a reasonable accommodation? “It’s not a cookie cutter approach,” but there are meetings with each individual student. What is *not* reasonable? An accommodation cannot be a threat to the health and safety of others, it cannot mean a “substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum or a substantial alternation in the manner in which you provide your services,” and it cannot pose an “undue financial or administrative burden.” Medical school example: What’s the point of this lab exercise? Is it the “physical manipulation” itself or that the student understands a hypothesis?

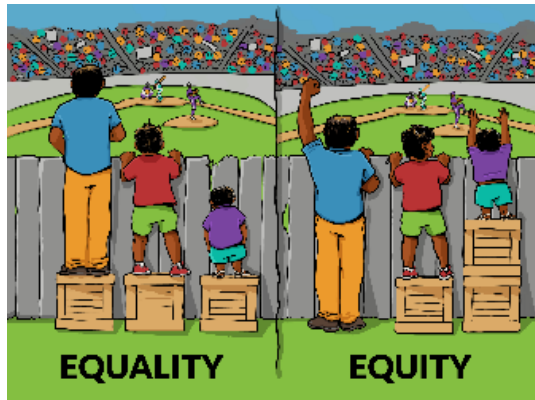
The burden question does not actually come into question here because courts will look at the budget of the *entire* institution.

Reasonable accommodations cannot fundamentally alter the course or program. Students must meet technical standards or requirements. Instructors should maintain open lines of communication, and confidentiality must always be respected, and no formal deadline for students should be imposed for students to request accommodations.

What is a fundamental alteration? A major change, lowering an academic standard, or removing or waiving acquisition of a skill that is essential.

Universal Design is the move from a compliance model to an equal access model. How does this look in terms of course design? Think of engagement. Is writing down every word to pass a test engagement? She says no, especially for students with disabilities. There can be shared materials or recordings in most cases.

She presents the equality, equity graphic:



“UDL (Universal Design for Learning) aims to change the design of the environment rather than to change the learner.”

Steps to take:

Share information with students about obtaining accommodations.

Adopt a universal design process that factors course accessibility from the onset.

Ensure that all materials posted to ELMS are in an accessible format. The IT Accessibility website has information on making items in ELMS accessible. (We are *required* to post documents, such as PDFs, in accessible format.)

Use the Course Accessibility Checklist to remove potential barriers; ensure that recorded classes are captioned; talk with students.

Inclusive Learning Environment training—TLTC, for instance, has an asynchronous online course on Universal Design for Learning (see [here](#)).

Service Animals

Guide dog. They have to be a dog or a [miniature horse](#). (Not a cockatoo) They are not required to be licensed or certified. They are allowed to accompany handlers at all times and everywhere on campus except where specifically prohibited. They are not required to wear a vest. You can ask if the dog is required or what it has been trained to perform. You cannot ask about documentation.

Emotional support animals. They can be any animal. There is a process through ADS. They are primarily for a residence hall.

Do and Don't around a service dog team—don't touch the dog without asking, etc.

[Accessibility website](#)

“One stop shop”--for instance, see [“Service animals in labs.”](#)
[Campus map](#) has a check off for wheelchair accessibility routes
Micromobility parking violations
Commencement
Podcasts that can be included in courses.

Event access—if you are hosting an event, put a disability access statement on there—that’s a welcoming way to say, “We’re here, we’re listening.”

Q&A

Q: Fundamental alterations: We have a residential program; is the modality change considered a fundamental alteration? A: “There is a process for that.” You can go to ADS for their adjudication process. If you say it is a burden, you will have to justify not changing the modality, and ADS will have to agree with you. There is a further appeal process. There is [OCRSM](#) that might also bring the student in. It is a “case-by-case basis.”

Q: Is ADS shifting its thinking based on more holistic thinking? A: “I can’t answer that question for ADS.” Q: Moving away from a compliance model? A: “ADS has been understaffed for years.” They have been focused on accommodations. Ms. Lucio’s role is something new.

Q: Are there ways to report facility accessibility barriers? A: “Yes.”

Q: What happens if a student discovers they have a disability because of multiple failures in a class that *subsequently* causes them to get tested? A: “There’s not really a process.” But generally, one can’t change the past retroactively. Perhaps the department might make an adjustment to procedure? Emily Lucio is happy to talk with individuals in difficult situations to work with a department to see what could be done and not to let things linger too long. (There is some disagreement here about the difficulty of obtaining some tests, especially getting reimbursed from insurance for its costs.)

Q: Where do we find adult evaluation information? A: “Call me.”

Q: A student was able to take a class online and then other students noticed, and everyone started requesting the online modality, which changed the class. (Obviously, the first student also got confidentiality.) How do you handle this? A: “We’re navigating new waters here.” The instructor can ask the student about their comfort with sharing their medical diagnosis. (The response to Lucio is that this might be “coercive” and sounds like pressure.) “Not an easy answer to this question.” Q: What about student evaluations that might be adversely affected here? (You can’t have an unhappy room.) A: The response is that we have to make sure that we are doing what is right for all students. Fair is that every student gets what they need. You might include that as part of a general conversation.

You can email her. Her email can be found [here](#).

Q: If we’re trying for UDL, we shouldn’t retreat to compliance. A: “Thank you.”

Q: How is your work different from ADS? A: They work with students for accommodations; she does compliance, policy development, etc.

- Dean's Update [Keith Marzullo]

New people

[Leah Bryant](#): Payroll & Administrative Coordinator (presently doing payroll)

[Melodie Lim](#): HR Coordinator

Next week promises to be “even more a whirlwind.”

David Loshin put together our inaugural INFO Night. Nine companies were there.

Next week, there will be a virtual panel on epistemic justice. Following the panel, there will be a mini-retreat. Please attend if you can. This came out of a conversation that came out of the Israel-Hamas discussions.

For Scott Nash's Dean's Lecture, there have been 290 registrants already. He will present information about using his own notion of good.

[The Do Good Innovator Award recipients](#)

Andrew Fellows

Beth Bonsignore

Beth St Jean

Carol Boston

Bill Kules

Diana Marsh

Galina Reitz

Ron Padron

Giving Day—we have a trophy... “It is a wonderful thing.”

Sadly, two students passed away. We are working with one family, as Bryn Mashiri was an enrolled student. Raena Nicole Smith graduated in December and was slated to walk in the May Commencement, when she will be remembered.

Q: New guidelines for PTK faculty that came up at the Office of Faculty Affairs? When will there be a vote?

A: Dean Marzullo does not know but there is an upcoming Dean's Forum.

P.S. There has been support for a name change to College of Information.

- MITH Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities [Trevor Munoz]

[Trevor Muñoz](#) has been at UMD as 12.5 years and been associated with MITH throughout. He has been director since 2020 when he had to send everyone home for COVID. What are they up to these days?

They are a small and soft-funded group. They are studying cultural expression based on the interpretive traditions in the humanities while making things with computers. They are interested in change from centering marginalized communities.

There are five areas:

Community-led partnerships with the humanities (Lakeland, which has been part of our geographical area since 1890)—the centerpiece has been building digital collections.

African-American experimental digital humanities

Digital editions and static sites and minimal computing (interest for HCI), especially early abolitionist periodicals.

Digital storytelling, including a partnership with the Driskell Center to better explore their collection)

Electronic literature and vintage computing—the lifeworld of computing.

Come find us; come email us.

- General Education Diversity Requirement [Douglas Roberts, Alice Donlan]

There are a number of diversity initiatives currently taking place at UMD. We needed a “more holistic approach”—every major was going to have a DEI learning outcome; there are non-curricular pursuits (TerrapinStrong); there are now also changes to GenEd. In 2022, the Campus Senate approved a proposal to make modifications to our General Education Diversity requirement.

Three changes:

Nomenclature

Theory course: Understanding Plural Societies will become Understanding Structures of Racism and Inequality.

Practice course: Cultural Competence will become Navigating Diverse Social Environments.

Content

The theory course will require instruction on issues of structural and systemic racism.

The practice course will expand the set of required skills-oriented learning outcomes.

At present, students can avoid taking a practice course. That’s being changed: students will have to take a theory and a practice course.

Main areas of implementation:

Clearly define the new categories, adhering to the vision set forth in the DETF report.

Develop a plan to deliver the required number of seats in each new category, especially the now-required practice course. (8,000 seats will be required for each category each year. We don’t have that today for the practice course.)

Technical implementation. This will require changes to CIM, SIS, degree audit tools, display of schedule of classes, etc. (There will have to be multiple codes for some time. But this has been done before.)

Tasks for the Senate

Refine and clarify the wording for the diversity course category learning outcomes.

Consult with additional faculty, including teaching assistants, with subject-matter expertise in teaching about race.

(There is an academic committee. The deliverables are the learning outcomes for each course, and contextual documents that describe what courses in these categories might look like.)

[Navigating Diverse Social Environments](#)

Practice skills related to diversity and inclusion.

Skills are explicitly taught here, and students must interact with others. (*How* to engage in group work—collaborative skills have to be *taught*.)

Examples: Intergroup dialogue, community action learning projects, interpersonal skill building courses. 1+ credit courses.

NDSE Learning Outcomes

Engagement Reflection Skills—reflect on how their social identity informs their position within systems of oppression and power.

Use Perspective-Taking Skills—understand how different positionality shape perspectives on the world.

Apply interpersonal skills—ex. Communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution.

[Understanding Structures of Racism and Inequality](#) (the theory course)

Help students understand structural features of racism—not interpersonal bias alone.

Examples: Courses on the history of structures of racism; courses on the intersection of structural racism and other dimensions of identity; courses on modern efforts to combat structures of racism.

3 credit courses.

Required USRI Learning Outcomes

Define Race—not a static construct.

Analyze Structural Racism (req. by Senate vote)—Analyze structural racism through the application of specific frameworks or methods.

Apply in Context—explain how racist structures emerge, are sustained, are resisted ...

Optional USRI Learning Outcomes

(nudge instructors, but not required)

Analyze Structural Racism with Critical Frameworks—frameworks from ethnic studies or other relevant areas that embody the perspectives, cultures, and histories from/of marginalized groups.

Interrelate Other Forms of Oppression.

Big Picture

Navigating Diverse Social Environments—interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that do not have to explicitly discuss race or racism.

Understanding structures of racism and inequality

Learn about structural racism.

Can be any time period, anywhere in the world.

Must include structural racism in a substantive way.

Next Steps

Gathering feedback from instructors and students

The learning outcomes will go into CIM this semester so people can start submitting courses for approval. Courses currently approved for Cultural Competence will be automatically coded for NDSE and will not have to be submitted for review.

We are aiming to start the requirement for new students in Fall 2026. We estimate that we will require 8,000 seats in each category per academic year. We currently offer 17,000 seats in Understanding Plural Societies and 3200 seats in Cultural Competence. The discussion of seat targets will begin during the Planning Cycle process.

They will be conducting continual training for courses to be adapted.

- INFO PostDocs [Megan Subramaniam, Katie Shilton]

[Yeweon Kim](#)—Communication PhD at University of California Santa Barbara; finished in December (minor in Information Science)

Digital Civil Society and the iSchool

Computer-mediated communication (CMC)

Social

Psychological

Communicative

Digital Empowerment (how to implement ICTs to better accommodate people with limited resources—“Do people with low cognitive resources benefit from highly visual and interactive infographics?”—MA thesis); Digital ethics (“When do people support digital incivility?”—PhD thesis)| Digital equity (“How to increase digital connectivity for those marginalized by digital divides?”—Santa Barbara County Broadband Strategy Plan, 2022).

@UMD: How can we improve the sustainability of digital literacy (DL) training services for MD residents? What communicative/sociopsychological factors serve as facilitators/barriers to DL training services? How can DL training services make meaningful improvements in MD residents’ digital life?

[Vaishnav Kameswaran](#)—Postdoc@ VCAI, PhD @University of Michigan

Bridging the AI Divide: Towards Equitable Technology Futures for People with Disabilities

Research in HCI, accessibility, and critical disability studies

Uses community-based participatory approaches, and qualitative methods

AI can create an accessible world by facilitating the design of novel technology, creating personalized experiences & scaling deployments, but AI threatens to leave those with disabilities behind and raises further concerns (e.g., privacy).

Unequal access, utilization and effects of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on people with disabilities (Van dijk 2016)

Focus on the *causes* of the divide

What has caused the AI divide? India as context:

India has one of the largest populations of people with visual impairments in the world (WHO 2010). A majority live in poverty & have limited access to educational institutions and employment opportunities (World Bank 2012). There are limited structural supports, and attitudes towards disabilities remain marked by pity and charity (Ghai 2019). There has also been exponential growth in AI.

There are ableist technology gatekeepers, culturally misaligned models, and ineffective governance mechanisms.

Value-laden models and AI divide: His work showcases how universal values embedded in models can limit utilization & usability of AI technologies.

Governance frameworks and AI divide—Rights-based AI governance frameworks place demands on *users* to seek accountability and transparency when they encounter harms. These frameworks are ineffective because people themselves have to assume responsibility to recover from harms, retain limited collective capital & legal expertise, and the technology protections are inadequately enforced.

- Doctoral Committee Update [Jessica Vitak, Diana Marsh, Emily Dacquisto]

PhD integrative paper update

The integrative paper is one of four major milestones for PhD students (coursework, integrative paper, dissertation proposal, dissertation defense)

The paper has two main objectives: 1) provide an early assessment of the student's ability to successfully complete a doctoral dissertation and 2) improve the research capabilities that the doctoral student brings to their dissertation. It's typically completed in a single semester and may involve an empirical study or a literature review. It's assessed by the integrative paper committee (three faculty members) on whether the student provides strong evidence that they are capable of completing a satisfactory dissertation. Upon successful completion of the integrative paper milestone, students advance to candidacy.

There are concerns about the format. There are comprehensive exams vs. lit reviews and the need to take into account disciplinary flexibility. There are timeframe issues, like when the paper is extended beyond one semester, and students get stuck between the integrative paper and dissertation proposal milestones. The committee has conducted a quick review of what other programs do—we are one of only three information schools that do not have a holistic oral exam and one of only four that do not have a holistic written exam. Many programs with a pre-candidacy paper also have these other milestones.

Candidacy models

1. Keep things the same
2. Comprehensive/Field Exams
3. Pre-Candidacy Paper and Comps (Michigan model)

4. Dissertation Proposal and Defense
5. Hybrid models

Next steps: Faculty members should look for an email from the committee with a document providing more detail on options and a Google form; email them if there are further questions.

Consider: What constitutes “Candidacy” for you or in your domain? What steps would better prepare your students? What are the pros and cons of the current integrative paper.

Q: Have you considered interdisciplinary tracks? Student might select an area and then the faculty who are experts can collaboratively construct the plan? A: There is a model of flexibility when one can work with their advisor and committee to pick from options, but that’s a lot easier said than done. If there are multiple paths, we need to make sure they have the same bar and assessment.

Q: Anecdotal evidence about how other universities are successful or not? A: That’s probably not public information, although it is a great question. There is the question of students who fail and have nothing to show for it. We will have a Masters of Information degree that is presently going through PCC. But it is a good question that remains a valid point, and the committee will need to talk to directors of other PhD programs.

Q: Can there be different standards for students going into industry? A: We don’t have different standards.

Please talk with them.

- Giving Day [Nancy Murray]

Giving Day is March 6. 11am-1pm—best time to give.

Videos have been made by Craig Taylor. Please watch:

[2024 UMD Giving Day | UMD INFO College #GivingDayUMD #UMD \(youtube.com\)](#)

If Faculty and Staff give, we will enter you into a raffle for a track jacket. Minimum donations are \$10.

- All Things Awards, Maryland Day and Commencement [Sarah Grun]

Please nominate a deserving staff member for the William G. Wilson Staff Excellence Award. Please nominate a serving faculty member for the Instructional Innovation Award. There are other nominations. All student awards include a monetary prize. Faculty and Staff Awards will be presented at the May Assembly.

iSchool @Maryland Day

Mark your calendars

Saturday, April 27th from 10:00am to 4:00pm

Spring 2024 Commencement

Mark your calendars

Tuesday, May 21st from 4:00pm to 6:00pm

Announcements

APT at 1:00 pm

All Staff Meeting at 1:00 pm

Buy baby goods—Carol Boston—for kids in the Neighborhood—a community baby shower for young families in the Riverdale area.

Kibbi Henderson—Payroll update. They have been short-staffed, but everyone has been working very hard. 193 hourly students, 277 adjuncts (and others) have been processed. Public health helped them out. Carolina Ethridge deserves our gratitude.

Adjourned.