**Accessibility Syllabus Statement**

**What is current practice?**

In order to ensure that students know the process for requesting reasonable accommodations, many colleges and universities require that course instructors include a statement on all syllabi that provides that information. Traditionally these statements reference the institution’s legal obligations under federal law and direct students to the disability service office.

***Sample 1***

**Statement on Students with Disabilities:** Individuals who have any situation/condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in class or access class materials, are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. It is recommended that the student request a meeting in a confidential environment to review course requirements and discuss their need for accommodations. Establishing reasonable accommodations should be considered on a case-by-case basis due to variations in functional limitations of each individual and specific demands of the course. Accommodations are arranging through the the Office of Academic Skills (OAS). They are located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860.

***Sample 2***

If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the Office of Academic Skills (OAS) to discuss reasonable and appropriate accommodations and eligibility requirements. Adaptations of teaching methods, class materials or testing may be made on a case by case if warranted, as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They are located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860.

***Sample 3***

Students with a documented disability requesting classroom accommodations or modifications resulting from the disability are encouraged to register with the Office of Academic Skills (OAS). The OAS will assist in recommending accommodations that eliminate barriers in academic coursework. They are located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860.

***Sample 4***

**Students with Disabilities:** Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to participate in this class, please visit the Office of Academic Skills (OAS). They are located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860. Note that all accommodations MUST be approved through the OAS.

***Sample 5***

**Students with Disabilities**: Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the university to be accessible consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Office of Academic Skills (OAS) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The OAS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process amongst you, your instructor(s) and the OAS. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the Office of Academic Skills (OAS). They are located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860.

**What are the implicit messages?**

* Disabled students cannot navigate the curriculum independently and will need support. The course design is fine; the disabled student just can’t achieve.
* Instructors should not respond to requests for assistance from disabled students as they would to requests from other students. The disability service office must always be involved, regardless of the flexibility requested.
* Disabled students are untrustworthy; they may ask for assistance that is unjustified and try to take advantage of the system.
* Disabled students need help from a disability expert to identify accommodations or strategies that will provide them with access.
* Disabled students will require extra time and attention; they are an added burden.
* The course instructor and student cannot find a solution to an identified barrier.

**How might it be different?**

Syllabi statements represent disability as an aspect of diversity, social justice, and equity and recognize the importance of inclusive course design and effective provision of accommodations.

***Sample 1***

Diversity and Disability Statement: Our institution values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Disabled students are also welcome to contact the Office of Academic Skills (OAS) to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in the course, including accommodations. They are located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860.

***Sample 2***

**Students with Disabilities:** If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. Together we can plan how best to design the course and coordinate your accommodations.

***Sample 3***

**Students with disabilities:** It is the policy and practice of the Washington College to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or to accurate assessment of achievement—such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos—please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Students are also welcome to contact the Office of Academic Skills (OAS). They are located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860.

***Sample 4***

**Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities who experience barriers in this course are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Office of Academic Skills (OAS) is available to facilitate the removal of barriers and ensure reasonable accommodations. They are located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860.

***Sample 5***

Our college is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning, discuss your concerns with the instructor. In addition to speaking with the instructor, the staff in the Office of Academic Skills (OAS) are available to ensure an opportunity to learn in an inclusive environment that values mutual respect. They are located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860.

***Sample 6***

**Accessibility and Accommodations:** It is the College’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact the Office of Academic Skills (OAS) to begin this conversation or to establish accommodations. They are located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860.

***Sample 7***

**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 Office of Academic Skills (OAS) 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. The OAS is located on the 2nd floor, Miller Library, and can be contacted at oas@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7860.

**What are the potential implications of this change?**

* When the focus is on the instructional environment as the problem, instructors have responsibility to design a course that is welcoming and inclusive.
* When the responsibility is placed on course designers, the institution distributes accountability in ensuring that all students can participate.
* The disability resource office acts as a consultant in the process for the instructor and/or the student.
* When the statement is broadened to include all students who may experience barriers, disabled students are not singled out.
* Students are able to place their attention on participating and learning rather than spending time resolving problems and being treated as an afterthought.

Adapted from - **Refocus: Viewing the work of disability providers through a new lens** is a product of [**Project ShIFT**](https://www.projectshift-refocus.org/project-shift.htm), through funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education (PR Award # P333A080082-09). Updated and enhanced in partnership with [**Access to Design Professions, Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD)**](http://humancentereddesign.org/projects/access-to-design-professions) Boston, MA and funded in part by a grant from the [**National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)**](http://www.nea.gov/). <https://www.projectshift-refocus.org/syllabus.htm>