



Oklahoma ABLE Tech

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June 6, 2012

Oklahoma Higher Education Public Institution
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear CIO
Dear Communications Director

Subject: Web Accessibility in Higher Education Project. Response Due by June 8, 2012

Oklahoma ABLE Tech, and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Advisory Groups, the Oklahoma Council on Information Technology and the Communicators Council, are pleased to extend an invitation to you to participate in the Oklahoma ABLE Tech Web Accessibility Higher Education Project. The project will provide training and technical assistance to participating Oklahoma Higher Education Institutions in order to improve the accessibility of each institution's website and services. The effectiveness of this project is dependent on the collaboration between Oklahoma ABLE Tech and Oklahoma State University through a Memorandum of Understanding for the extent of the project Fall 2012 through Fall 2016.

The Internet is a crucial part of higher education today. Students, faculty, and staff must have access to institutional web content for many essential activities such as registering, applying for financial aid, applying for employment opportunities, completing assignments, testing, and delivering or augmenting courses. However, if websites that provide necessary information are not accessible, those with disabilities may not be able to independently complete their daily tasks or compete with their peers in academia and beyond.

Recent lawsuits and new legislation are providing additional motivation for institutions to ensure that their websites are accessible to all. While an understanding of the need for accessibility is growing, most institutions struggle to find ways to achieve and maintain it. Furthermore, the decentralized nature of most postsecondary institutions adds an additional layer of complexity to the problem. To achieve institution-wide web accessibility, systemic change is needed. Top level leadership and guidance is essential to promote the institution-changes necessary to address and maintain web accessibility in postsecondary institutions. The Oklahoma ABLE Tech Web Accessibility Higher Education Project is designed to address systemic change through activities, training, and consultation resulting in increased accessibility and compliance.

Oklahoma ABLE Tech is a nationally recognized statewide Assistive Technology Act Program focusing on assistive technology for individuals with disabilities, universal design for learning, and accessible environments. Oklahoma ABLE Tech has been a leader in the state as a member of the Oklahoma Electronic and Information Technology Advisory



Council since 2004 and has been responsible for statewide accessibility training for state agencies and higher education related to Oklahoma's information technology accessibility law (HB 2197 – 2004). This training project is an innovative approach leveraging the resources and expertise of Oklahoma ABLÉ Tech, Web AIM, and the Southwest ADA Center at ILRU. The project offers a training and implementation plan to assist Oklahoma's Higher Education Institutions in achieving standards compliance and therefore, providing the best approach and communications for our valued patrons.

Enclosed is the Memorandum of Understanding outlining the project activities and a project fact sheet. We encourage your collaboration through the Memorandum of Understanding and identification of the stakeholders from your institution who will be pivotal participants in the extent of the project. The project will kick off with a training event for administrators and web developers on October 23-24, 2012 in Oklahoma City. Oklahoma ABLÉ Tech's goal is to provide a comprehensive training opportunity in a learning environment designed to prepare your staff as they focus on the future of institutional compliance and accessible services.

Oklahoma ABLÉ Tech looks forward to working with you in this opportunity to prepare your institution to move forward with institutional accessibility. It is an exciting opportunity to provide premier training in the field of web accessibility. **Please return the enclosed MOU to Brenda Dawes at Oklahoma ABLÉ Tech (address listed below) no later than June 8, 2012.** Please contact Brenda or Linda Jaco if you have questions about the project. ABLÉ Tech will keep you informed of the upcoming events and details of this project.

Sincerely,



Dan Moore
Southeastern Oklahoma State University
*Chair, OSRHE Council on Information
Technology*



Bill Johnson
Northern Oklahoma College
*Chair, OSRHE Communicators
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cc:
Institution President
Institution Student Disability Services Director