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Goals Is Making Postsecondary Education Accessible for All

Center for Persons With Disabilities

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Using the internet is essential in gaining a postsecondary education today. Students, faculty, and staff must have access to institutional web content for many educational activities.

However, if websites that provide necessary information are not accessible, those with disabilities may not be able to independently complete their daily assignments or compete with their peers. The most accessible webpage in the world is still inaccessible if a user with disabilities must navigate inaccessible pages to get to it.

The Gaining Online Accessible Learning through Self-study (GOALS) project developed an innovative solution to this issue by designing an online self-study tool. It helps colleges and universities evaluate their system-wide web accessibility efforts and improve their accessibility across all departments.

This Benchmarking & Planning Tool will begin its next round of invitation-only testing in early 2012. For the next three years, GOALS will work with its partners to help inform colleges and universities about the Tool and get them on board. Top level administrators must be involved to promote the institution-wide changes necessary, and a team of key players must work together to address and maintain web accessibility.

If you would like your institution to take part in the next round of testing, please contact the National Center on Disability and Access to Education.

This tool first guides the team through a self-study process by asking them a series of questions. These questions are used to create a snapshot of the institution’s web accessibility efforts. Team members will then be able to compare these snapshots with their own past responses, and with combined responses from similar institutions (e.g. other community colleges).

The tool also assists the institution’s team in creating a plan to guide the process of sustaining their campus-wide web accessibility. GOALS staff then continues to provide resources and support to institutions as they implement their plan.

Along with supporting the use of the Benchmark Tool, GOALS will focus on adding institutional web accessibility to regional accreditation process. This will ensure that an institution will meet high standards of web-accessibility in order to be accredited.

Project GOALS is a project of the National Center on Disability and Access to Education (NCDAE), an initiative of the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University.

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