

Considering Disabilities in Course Planning

A resource provided by Dean Camesha Little

I know we are aware of some of the many struggles our students may be facing during this time (job, home, location, and financial changes) I want to encourage you to email the [CEAL Division](#) or use the [REFER FORM](#) to communicate about any student concerns you may have.

I also want to take a moment to address some of the struggles that some of our students with different abilities may face.

Potential Impacts to Students with Disabilities as provided by the *Disabled Law Students Association*:

Students may choose not to disclose certain disabilities because they are unaffected in a normal academic setting. The transition to online classes could have unintended negative impacts on some students. The change to remote classes could have disproportionate effects on students who are blind or low vision, students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, students with Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and other cognitive conditions or processing disorders. Students with certain mental health conditions may also be negatively affected by this sudden change in the learning environment. Students who are in these populations may struggle to adapt to online classes with the same ease as non-disabled students.

Please find some resources to consider below.

University Guidance:

All faculty are already enrolled in the “**All Campus Resource Course**” on Blackboard. It has recordings of all of the trainings and tons of other resources provided by the instructional design team and our disability access team. A link to the first disability access training can be found directly [at this link](#).

OCR Guidance:

The Office for Civil Rights' (OCR's) Center for Outreach, Prevention, Education, and Non-discrimination launched a short webinar on ensuring web accessibility for students with disabilities for schools utilizing online learning during the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

outbreak. In addition, OCR published a fact sheet for education leaders on how to protect students' civil rights as school leaders take steps to keep students safe and secure. These resources will assist education leaders in making distance learning accessible to students with disabilities and in preventing discrimination during the Coronavirus response effort.

[OCR Short Webinar on Online Education and Website Accessibility](#)

[Fact Sheet on Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Schools While Protecting the Civil Rights of Students.](#)

Other resources:

- [March 4, 2020 OCR Coronavirus Statement](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education, Coronavirus Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel](#)

Finally, as we continue to provide the best education that we can, I hope that you are each taking care of your well-being both physically, mentally and emotionally as best you can. If there is anything I can do personally or professionally, please let me know.

Happy course planning!

Camesha