DEI Accessibility Guiding Principles

I. Framing Statement

The Office of Digital Education & Innovation (DEI) at the University of Michigan provides learners with digital content and tools that are not only compliant with all applicable laws and regulations but are also shaped by a universal design ethos to enable access for the widest possible audience, regardless of technology or ability.

II. Guiding Principles

In connection with this commitment to accessibility, DEI operates according to the following guiding principles:

- Ensure equal opportunity to the educational benefits afforded by the use of technology
- Liberally employ the use of accurate captions and audio descriptions
- Behave proactively in leveraging the latest advancements in accessibility solutions
- Facilitate accessibility implementation on a variety of levels, including through faculty and staff training, integration with existing IT, and digital media production by DEI staff
- Utilize the core principles of universal design as fully as possible in DEI projects
- Start with building access to as wide a population of learners as possible, and then enable accommodation when initial safeguards are not enough

III. Background

DEI is firmly committed to partnering with U-M faculty, students, and staff to create educational content and software tools that are widely accessible and can be effectively communicated to learners with disabilities. DEI views compliance with applicable laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as floors that provide starting points for designing and producing content and tools that are made available to the University community and beyond.

In line with the position of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, DEI’s starting point for content and tool creation is providing people with disabilities the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.

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DEI recognizes that applying best practices around accessibility to digital content and tools benefits more than people with disabilities. These content enhancements can and are utilized by a much wider audience in a variety of ways to improve learning.

Accessibility is a shared responsibility at the University of Michigan. DEI is committed to doing our part to ensure as broad of access as possible to educational materials developed in partnership with our team. DEI pledges to make a concerted effort to assist U-M faculty, students, and staff to implement best practices around accessibility in digital courses, programs, and tools.

IV. Learn More

There are numerous resources provided by the University of Michigan that relate to accessibility best practices. DEI encourages faculty, student and staff partners to reference these resources when partnering with DEI, including:

- U-M Information and Technology Services Top 10 Instructional Accessibility Tips
- U-M Human Resources Web Accessibility at U-M

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