UAGC FACULTY FELLOW, ACCESSIBILITY DESIGN

Ted Ellis, Program Chair, BASCJ & MSCJ Programs, Division of Justice, Security, & Public Safety Professions

This pertains to work on collaborative initiatives I am advancing as the University of Arizona Global Campus (UAGC) Faculty Fellow for Accessibility Design, an appointment I received across the academic year 2025-2026. Working in collaboration with UAGC curriculum and accessibility team members, UAGC faculty, and with projected collaboration with members of University of Arizona (UA) Online, I aim to advance accessibility initiatives, which include a funded research design in progress to facilitate an upcoming pilot study, an event with sessions for spring 2026 accessibility learning, and a spring 2026 Faculty Learning Community (FLC).

Research Design and Faculty Instruction Self-Audit and Reflection

In the fall of 2025, I constructed outlines for productivity on research design to facilitate collaboration with and inputs from Dr. Ellen Beattie (UAGC Assistant Professor, Division of Education Professionals) and Dr. Paul Greenberg, (UAGC Assistant Professor, Division of Health and Behavioral Professions), and at the present, the literature review, theoretical support, questions, hypotheses, variables, quantitative and qualitative methodology, structure for instruments, and process in data collection are approaching finalization. The pilot study objectives include the structuring and use of instruments to measure the effectiveness of the faculty accessibility self-audit and reflection rubric as an accessibility initiative parallel to the projected spring learning session and FLC accessibility initiatives, which center on dynamic faculty activities and contributions within the online course environment, as distinct from embedded online course infrastructure. In collaboration with Alaina Pascarella (UAGC Manager, Academic Quality Services, Quality Matters Coordinator), Stacy Gresnick (UAGC Academic Quality & Accessibility Specialist), and additional team members, there has been preliminary construction of an instructional resource in the form of a faculty accessibility self-audit and reflection rubric for online instruction with learning outcomes. Our accessibility initiatives include a focus on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 and 2.2 (WCAG 2 Overview), and an emphasis on learning how accessibility standards apply to and inform online instructional practices and dynamic instructor contributions in guidance, announcements, posts, feedback, and messaging in online higher education classrooms. The faculty accessibility self-audit and reflection rubric will function as the intervention in the pilot study, and the projection is to maintain and iterate this resource purposed to support faculty application of accessibility standards in their dynamic course instruction contributions. The pilot study will involve data collection through instruments and participation in the faculty instruction accessibility self-audit and reflection rubric.

Accessibility Module and Faculty Resource

As an initiative in parallel, collaborative work is proceeding toward construction of an accessibility training module to house and administer the faculty instruction accessibility self-audit and reflection rubric. This collaboration extends to include UAGC media content developers. The objective at present is to sequence the module with existing accessibility training materials/modules and to construct a curriculum with exploration of badging feasibility. Beyond the pilot study, the projection is to structure the accessibility module and training elements as fluid instructional tools amenable to relevant updates and inputs.

Accessibility Learning Sessions and Demonstration of Tools

Additional congruent initiatives include collaborative structure and implementation of a day with sessions on accessibility learning with a projection for implementation in the spring of 2026. Work is in progress through communication with Morgan Johnson (Vice President, Academic Innovation & Operations, Academics), Dr.Teresa Kuruc (Vice President, Faculty Affairs & ALO), Jenn Zaur (UAGC Director, Learning Solutions, Academics), and Jacquelyn Bullis (Lead Faculty Support & Classroom Consultant, Academics) to communicate and promote participation, with session construction in collaboration with Alaina Pascarella, Stacy Gresnick, Nicole Egelhofer-Wells (UAGC Faculty Support and Classroom Consultant), and Diana Boggan (UAGC Faculty Development & Coaching Specialist), and with anticipation of additional UAGC and UA Online team members. The sessions will feature learning and module training relevant to accessibility in instructional practices in online higher education instruction, to support faculty in their dynamic contributions to online classrooms.

Faculty Learning Community on Accessibility

In collaboration with Alaina Pascarella, Stacy Gresnick, Jenn Zaur, Nicole Egelhofer-Wells, and Diana Boggan, and with anticipation of contributions from additional UAGC and UA Online team members, progress is advancing on curriculum and session design for a three-week faculty learning community (FLC) to engage in accessibility learning granular FLC-based discussion on accessibility tools pertaining to outlets in online courses, and to inform and faculty contributions to and within, online classrooms. The projection anticipates collaboration with UAGC and UA Online representatives to design and to leverage the faculty learning community on accessibility structure to augment faculty study of WCAG 2.1 and 2.2, together with other sources on accessibility standards, applicable to online instruction, and to derive a focus group.

Next Phase Components

- Submit research design and instruments to IRB
- Finalize faculty instruction self-audit and reflection accessibility rubric
- Collaborative and build interactive training module
- Administer pilot study through quantitative and qualitative methods
- Collect and analyze pilot study data
- Build structure and session allocation for accessibility learning sessions/event

- Finalize three-week accessibility faculty learning community curriculum
- Prepare manuscript and identify potential conferences and/or outlets for research dissemination

The essence and outcome projections of the foregoing accessibility initiatives are practical, in support of online instruction and learning for faculty. Collectively, the accessibility initiatives inform, and center on, learners' interests in dynamic contributions of instructors in online classrooms that manifest in conduits for guidance, announcements, discussion posts, feedback, and messaging.

References

World Wide Web Consortium. *WCAG 2 overview Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)*. W3C Web Accessibility Initiative. https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/