Accessibility in Learning Quasi Needs Assessment Update

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Analysis

The main gap between what is and what should be has been based on the discovery that none of the courses in the management department have ever incorporated federal accessibility standards. Since the processes and procedures to close this gap are being developed and learned at the same time, a secondary gap between the current level of faculty knowledge and experience in this area and the level necessary to complete this project has also been identified. As a result, our data collection and analysis has determined several obstacles, opportunities for improvement, and preliminary recommendations for the next steps in the process.

Obstacles

After the initial data collection and subsequent discussions with the co-chairs of the management department, three key obstacles to the successful completion of the project were identified. These are not the only obstacles involved, but they play an integral role in the work and process flow for the project.

Time

The 25 faculty members involved in the project are working on completing the training necessary to incorporate the ADA accessibility modifications into their own management courses. Five faculty have fully completed the training and one has successfully updated one of her courses. Although it took this faculty member six hours to modify her course, we cannot establish an average time frame for this task until more faculty incorporate the modifications into their respective courses. This means that the time needed to incorporate modifications into the management courses may be greater than or less than the time frame for the one completed course. This may affect the ability to meet the deadline of July 1, 2019.

Supervision

There are 15 full-time and 10 part-time faculty working on the project. Full-time faculty are expected to work on their courses as part of their full-time duties and are not receiving additional compensation for their participation. Since no one is supervising their work, project success depends on each faculty member completing the training and modifying their courses in a timely manner to make the July deadline. The assumption is that each faculty member is committed to completing the scheduled trainings and has started the process of incorporating the requirements into their respective courses. Currently, there is no supervision or point person to monitor progress and ensure that the program is advancing successfully, but the Provost has sent several emails to stress the importance of doing so.

Budget Constraints

The management department has requested funds to provide additional compensation for adjunct faculty who assist with the course modifications, but they have not yet received approval for the budget request of $11,000. If this request is not approved, then the full-time faculty will have to work on all 50 courses without the assistance of the adjunct faculty.

Opportunities for Improvement

Several opportunities have been identified as potential improvements in both the work and process flow of the project. These are significant because a deadline for the project was determined by the Provost without addressing the gaps and obstacles identified in this needs assessment.

Constraints

Budget, time, and human resource constraints should be determined and taken into consideration prior to the establishment of a deadline date.

Document Accessibility

In addition to the incorporation of accessibility standards into the online learning environment, each course document must also be updated. Guidelines for completing this part of the project are noted on the various document samples included in the accessibility training (e.g. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook). The number of documents for each course also needs to be determined so that time estimates for each course can be better determined. Since findings from the management department co-chair indicate one course takes approximately six hours to incorporate accessibility standards, this timeframe will be used as a benchmark for other faculty members to complete their respective courses.

Content Updates

Although it is currently outside the scope of this project, course documents must be periodically reviewed to determine content updates and enhancements. Once course updates are made, they will also need to be included in the accessibility standards requirement.

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Recommendations

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Several recommendations have been proposed to facilitate the timely incorporation of the accessibility standards into the management courses. These recommendations will help to ensure that data collection is accurate, and the project deadline is met.

Focus Group

A focus group of 5-8 faculty members should be established to review the process used by faculty to incorporate accessibility standards into their courses and determine a consistent method for faculty to follow. This group will ask faculty members specific questions to determine their technical and design skill levels; a facilitator will modify the questions to further determine their skills and discover whatever tools would assist the faculty in meeting project

goals and deadlines. Focus group data must be analyzed and supported by a review of faculty answers to focus group questions and will be key in determining accurate data collection and reporting.

Supervisor

The department should assign a supervisor to monitor the progress of each faculty member as they modify their respective courses. This will help identify any faculty that need additional training, tools or assistance and ensure ADA compliance throughout the process instead of at the end of the project. This will help to minimize delays and adjustments to the July project deadline.

Pilot Program

If the management department completes the incorporation of accessibility standards into their courses prior to the July deadline, then the established processes and procedures should be used as a Pilot Program for the rest of the departments at LCC.

Next Steps

The success of this project is dependent upon accurate and timely data collection, faculty completion of all scheduled training, an accurate assessment of faculty skill sets, and the availability of resources to support and maintain the incorporation of accessibility standards into current and updated course documents. The next steps in the project will ensure that the project is a success and the deadline is met:

1. Create a spreadsheet of all full-time and part-time faculty that includes their respective courses,

2. Document when a faculty member has completed a scheduled training and has incorporated the accessibility standards into a class.

3. Create a timeline and schedule that includes weekly meetings between the supervisor and faculty to determine progress and challenges in completing their respective courses and enables the supervisor to review completed courses for consistency and thoroughness.

4. Email all guideline and support documents to everyone involved in the project, including faculty and the supervisor over the project. These will include the accessibility checklist, the accessibility revision plan, and the program documents for Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.

5. Determine the number of documents included in the course that was completed by the co-chair in 6 hours and use this as a benchmark to gauge the time needed for each of the 50 courses involved in the project.

6. Based on the number of documents that need to be completed, the number of faculty involved in the project, and the average number of hours needed to complete a course and use this to calculate the number of weeks necessary to complete the project. This will help to determine if the deadline of July 2019 is feasible or needs to be adjusted.

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(these will be updated in the final report)