Accessibility Guide for Promotional Materials

When developing promotional materials for campus activities, consider the following accessibility guidelines.

Product and Software Selection

- ☐ **Accessible design starts at the very beginning of a project.** Determine what type of product you want to develop. Are you creating a social media post? A newsletter? A flyer? Will it be digital, printed, an image, PDF, form, or other type of output?
- ☐ Use software that allows for accessible design (and output) and/or plan for an alternative method of communicating information (i.e., a link to an accessible web page).
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with the features of the software you choose to make sure you can implement the guidelines in the sections below (i.e., alt text, headings, links, etc.).

Navigation and Structure

- ☐ Use built-in heading and paragraph styles to create page structure instead of changing font weight, size, or style.
- ☐ Keep paragraphs short and break up text with lists and other layout elements to avoid large blocks of text.
- ☐ Use list formatting tools to create ordered (numbered) and unordered (bulleted) lists.
- ☐ Use layout tools to create columns.
- ☐ Use tables for data, not for page or content layout. Avoid using text boxes to structure page content.

Text Elements

- ☐ Use text instead of images whenever possible. If text is used in an image, make that text available in an alternate location.
- ☐ Select a clear, easy-to-read font. Only use fonts that are readily available.
- ☐ Make font and text size large enough to make content readable. Consider what the text will look like on different devices.
- ☐ Use UPPERCASE, **bold** and *italic* text sparingly.
- ☐ Left-align paragraph text. Do not justify text (i.e., align to both the left and right margins).
- ☐ Keep language simple and direct. Avoid acronyms and jargon.

Color

- ☐ Check to ensure sufficient color contrast (use a color checker such as WebAIM or CCA). This applies to all content elements including text, logos and components of graphs and charts.
- ☐ Do not use color as the only method to convey information. Graphics and/or text should be readable and distinguishable if viewed in grayscale only.

Images and Graphic Elements

- ☐ All images should have appropriate, concise, alternative text. Include longer descriptions for more complex images. Do not use file names or rely on automatically generated descriptions for alt text.
- ☐ If an image conveys no useful information, mark it as decorative.
- ☐ Provide equivalent alternatives to complex images (such as infographics) in context or on a separate (linked) page.

Hyperlinks and Link Text

- ☐ Use meaningful link text (e.g., "learn more about meaningful links" and not "to learn more about meaningful links, click here"). Users should be able to tell where a link goes from the link text itself.
- ☐ Links included in images or printed materials should be short and uncomplicated (e.g., www.fivecolleges.edu)
- ☐ All link text should be unique unless the links are leading the reader to the same location.
- ☐ Do not provide a QR code without also providing descriptive text that explains what the QR code is for.

Videos and Other Media Content

- ☐ Videos should be captioned (auto-captions are not sufficient).
- ☐ Podcasts and other audio-only content should have an accessible transcript.
- ☐ Avoid using content that flashes, blinks, or uses sparkling animation.

Social Media Posts

- ☐ Alt text for social media posts should include all text included in the images.
- ☐ Remember that most social media is viewed on small screens. Keep images simple with good color contrast.

Emails

- ☐ Review the correct use of templates before creating content. Be sure that all email elements meet basic accessibility guidelines.
- ☐ Do not use images as the primary method of conveying information in emails. Any text or information conveyed in an image should be available as plain text.

Converting to PDF

- ☐ If using software such as Microsoft Word or PowerPoint, use the "Create PDF" option in the Acrobat ribbon or "Save As…" option in the "File" tab to export to PDF. Do not use the "Print to PDF" option in the "File" tab.

Check Your Work

- ☐ Proof reading is essential! Review carefully or have someone else review your work before distributing content.
- ☐ Use built-in accessibility checkers to do a preliminary check (this will catch some, but not all accessibility errors).
- ☐ Use a text-to-speech reader, such as NaturalReader, to check the reading order of your document.
- ☐ When saving files, use a meaningful file name. Check the document properties to ensure the correct language is selected.

Software Options

Options for creating accessible digital products*

- Microsoft Word
- PowerPoint
- InDesign
- Acrobat Pro
- Google Workspace

Options that cannot output accessible digital products

- Canva
- Photoshop
- Adobe Illustrator

*** Note:** Accessible design is possible only by following accessibility guidelines and using built-in design tools.