



ACCESSed
P R O J E C T

**Departmental Accessibility Resource
Coordinators (DARCs)**

**CREATING AND SUSTAINING A CAMPUS ACCESSIBILITY
RESOURCE COORDINATOR NETWORK**



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INTRODUCTION

Universal design in education (UDE) is slowly being infused into the fabric of post-secondary campus life. This manual provides:

A brief overview of how campuses meet the needs of students with disabilities, including a theoretical model, issues and challenges, and some answers to those challenges.

- Unique strategies for motivating post-secondary faculty and staff to participate in a paradigm shift toward a more inclusive campus environment.
- Example tools and strategies.
- Ideas for implementation.

This manual was developed by the ACCESS-ed Project, a U.S. Department of Education funded demonstration project “To Ensure That Students With Disabilities Receive a Quality Higher Education” (2005 – 2008) The project was based at the Rehabilitation Research Design and Disability Center (R₂D₂), University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. A website remains active, including ongoing product development.

Why do we need a manual?

This manual is designed to assist post-secondary campuses in shifting from the current and primary model of individualized accommodations to serve the needs of students with disabilities, to greater inclusiveness for students with disabilities through universal design (UD) in all aspects of post-secondary education. Included are highlights of the Departmental Accessibility Resource Coordinator (DARC) method for infusing UD strategies into all aspects of post-secondary campus life. This method has been replicated and adapted on multiple University of Wisconsin System campuses. The manual can be used in its entirety or sections can be pulled and used, as needed. Administrators, disabilities student service (DSS) providers,

faculty members, student service staff and others eager to facilitate campus wide universally designed environments may find this strategy of using Departmental Accessibility Resource Coordinators (DARCs) useful for their campuses and are invited to replicate the strategy.

Background

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are often cited as the initial mandates for reasonable accommodations or “individualized accommodations” in higher education. According to Schuck & Kroeger (1993), the law requires a particular person to be assigned to coordinate ADA compliance for the institution, but does not require a specific office to serve students with disabilities. However, most colleges and universities have chosen to establish offices to address specific disability concerns of students.

The current movement in disability services, as supported by the Association for Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), is toward UD in post-secondary education. The commonly accepted definition of UD is “the process of creating products (devices, environments, systems, and processes) which are usable by people with the widest possible range of abilities, operating within the widest possible range of situations (environments, conditions, and circumstances)” (Vanderheiden, 2000). Universal Design recognizes that the emphasis on accessibility is related more to the environment and potential barriers to students, rather than focusing on the individual with the disability as having a problem to be remedied.

The ACCESS-ed Project, which developed the DARC methodology, utilizes the A3 model as its theoretical foundation ([see Figure 1 below](#)). Initially presented by Schwanke, Smith & Edyburn (2001) and further developed by Smith, the A3 Model

conceptualizes how organizations address the needs of people with disabilities in a continuum over time. It demonstrates how campuses and other institutions have moved from **advocacy** as the primary focus for serving the needs of people with disabilities, to **accommodations** and also illustrates movement from an accommodations emphasis toward greater **accessibility** of environments to meet the needs of students with disabilities. None of these approaches is totally exclusive of the others. The current emphasis in higher education lies primarily in the accommodation phase, though the progress within the continuum toward accessibility varies from campus to campus.

Though legislation has enabled increasing numbers of students with disabilities to access post-secondary education, there still remain several problems associated with the current system of individualized accommodations.

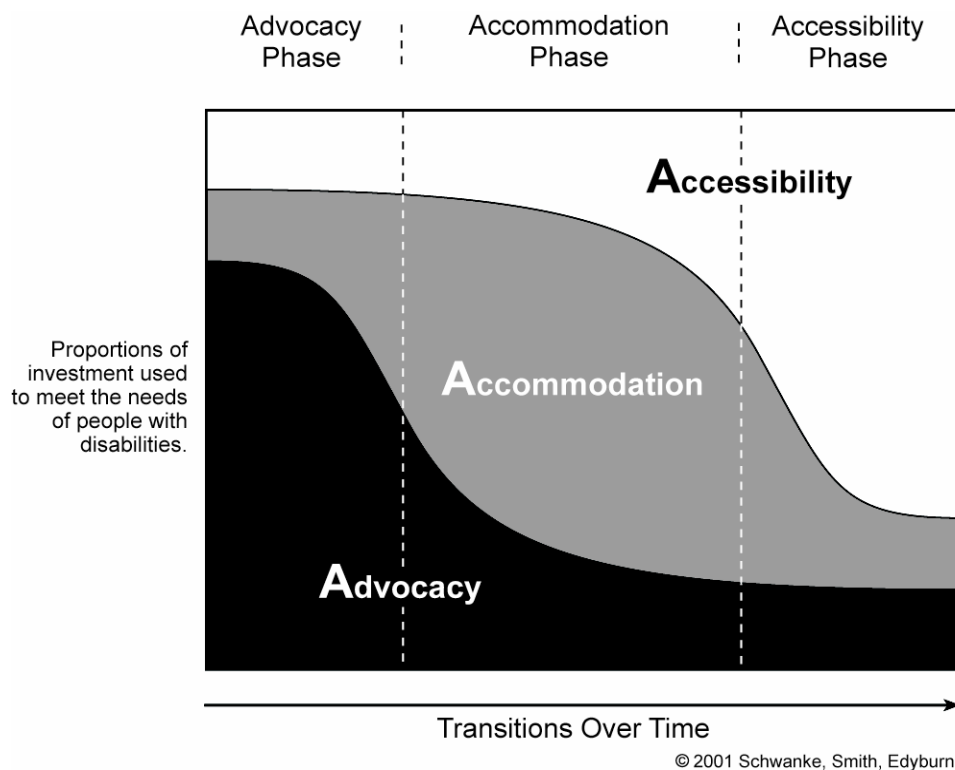


Figure 1: A3 Model [\(Click for text description\)](#)

Problems with the current system of individualized accommodations:

Costs – Human and Financial

The monetary costs incurred by colleges and universities represent only one of the problems inherent in this retroactive individualized method of providing equal opportunities for success of students with disabilities in higher education.

Other problems surface when students receiving individualized accommodations must expend significant time and energy, beyond the norm. Meetings with DSS staff, completing the required forms, obtaining the required medical documentation of disabilities, meeting with instructors or other campus service providers, and

receiving (and training with) assistive technology equipment are all additional “to-do” items for students who face an abundance of other time-management challenges, especially as freshmen transitioning from the K-12 system.

Self-identification

Recent research by the ACCESS-ed Project indicates that only an estimated one third to one half of students with disabilities on campuses receive direct services from DSS providers (Smith, Hirschman & Rust, in preparation). In other words, a significant percentage of students with disabilities are not receiving services.

“Hidden disability” is a catchall phrase meaning that a person’s impairment or condition is not obviously apparent or visible (The Open University, 2006). Students with hidden disabilities such as mental health issues, attention disorders, learning disabilities or chronic diseases may struggle with a variety of issues (e.g., absenteeism for medical care, distractibility, perceptual deficits) due to their conditions. They may choose not to declare their disabilities because of the potential stigma and other reasons. Very often, students with disabilities, particularly those with mild disabilities, have not been diagnosed by medical professionals. These students may or may not recognize that their condition may qualify as a disability, thus enabling them to obtain individualized accommodations.

A Medical Model vs. a Social Model

The current system of accommodations in higher education is still highly entrenched in a medical model of disability, requiring medical professionals to evaluate and document disability. Only then does the disability service program determine eligibility and work with the student to decide appropriate and reasonable accommodations. The system also assumes that access is the problem of the individual and that the individual is responsible to obtain appropriate documentation and intervention. The accommodations are largely provided with the disability

service program and the school determining what can reasonably be applied, similarly to a doctor determining appropriate treatment for a patient. Another similarity to a medical model are issues of cost and availability for specific types of accommodations. Just as cost may limit certain types of medical intervention in some cases, the cost of some accommodations may limit an individual's capacity to participate in all of the offerings in a higher education setting. (One example under current scrutiny on many campuses is the use of interpreters for overseas programs sponsored or supported by the campus.)

The medical model holds that disability results from an individual's physical or mental limitations, and is largely disconnected from the social or geographical environments. It contrasts with a social model that views disability as a consequence of environmental, social and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with impairments from maximum participation in society. "The concept of universal design arises out of and supports the broader philosophical framework of the social model of disability" (<http://www.pepnet.org/>).

Universal Design in Education – Holistic, proactive, sharing in responsibility and benefiting everyone.

A new model is emerging that promotes accessible college communities for all students and consumers. UDE is a holistic and a proactive approach to higher education that emerged from a movement for universal design in architecture and a push that occurred coincidentally for the accessibility of the World Wide Web. The advent of new social networking programs on the web and new instructional and assistive technologies now also requires attention to design for accessibility. UD implementations in all aspects of campus life provide for an accessible campus for all consumers, including students, staff and visitors both with and without disabilities.

Numerous examples exist to demonstrate the concept that good design for people with disabilities actually benefits everyone. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in an attempt to enhance the quality of life for deaf students. Electronic doors and curb cuts that were designed for individuals with mobility impairments are used by all of us to push carts and carriages from street to sidewalk and from outdoors to indoors. Captioning was mandated for individuals with hearing impairment, but also appears in crowded gyms and bars and is useful in the event that a sleeping spouse may otherwise limit watching late night television or a movie in bed.

UDE expands the concept of universal design within three major areas of higher education:

- The learning and social environment, including instruction and services;
- The physical environment of the campus; and
- Campus information media.

A student in higher education essentially experiences a community, encompassing all aspects of campus life. Instruction and learning are central; however, campus experience may include recreation, residence, social networking, transportation, and other needs that impact the success of students, but also impact the participation of campus personnel and the community at large.

UDE promotes a shared model to provide all students and other consumers with greater access to all campus units and activities. It recognizes that administrators, service providers, and instructional staff have shared responsibilities to create accessible campus environments by design, thus impacting positive change toward inclusive campus climates. With growing numbers of people with disabilities and

other special needs, such as English as a second language, utilizing campuses, it is virtually impossible to serve their individual needs through one small office or a few specialized professionals with very limited budgets. Professional expertise in meeting the needs of students with special needs is vital, but the feasibility of delivering all of the needed services on an individualized basis through only a few campus professionals is diminishing with growing numbers of students with mild or other disabilities.

Assuring accessibility up front and proactively can minimize the cost of fixing problems in the future. Retroactive solutions to providing accessible environments may require greater expenditures over prolonged periods of time.

Promoting and Facilitating Change through Policy

This manual highlights a method for infusing universal design information and strategies throughout a campus. In addition to disseminating information and strategies campus-wide, the ACCESS-ed team discovered that policy change within the institution need also be addressed simultaneously. The use of accessible goods, services and materials is already a mandate for public institutions (Section 508) though implementation is notably behind in most. Implementation of existing policies and mandates is vital to the endorsement of universal design for greater inclusivity, accessibility and positive change. Campuses cannot afford to ignore federal and other governmental mandates for a variety of reasons, both legal and ethical. Greater accessibility within the context of campus planning and procurement of services and materials will ultimately result in cutting costs financially and humanly in terms of time and efficiency. Additionally, retroactive solutions and afterthought to accessibility is often haphazard. Campuses who implement policies for increasing

accessibility benefit financially by outreaching to a larger community and a greater pool of potential employees and learners.

Research and Training

While the field of higher education is advancing with the idea of UD, research and measurement regarding materials, tools, strategies and mechanisms to increase the skills of college personnel are not yet abundant. Scholarly literature on the use of UD in higher education, including research and testing regarding the use of universal design strategies for education is sparse. We must demonstrate and disseminate the positive results for all students of implementing UDE, both with and without disabilities.

Research is also lacking regarding the actual numbers of students with disabilities on post-secondary campuses. Some estimates indicate that only half of the students who actually do have a disability utilize campus disability student services. It is almost impossible to know how many of these students drop out of classes or leave campuses due to accessibility barriers. Because of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) there are restrictions on the type of data that is obtainable regarding students. There is no specific method that is available to compare the performance of students with disabilities to those students without disabilities. Thus, there is no specific way to measure the performance of students with disabilities who use DSS services as opposed to students with disabilities who do not request accommodations.

Additionally, there is little known about the numbers of individuals with disabilities in the larger campus community, including staff and other community members that partake of campus offerings or do not participate due to barriers of accessibility.

All of these groups have potential to benefit from greater campus accessibility through universal design. New methodologies to gather data and to measure the impact of universal design are needed.

It is a lofty goal to think that campuses will ever be universally designed to the point where all individualized accommodations will be totally unnecessary. Expertise is needed on campuses to continue to provide accommodations where needed, but also to advise regarding accessibility standards and planning for inclusion.

Though UDE is not just about instruction, it is an essential component that brings increased diversity to a campus. It is the process that eliminates environmental barriers and increases the accessibility of the campus for students with all types of disabilities and challenges. UDE enhances opportunity for students who use English as a second language or who may face other learning challenges through the principles of applying varying modes of expression, demonstration and evaluation that enhance learning for everyone. According to Harrison, “As the greater academic community learns to include people with disabilities in its thinking and planning about the teaching and learning environments that we design, we will make these environments more effective for all learners - at the same time and from the beginning - without the need for so many retroactive, individual accommodations.” Harrison believes that, “The question for anyone working in education is how we can put UD into practice in teaching and learning.” Harrison addresses teaching and learning:

- “The instructor might ask how to effectively and creatively design and teach a course in multiple ways that make learning accessible to the

widest possible range of students without compromising the essential elements of the course and without singling out individual learners.

- The disability services professional might ask how to help faculty members buy into the need to design courses in ways that make learning accessible to the widest possible range of students without singling out individual learners for special or different treatment.
- Combining our advocacy for UD with the current administrative interest at many colleges and universities in promoting learner-centered education gives us a highly strategic opening for working with faculty toward more universally designed instruction.”

THE DARC NETWORK – A METHOD FOR INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

The ACCESS-ed Project is developing, infusing, and testing a process to deliver an infrastructure that can self-sustain a campus wide UD environment that will benefit all students, staff and consumers. UD in the realm of higher education includes the learning environment, information media, and the entire campus physical environment. A multifaceted change process in the form of a campus Departmental Accessibility Resource Coordinator (DARC) network has been tried. With guidelines developed by the ACCESS-ed staff, a manager or management team and a steering committee on each participating campus can facilitate the development of a system of DARCs in every department or unit, whose primary role is to disseminate Universal Design information and strategies.

The DARC strategy favors a bottom-up and “inside out” approach to the dissemination of the ideas, information, and strategies for implementing UDE, rather than via “top down” pronouncements from top level administrators

What is a DARC?

DARC’s are appointed liaisons to bring universal design in education (UDE) ideas and resources to their respective departments or units. The federally funded ACCESS-ed Project has developed the DARC (Departmental Accessibility Resource Coordinator) system as a best practice for the dissemination of already existing UDE resources, as well as new products and strategies to faculty, staff, and students. Primary responsibilities focus on facilitating a systems approach toward more accessible instruction, information and campus service delivery and toward a more inclusive climate for students with disabilities, while simultaneously improving the campus climate and instructional accessibility for all students. As information

brokers, DARC's meet their responsibilities through informal interactions with other faculty and staff, as well as through formal venues, such as department meetings.

Specific Duties of a DARC

Essential tasks:

- Facilitate an accessible campus climate environment through promoting departmental approaches to UDE.
- Participate in annual DARC universal design in education training sessions and/or conferences on UDE.
- Use ACCESS-ed and other websites and materials to become familiar with UDE tools.

And:

- Provide specific tips for UDE in departmental meetings. (Get on the agenda for a few minutes at each meeting.)
- Be a vigilant observer for other UDE training opportunities or strategies to share with your department.
- Serve as a “hallway” information resource on UDE. (Run into your colleagues in the elevator?)
- Help obtain program evaluation data, e.g. number of faculty that have implemented UDE strategies, student success stories in universally designed courses, decreases in cost of accommodations from disability student service office.
- Provide feedback on ACCESS-ed materials to the design team.
- Suggest new ACCESS-ed resources and needs as identified by department.
- Identify departmental or “nearby” exemplars and recognize achievers.

Do we need to use the acronym DARC on our campus?

In its original development, the writers of the ACCESS-ed Project grant proposal chose to use the acronym DARC (Departmental Accessibility Resource Coordinator). Our pilot campus, the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, is sizable enough that each college has multiple departments in which to situate a representative DARC. A coordinator in every department, at UWM, acts as a change agent by disseminating information and strategies and encouraging professional development.

Each campus that chooses to use the DARC system has a different organization and unique structure. Accordingly, the structure and replication of the DARC network may differ from campus to campus. If there are departments, DARC may be the appropriate or chosen acronym. If other units than departments comprise the lower rungs of the organizational chart, the system may be adapted accordingly. The important feature is ensuring that information regarding accessibility and UD is reaching all levels of the organizational chart.

Who manages the DARC network or system?

Each campus needs leadership of the DARC network (regardless of what acronym or name is utilized) and appropriate supports. There are several approaches suggested here based on the ACCESS-ed Project experiences.

Each campus can decide the best fit; a single DARC manager or a management team of two to three professionals on the campus. Professional Development offices and/or the Learning Center offices are two campus agencies pivotal in disseminating ideas, strategies and information about UDE. A seasoned campus professional who is well known to his or her colleagues on the campus; someone who is articulate, well respected and involved in campus governance can be a major

asset. Faculty speaking to faculty appears to be a most effective management and motivational approach to the instructional staff.

Another option for getting started, one chosen by several of our partner campuses, is to initially form a Universal Design Committee of interested professionals to consider how best to approach setting up a system on the campus. This committee can assist in identifying a manager or management team and can continue to provide support as a steering committee. One of the committee members may emerge as an enthusiastic leader.

No matter the order, some form of a steering committee will be of benefit in strengthening and sustaining the DARC system on a campus. This can be your initial committee or a committee that is formed subsequently by the manager or management team.

The experiences of ACCESS-ed partners offer a few examples. One campus started with bringing attention to UDE through one interested faculty member, another through the director of the Teaching Excellence Center on campus, and yet another through the campus Disability Service Director. Initial interested parties who have been targeted for management or for campus UDE or steering committees have included, but are not limited to, campus planners, diversity directors, grounds supervisors, building supervisors, IT professionals, vice chancellors (or assistant vice chancellors), provosts, deans, purchasing or finance professionals, recreation or athletic directors, student services directors (including disability services), library directors, housing directors, parking and transit directors, evaluation and testing professionals, faculty, and graduate teaching staff and in some cases, chancellors.

Getting Started

On one campus, an interested faculty member used their convocation as a venue to solicit potential committee members. An ACCESS-ed poster (see Appendix C) was prominent near the registration table. This faculty member personally greeted his colleagues to talk about UD and provided a handout of information about UDE. He encouraged interested colleagues to become involved by using a sign-up sheet near the convocation registration area. He promised to put them on a mailing list for receiving more information about UDE and strategies and resources. He then also utilized the sign-up list to help form a development committee.

Another campus utilized its ADA Committee to serve as the facilitator of UD change on the campus. UD became part of the mission and goals of the committee. The committee also served in an advisory capacity, reviewing and suggesting resources for the DARCs and assisting in developing and providing workshops and training on campus. If not the whole committee, a sub-committee can be formed to concentrate on universal design and increased accessibility of the campus.

One other alternative is to provide a workshop, such as an Accessibility Gems and Bloopers Campus tour, followed by a facilitated discussion regarding what has been learned about the campus through this tour. Enthusiastic participants may be valuable members on the initial committee. Other topical workshops or seminars may be a vehicle for dissemination, but also for finding leaders.

THE DARC SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

This section provides details of what needs to be considered in finding, requesting, or appointing a DARC manager(s) and forming a committee. Covered are roles, purpose and suggestions for development, including suggested timelines to accomplish finding an appropriate manager or management team and committee.

Purpose of DARC Network Manager(s)

To help promote an accessible campus climate environment for all individuals with disabilities.

To facilitate a campus wide support system approach toward UD concepts in education/instruction.

To help develop and implement UDE policies, whereas promoting UD as a first-order approach to meeting the needs of students with disabilities, providing more equal access to education and to benefit all students, staff and visitors.

To motivate faculty and staff to implement UDE.

To provide resources for DARCs regarding UD concepts and strategies in education/instruction (by linking to the ACCESS-ed Web site and/or perhaps by maintaining an updated resource spreadsheet) (see Appendix D).

Roles and Responsibilities of the Campus DARC Manager(s)

To facilitate the creation of a campus network of DARCs.

To maintain a campus link to the ACCESS-ed Web site resources and other resources specific to the campus.

To communicate the goals of the project on campus.

To facilitate appropriate initial and ongoing training for the DARCs.

To provide ongoing support to campus DARCs.

To facilitate campus policy change.

To provide updates to appropriate administrators.

To collect and integrate feedback for the ACCESS-ed Project and for the campus to optimize effectiveness.

Finding a Campus Manager – Approaches

The First Step – Go to the Top

All of the approaches below must include communication with and approval of the appropriate administrator. The first step is to bring information and ideas about accessibility and UD to their attention and obtain their buy-in to the concept of UDE and systematic change. Provide all or a portion of this manual and/or other UDE information and resources before the meeting date, if possible. An integral part of the discussion is to propose a DARC system for UDE dissemination along with ideas for a manager, management team or steering committee.

The Second Step – Committee Involvement

One alternative is to start with disability experts on a development committee. Identify representatives from faculty/staff who are knowledgeable regarding disability issues on campus, e.g., disability services director, disability services managers/providers, ADA committee members, special education or occupational therapy faculty, and ADA coordinators. Set a meeting time to discuss ideas and suggestions. Another alternative is to start with an interdisciplinary team of faculty, service providers and administrators.

Either before or at the meeting, provide these representatives, who understand disability issues and/or have an interest in campus accessibility, with relevant background information concerning universal design in education, the DARC system, and the goals of the project. (You can certainly use this manual!) You can begin searching for a DARC manager or team before the initial meeting or at the initial meeting.

Engage these faculty or staff in the process of finding a DARC manager. Discuss criterion for how to look for a DARC manager with appropriate qualifications:

- On this campus, would it be better to have an individual or a team (two to three people) to act as the DARC manager(s)?
- Are we considering a leader(s) who is connected with, or employed in the realm of, Professional Development, the Learning Center, or the Learning Technology Center on campus?
- Is the individual(s) known and well respected by colleagues and students?
- Does the individual(s) have motivational skills?
- Is the individual(s) visible as a role model and resource person?
- Is the individual(s) respected by the staff of the student disabilities service on campus?
- Is the individual(s) open to learning new approaches to changing campus climate to be more inclusive?
- What is the experience of the individual(s) with campus governance, committees and leadership?
- Will this be a rotating role with a specific duration (for example, two to three years)?

This group of disability experts or interested campus personnel can function as part of the development committee to facilitate the process. The committee or a substantial portion of the committee needs to remain involved as part of the steering committee. Decide on a few good choices for a DARC manager or team and a steering committee to continue as support.

The Third Step – Follow up with Administration

Keeping everyone “in the loop” is essential. It is critical to follow up with administration.

Set up a second meeting or communication with the chancellor or chancellor’s representative after the initial development committee meeting. Provide the chancellor or chancellor’s representative with a record or synopsis of the meeting (ahead of time, if possible).

Meet with chancellor/representative to discuss the two to three recommendations (for a DARC manager or team) and recommendations for steering committee members who were agreed upon from the development committee meeting. Facilitate a final decision for a manager or management team with his/her recommendation.

Arrange with chancellor or designee to appoint individual(s) for the DARC manager through appropriate campus channels. Discuss and decide on methods of encouraging participation. Suggestions include, but are not limited to incentives such as a stipend, a grant, or certificate of participation that can be signed by the administrator. With awarding a certificate, the individuals are then recognized for appreciation, or ideally for professional development credits and/or fulfillment of tenure. This can be done at appropriate public meetings. Adding incentives will help legitimize the campus commitment to UDE.

One thing we have found to be very effective in engaging faculty, students and staff in the initiative to increase accessibility, usability and inclusiveness is that participation in related professional conferences is a major launching pad for

positively impacting a self-sustaining DARC Network and insuring an ongoing commitment to UDE.

(ACCESS-ed does not claim expertise in finding funding sources. This may be an item to discuss and be negotiated with the provost office, through grants, or other means that may be unique to your campus or system.)

Arrange to have your administrator involved in the selection of DARCs. Offer a pre-written letter (see example in Appendix E) that goes out from the administrator on his/her office stationery to department chairs/heads. Ask the administrator to put an electronic or actual signature in the closing of the letter. The letter should include a deadline, approved by the author of the letter, of two to three weeks for the receiver to respond.

Sending the initial letter and conducting follow-up requires working with the appropriate administrative clerical support person. Determine who that secretary or clerical support person will be to assist you with the letter and its distribution. One method of distribution we have found beneficial is to use existing e-mail reflectors. Request that the first letter from the administrator be sent out in this manner (either by secretary or someone in your office, as agreed upon). Request permission for obtaining reflector lists. This information will be extremely beneficial in the DARC database you will be creating.

After 1 - 2 weeks or so, follow-up may be necessary in the form of another correspondence from the same administrator, an e-mail message or letter, or a personal phone or e-mail contact from the DARC manager(s) or a committee member. An attempt should be made to follow up with every department head to

obtain a DARC suggestion. Just as important, follow up with a note thanking them for their participation in the process.

DARC MANAGERS – A SUGGESTED COURSE OF ACTION

Set up a spreadsheet/database for tracking DARCs ([see Appendix D](#)).

Arrange an initial meeting with appointed or designated DARCs to be held during the first few weeks of the semester. Department chair people can be included in this initial event. Lunch is an incentive to entice DARCs to participate. The chancellor's personal invitation or request to DARCs may also be incentive.

Work with catering to determine time, duration and place.

Produce an invitation, flier or letter to send by mail, e-mail, and/or other means; include time, place, nature of event, a short agenda for the initial meeting, and name of contact person with phone or e-mail and RSVP deadline. This can be sent out twice, or send it once and follow it up with a reminder note (e-mail suggested) to DARCs.

Send invitations/fliers approximately five weeks prior to the initial meeting/workshop. Invite DARCs, department heads, and any personnel who assisted with the DARC manager decision, e.g., chancellor or representative, department directors, disability services director, disability services managers/providers, ADA Committee, etc., to attend initial meeting/lunch/training session. Invite other campus personnel you may want to have on your steering committee if you have not yet formed a committee. Include an RSVP date and specify who should receive your response. This can be done by e-mail. It is helpful to set up a separate e-mail address from your primary e-mail address.

Follow up with second contacts to department directors who do not respond within the given timeline. Formulate a list of DARCs in the database.

Develop a detailed agenda for what will be accomplished at the initial lunch meeting (see example):

- Welcome - Overview
- Review Handouts/Folder Items
- Provide DARC Guidelines or Position Description
- Discuss Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities. Solicit ideas and discuss what each DARC can do (one thing, at least) to take something tangible from the meeting back to his/her department.
- Discuss ongoing training and timeline. Solicit and discuss specific ideas for continued participation.
- Discuss appropriate announcement or publicity for each department regarding each respective DARC. (Who is the DARC? What does a DARC do? When and how is the DARC available? What are Web resources?)
- PowerPoint Presentation on Universal Design in Education (see ACCESS-ed Web site – Tools and Resources for packaged presentations).
- Initiate Question-and-Answer Session. Keep the focus on UDE rather than individual accommodations. (Experience tells us that there are still many questions from faculty regarding the current system of individualized accommodations.)

Assemble/collate information, agenda and printed PowerPoint presentation slides handout in a folder for each participant in the initial workshop. Make extra folders for walk-ins. Place the handouts and other items in the folder in order of your reference during the meeting. (Color coding is helpful, for example, “Please take out the yellow handout on UDE.”) Name tags should be included.

Lunch/Initial Training Meeting – Conduct training per agenda. Example Schedule:

- 12:00 Welcome. Introduce and thank appropriate personnel involved in the process of setting up the DARC network. Provide a brief overview of the agenda, point out guidelines and any other materials provided, extend thanks for coming.
- 12:15 Serve lunch.
- 12:40 Begin the program.
- 1:15 Conclude formal program, hold a question-and-answer session.
- 1:30 Conclude with a short summation and a brief review of expectations.

If more time is available, this topic and agenda could certainly fill 2 – 4 hours. Follow up with DARCs, minimally on a semiannual basis via e-mail, phone, etc. to provide information, resources, and updates. Provide ongoing training, either in workshop, or available online. A method of recording all completed training and attendees should be maintained in the DARC database. Continued incentives and recognition will increase overall participation.

TRAINING GUIDELINES FOR DARC MANAGEMENT

The DARCs will receive training at least twice annually, such that they can be a resource to their respective departments (or other appropriate divisions), promoting awareness and implementation of UDE.

- Provide DARCs with this manual or appropriate section of the manual.
- Managers will facilitate initial training by reviewing the manual, the PowerPoint presentation on UDE (see ACCESS-ed Web site) and other available resources. Manager(s) participate in the preparation of initial DARC orientation lunch meeting with established committee.
- Arrange ongoing training sessions, schedule for training (either online or in person). Arrange for agreed-upon incentive or recognition.
- Arrange regular meetings with administration (once per semester or twice a year is suggested.) Prepare and distribute updates of progress, participation, etc.
- Arrange regular meetings with manager, team and/or steering committee. A monthly meeting is suggested.
- Maintain database on a regular basis.

THE DEPARTMENTAL ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCE COORDINATORS

[\(See Appendix B for the DARC Job Description\)](#)

Goals and Objectives for the Departmental Accessibility Resource Coordinator

To promote an accessible campus climate environment for all students, other consumers and staff with disabilities.

To facilitate a support system approach toward UD concepts in education/instruction.

To promote universal design concepts in education/instruction within departmental structures.

Roles and Responsibilities of the DARC

Participate in appropriate training and assist in dissemination of relevant materials.

Serve as a school, college, unit or departmental resource providing basic information to staff regarding UD concepts and resources for education/instruction.

Maintain an active role in departmental/unit meetings, activities, and services to disseminate information about implementing UD for individuals with disabilities.

Be a role model, willing to encourage others to learn about and utilize UD concepts in education/instruction.

DARCS - SUGGESTED TIMELINE/EVENTS

- Attend initial meeting/lunch and training – toward the beginning of the semester.
- Following lunch/initial meeting, and within one to two weeks, announce DARC role and availability to department/unit personnel (via a flier, e-mail, meeting announcements, etc.).
- Insert yourself into departmental meeting agendas, with agreement of department/division director; offer information on a regular basis regarding a resource, offer kudos to a department member executing a UD idea into curriculum or space, do a brief activity, and/or provide updated handouts. Follow up with DARC manager and Web site for updates and annual training.

RESOURCES

Web Resources - <http://access-ed.r2d2.uwm.edu/>

- Downloadable
- Accessible
- Annotated Sites
- Campus Specific

What's Available?

- Brochures
- Handouts
- PowerPoint Presentations
- Posterettes
- AUDITs
- Protocols
- Tips Sheets
- Articles

THINGS TO CONSIDER

A Unique Campus

We continue to learn and try new variations to fit the uniqueness of each campus, with consideration for 2-year or 4-year institutions; urban, rural or suburban campuses; public vs. private colleges; commuter vs. residential campuses; and any other variations that may impact policy making.

Share your experience

Utilize the ACCESS-ed Feedback Form to share your experiences. Discuss the endeavor with colleagues to develop plans that work for your campus.

A Demonstration Project

We share our ideas and experiences here as a Demonstration Project to Ensure that Students with Disabilities Receive a Quality Higher Education. There are over 20 other Demonstration Projects with unique and effective models and approaches to offer. All of the projects can be accessed through the Ed.gov website of the U. S. Department of Education:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/disabilities/disabilitiesabstracts2005.html#ahj>

We encourage you to explore other projects and contact staff through their respective websites.

Thank you.

We are appreciative to have your interest and wish you success as you work to make your campus accessible to all students!

<http://access-ed.r2d2.uwm.edu/>

Contact: access-ed@uwm.edu

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Work also continues on the development of this document with the UDITEACH Project. UD ITEACH (Universal Design Infusion of Technology and Evaluation for Accessible Campuses of Higher Education) is supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Post-secondary Education, PR/Award #P333A080071.

The opinions contained in this publication are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Education.

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APPENDIX A – EQUIVALENT TEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Text Description for A3 Model [\(Click here to return to Figure 1 - A3 Model\)](#)

Brief Description: A3 Model diagram depicting three phases: advocacy, accommodation and accessibility.

Essential Description: The full A3 diagram is shown to illustrate how the three phases of the model, advocacy, accommodation, and accessibility come together. The advocacy phase represents the majority of the model early on (to the left) and is when an awareness is raised due to some event; the accommodation phase represents the majority of the model as time moves on (towards the middle) and is when something is changed in order to meet the needs of one individual; and the accessibility phase represents the majority of the model in the later stages (towards the right) and is when something is changed to meet the needs of all individuals. The three phases occur on a continuum and as time goes on we progress further within the model toward universal design and accessibility.

Detailed description: Theoretical relationships of advocacy, accommodation, and accessibility are demonstrated as a function of time (the x-axis) in a 100% stacked area chart. That is, the contributions of advocacy (in black), accommodation (in gray), and accessibility (white) to an organization's approach sum to 100% of its approach at any point in time. The y-axis is labeled, "Proportions of investment used to meet the needs of people with disabilities (expressed as the proportions of the three strategies used to meet the needs of people with disabilities)." The full A3 diagram is shown to illustrate how the three phases of the model, advocacy, accommodation, and accessibility come together. The advocacy phase represents the majority of the model early on (to the left) and is when an awareness is raised

due to some event; the accommodation phase represents the majority of the model as time moves on (towards the middle) and is when something is changed in order to meet the needs of one individual; and the accessibility phase represents the majority of the model in the later stages (towards the right) and is when something is changed to meet the needs of all individuals. The three phases occur on a continuum and as time goes on we progress further within the model, In the first panel on the left, the largest proportion is black, representing Advocacy as primary, Accommodation as smaller, but growing, and then Accessibility. In the second panel, Accommodation is the largest proportion (gray) and Advocacy is decreasing and Accessibility is increasing. In the last panel, Advocacy is a small proportion, with Accommodation diminishing and Accessibility taking the majority of the panel.

Text Description for Poster [\(Click here to return to poster\)](#)

Brief Description: Universal Design in College Instruction poster.

Essential Description: The flyer is titled “Universal Design in College Instruction” with a subtitle of “Shifting our Focus: From Accommodations to Accessibility.” It conveys a message that states “Design for Disability is Better Design for Everyone.” It shows a cartoon with a student and teacher. The student is indicating to the teacher their learning style and asking the teacher to accommodate accordingly. Following are bulleted key concepts of universal design.

Detailed Description: The ACCESS-ed Project’s Poster is laid out with the title centered and bolded at the top of the page stating “Universal Design in College Instruction.” Following below is a yellow circle on the right side of the page with text that interrupts the top left portion of the circle. The text is black and bolded and

states "Shifting our Focus:" Below the text is another title in bold burgundy letters stating "From Accommodations to Accessibility." Within the yellow circle is a statement in black text that says "Who does it serve?" In the bottom right portion of the circle is a burgundy filled circle with white text centered and stating "Design for Disability is Better Design for Everyone." To the left of the circles is a square cartoon graphic that has a blue background with a door that has a small window in the center. In front of the door is a young female with blonde hair and a pink dress, holding a yellow book. To the right of the female student is an older male wearing a white shirt and multicolored tie and brown pants with black shoes who has his head turned back towards the student. The girl is stating to the teacher "As we start a new school year, Mr. Smith, I just want you to know that I'm an abstract-sequential learner and trust that you will conduct yourself accordingly!" Underneath the cartoon in small black text is a hyperlink where the location of the cartoon is from. Below and to the center of the cartoon in bold black font is the statement "Universal Design:" Below is 4 bulleted points with each of the first words within in the bullets in capital, burgundy font. The first bullet states "PROACTIVE vs. Retrofit." The second bullet states "ANTICIPATES Diversity in Learners" The third bullet states "PROMOTES Faculty Development" The fourth and final bullet states "ENCOURAGES Collaborative Partnerships" In the left bottom corner of the flier is shading with a curve in burgundy color. In the bottom right corner in smaller black text states "The ACCESS-ed Project and this work are supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), PR/Award #P33AQ50090. The opinions contained in this publication are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the OPE or The U.S. Department of Education."

Text Description for Example DARC SPREADSHEET ([Click here to return to chart](#))

Brief Description: A picture of an example excel chart for DARC recordkeeping

Essential Description: This example chart includes columns for DARC names, addresses, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, departments, positions, department chair names, and for each workshop, by date of the workshop. Approximately 10 rows illustrate information in most of the cells for each person listed in the rows.

APPENDIX B – DARC POSITION DESCRIPTION

DEPARTMENTAL ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCE COORDINATOR (DARC) POSITION DESCRIPTION

DARC's are appointed liaisons to bring universal design in education (UDE) ideas and resources to their respective departments or units. The federally funded ACCESS-ed Project has developed the DARC (Departmental Accessibility Resource Coordinator) system as a best practice for the dissemination of already existing UDE resources, as well as new ACCESS-ed products and strategies to faculty, staff, and students. Primary responsibilities focus on facilitating a systems approach toward more accessible instruction, information and campus service delivery and toward a more inclusive climate for students with disabilities while simultaneously improving the campus climate and instructional accessibility for all students. As information brokers, DARC's meet their responsibilities through informal interactions with other faculty and staff, as well as through formal venues, such as department meetings.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

Promote an accessible campus climate environment through implementing departmental approaches to UDE.

Participate in annual DARC universal design in education training sessions.

Use ACCESS-ed website and materials to become familiar with UDE tools.

Provide specific tips for UDE in departmental meetings. (Get on the agenda!)

Be a vigilant observer for other UDE training opportunities or strategies to incorporate in your department.

Serve as a “hallway” information resource on UDE. (Run into your colleagues – literally!)

Help obtain program evaluation data, as requested, e.g. number of faculty that have implemented UDE strategies, student success in universally designed courses, decrease in cost of accommodations from disability student service office.

Provide feedback on ACCESS-ed materials to the design team.

Suggest new ACCESS-ed resources and needs identified by department.

Identify departmental or “nearby” exemplars and recognize achievers.


Last updated April 30, 2008

APPENDIX C – POSTER

[\(CLICK HERE FOR APPENDIX A - TEXT DESCRIPTIONS\)](#)

Universal Design in College Instruction

Shifting our Focus: From Accommodations to Accessibility



Who does it serve?

**Design for Disability
is
Better Design
for Everyone**

Universal Design:

- **PROACTIVE** vs. Retrofit
- **ANTICIPATES** Diversity in Learners
- **PROMOTES** Faculty Development
- **ENCOURAGES** Collaborative Partnerships

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<http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/earlycareer/teaching/learningstyles.html>

APPENDIX D – EXAMPLE DARC SPREADSHEET ([CLICK HERE FOR TEXT DESCRIPTION](#))

Name Last	DARC Name First	Campus Address	Email	Phone	Department	Position	Chair	9/21/06	11/2/06	2/7/07
	Rachel	Enderis Hall 1144			Curriculum & Instruction	Admin Program Specialist	Linda	x		x
	Linda	Educational Psychology 1105			Educational Psychology	Clinical Assistant Professor	Tony			
	Jerry	Biological Sciences - Lapham 800			Biological Sciences	Professor	Arthur			
	Keith	Center for Continuing Education 1500			Continuing Education Business Engineering and Technology	Faculty Associate	James	x		
	Tom	Golda Meir Library E500			Center for Instruction & Professional Development	Academic Program Director and Professor	vacant	x		
	Ilan	Mitchell Hall 900			PSOA - Dance Department	Admin Program Specialist	Janet			x
	Frank	Enderis Hall 1330			Administrative Leadership	Associate Professor	Barbara			
	Joe	Enderis Hall 1200			Health Sciences Department	Professor	Mary			

APPENDIX E – SAMPLE LETTER

August 17, 2006

To: Deans, Associate/Assistant Deans, and Department Chairs

Perhaps over the last several months you have heard of the **ACCESS-ed Project**, (Accessible Campus Climate Environment Support Systems for Education). This letter is to inform you about the project and how you will be involved.

What is ACCESS-ed? The UW Milwaukee campus is serving as a national demonstration site to promote and implement universal design (UD) strategies in higher education. A key ACCESS-ed strategy is to provide resources through a network of Departmental Accessibility Resource Coordinators (DARCs). The DARCs will be implementing and promoting universal design techniques and providing resources for their colleagues to meet the needs of students with disabilities and provide equal access to education, while benefiting all students.

Why universal design? The current one-to-one system of accommodations for students with disabilities is available only to those students on campus who declare that they have a disability. Research tells us that this is only a percentage of the total number of individuals on campus who have a disability. Particularly, this model of accommodations does not support high incidence “hidden disabilities”. Finally, a large proportion of service provision tends to be delivered by disability student services, separate from faculty. Though accommodation practices will never be totally replaced, ACCESS-ed proposes to develop a more balanced campus-wide infrastructure that will infuse universal design strategies and resources throughout every department. The goal is to break down barriers and ensure that all individuals with disabilities receive full access to quality higher education.

Who is on the ACCESS-ed team? The ACCESS-ed Project is under the direction of Roger O. Smith, Ph.D., Director of the Rehabilitation Research Design & Disability Center (R₂D₂), and Jim Marks, Technical Manager of R₂D₂.

Ann Jones, M.S., C.R.C., is the Outreach and Training Coordinator and will be the primary contact for the ACCESS-ed Project. She can be reached by e-mail (access-ed@uwm.edu) or phone, (414) 555-1555 or TTY (414) 666-1666.

What ACCESS-ed needs from you. Your assistance is needed to **designate a liaison** for your department. You have the most knowledge about who, in your department, would best serve as Departmental Accessibility Resource Coordinators (**DARCs**).

In **selecting a DARC**, please consider a faculty/staff member who is well regarded by colleagues and students, visible as a role model, and open to learning about new ideas and new approaches.

Please e-mail Ann, at access-ed@uwm.edu, with your DARC designee name and e-mail address. I have given her clearance to follow up with you in three weeks if she does not receive your response.

The UW System President's Advisory Committee on Disability, the UWM Associate Vice Chancellor's office, and the Office of the Provost join the ACCESS-ed team and look forward to this exciting new direction in higher education.

Sincerely,

Bxxx Sxxxxxxxx

Associate Vice Chancellor

APPENDIX F – SAMPLE INVITATION

Building Your Repertoire as a DARC

A Series of Workshops sponsored by the **ACCESS-ed Project**

As a **Departmental Accessibility Resource Coordinator** (DARC), we'd like to provide you with ongoing workshops and strategies to share with your department. All workshops are held **12:30 p.m. until 2:00 p.m.** Refreshments will be served for participants. Other interested staff are welcome to attend. RSVP necessary.

❖ **Dates:** Wednesday, February 21, 2007

ARE YOU READY for UNIVERSAL DESIGN?

Thursday, March 29 – Universal Design and Learner Centered Instruction

Wednesday, April 18 – Creating Accessible Presentations

Thursday, June 14 – Accessibility Gems and Bloopers Campus Tour

Wednesday, July 11 – Accessible Distance Education

❖ **Where:** Golda Meir Library – 4th Floor Conference Room

❖ **What to bring:** An open mind for all sessions.

❖ **What you will get:** An overview of how universal design can benefit you, your colleagues and students. Practical resources for application.

Please RSVP to Ann via e-mail at access-ed@uwm.edu. **Your reply is requested no later than one week prior to date of workshop.**

Please let us know if you need any special accommodations.