Chapter:	Fiscal Affairs	Modification No. 001
Subject:	**Electronic Information Technology Accessibility**	

I.   Montgomery College is committed to providing equal access to College programs, services and activities, and environments in which electronic information technology is used.

II.   Implementing this policy will help ensure that all individuals have access to information technology associated with administration and services, courses of instruction, departmental programs, and College-sponsored activities as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act As Amended (2009).

III.   It is the policy of the Board of Trustees that the College will:

A.   Use web page design standards that improve accessibility for all, including those with disabilities.

B.   Use hardware and software products that promote universal design and access.

C.   Design and implement work and learning environments that accommodate all users.

D.   Disseminate electronic documents and multimedia on web pages that are consistent with this policy.

IV.   Undue burden and/or non-availability of accessible technology may qualify as an exemption from this Policy.

V.   The president is authorized and directed to establish procedures necessary to implement this policy.

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Board Approval: May 16, 2016

Chapter:	Fiscal Affairs

Modification No. 001

Subject: **Electronic Information Technology Accessibility**

I.   Introduction

The intent of the Electronic Information Technology Accessibility policy is to promote equal access to the College's electronic information resources, technologies and services for students, employees, guests and visitors — including those with disabilities. The Information Technology Accessibility policy encompasses the following areas:

A.   Web-based information and services — including those associated with courses of instruction, departmental programs, College-sponsored activities, employment, administration and College services.

B.   Hardware and software, enterprise-level systems or technologies that affect a large number of students, faculty, and/or staff, that are developed, purchased, or acquired by Montgomery College.

C.   Environments specific to information technology — including classroom and general use computer facilities, on-line instruction, distance learning, places of employment, libraries and resource centers.

D.   Exemptions — Extreme difficulty or expense (undue burden); Hardware and software tools specific to a development process in which no member of the development team requires accessibility accommodations; Hardware or software for which no equivalent accessible option is available (non-availability).

II.   Definitions

A.   Accessible - means a person with a disability is afforded 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.

B.   Equally Effective Alternate Access - equally effective alternate access to electronic and information technology for persons with disabilities is based on (1) timeliness of delivery, (2) accuracy of translation, and (3) delivery in a manner and medium appropriate to the disability of the person. Such alternate(s), to be equally effective, are not required to produce the identical result or level of achievement for disabled and non-disabled persons, but must afford disabled persons equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs.

C.   Fundamental Alteration - a change to a College program or service may constitute a fundamental alteration if it alters the essential purpose of the program or service or any of its components. In situations where a fundamental alteration can be documented, equally effective alternate access must still be provided

D.   <u>Undue Financial and Administrative Burdens</u> - undue financial and administrative burdens are created when a proposed course of action causes significant difficulty or expense. Because an institution must consider all resources available when reviewing claims of undue financial and administrative burdens, the decision to invoke undue financial and administrative burdens should be carefully weighed and sufficiently documented. In situations where undue financial and administrative burdens can be documented, equally effective alternate access must still be provided. (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013)

E.   <u>"Electronic and information technology (EIT)"</u> - includes information technology and any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment that is used in the creation, conversion, or duplication of data or information. The term electronic and information technology includes, but is not limited to, the internet and intranet websites, content delivered in digital form, electronic books and electronic book reading systems, search engines and databases, learning management systems, classroom technology and multimedia, personal response systems ("clickers"), and office equipment such as classroom podiums, copiers and fax machines. It also includes any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment that is used in the automatic acquisition, creation, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. This term includes telecommunications products (such as telephones), information kiosks, Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) transaction machines, computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources.

F.   <u>Legacy Web Page</u> - is a web page published prior to the effective date of this policy.

G.   <u>New Web Page</u> - is a web page created for or by any Montgomery College unit after the effective date of this policy.

H.   <u>Revised Web Page</u> - is a web page that has been altered or updated through visual design or significant content additions, subtractions, or modifications after the effective date of this policy.

I.   <u>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)</u> - is a working group of the W3C that focuses specifically on accessibility standards creation. WCAG is a widely accepted and commonly used standard.

III.   <u>Web Pages</u>

A.   All new and revised web pages, web applications and web content, and website templates, published or hosted by the College, program, unit, or faculty that are available to students, prospective students, or applicants must comply with the <u>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, level AA.</u>

B.   All new and revised web pages must indicate in plain text a method for users having trouble accessing the site to report the inaccessibility. The disclaimer should state, "The <u>[name of department or unit]</u> is committed to making its websites accessible to all users, and welcomes comments or suggestions on access improvements. Please send comments or suggestions on accessibility to the <u>[position to contact]</u>."

C.   Legacy Pages: Priority will be given to creating accessible web pages for core institutional information such as course work, registration, advising, admission, catalogs, and student services information. Departments with large web sites containing core institutional information that is made available to students, prospective students, or applicants should establish priorities for ensuring access to these pages according to the pages being used or requested most often. The following guidance is suggested for setting priorities to make legacy web pages accessible:

     1.   Web pages specifically requested to be made accessible as part of a formal accommodation request shall be made accessible as soon as possible, or an equally effective alternative shall be provided. Undue administrative or financial burdens may contribute to a determination that alternative formats be used to provide the information to individuals requiring use of the information.

     2.   Other pages that are determined to be of the most importance in providing college services online (core institutional information) should be placed in the first priority.

D.   <u>Exemptions</u>

     1.   Archived web pages do not have to comply with WCAG 2.0 level AA unless specifically requested by an individual with a disability. Units with legacy pages not deemed high priority also do not have to comply with WCAG 2.0 level AA, but are encouraged to identify and improve the accessibility of their pages.

     2.   Undue burden and non-availability may qualify as an exemption from the policy under the following circumstances:

         a.   Where compliance is not technically possible, or is unreasonably expensive or difficult in that it may require extraordinary measures due to the nature of the IT or the intent of a web page.

         b.   The conclusion of undue burden or non-availability is an institutional decision to be made by the Office of Information Technology in consultation with the affected unit and others with relevant perspective or expertise.

IV.   <u>Instructional Materials</u>

A.   All instructional materials and online courses created by a program, unit, or faculty must be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities at the same time they are available to any other student enrolled in that program.

B.   Each program and professor using pre-existing instructional materials and online courses created or used prior to this policy should develop and implement a plan to make them accessible.

V.   Procuring Accessible EIT

   A.   The College will ensure that any new technology it broadly makes available to students, prospective student applicants, employees or prospective employee applicants including web applications, hardware, software, telecommunications, and multimedia is accessible, provided such new technology is commercially available and its purchase does not result in undue financial and administrative burdens or a fundamental alteration. If a product is available and meets some, but not all, of the relevant accessibility provisions of the WCAG 2.0 level AA, the product that best meets the standard must be procured.

   B.   Those responsible for making decisions about which products to procure must consider accessibility as one of the criteria for acquisition. The College will follow the below process to ensure electronic information technology developed, purchased, or acquired by the College is accessible:

      1.   Vendors must be asked to provide information about the accessibility of their products through the use of VPAT.

      2.   The information provided by vendors must be valid, measured using a method that is reliable and objective.

      3.   Those making procurement decision must be able to objectively evaluate the accessibility of products, and to scrutinize the information provided by vendors. The Office of Information Technology, in conjunction with the director of ADA Compliance will provide assistance with review of documentation in determining the accessibility of new technology.

      4.   The most effective means of providing equal access to multimedia (i.e. videos, movie clips, DVDs, films, etc.) is through the use of products with open or closed-captioning or subtitles. It is the responsibility of all units/departments, administrators, faculty and staff to utilize only media products with open or closed-captioning or subtitles, and/or provide an alternate format, such as a script.

VI.   Technical Assistance, Exceptions, and Monitoring

   A.   The Office of Information Technology will provide resources, information and assistance to programs on plan development and implementation, as well as on achieving accessibility of web pages, instructional materials, and other technology.

   B.   When compliance is not technically possible, would require a fundamental alteration, or would result in undue financial and administrative burdens, exceptions to the policy may be granted by The Office of Information Technology, in conjunction with the director of ADA compliance. Requests for exemption must be in writing to the Office of Information Technology. Whenever an exemption is granted, the College must develop a plan to provide equally effective alternate access to the information or service of the technology to students, prospective students, applicants, and employees.

C.   The College will periodically conduct audits of websites, instructional materials, and other technology used by departments, programs, and faculty, inform them of the results, and initiate remedial action for accessibility problems identified.

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Administrative Approval: May 18, 2016