

# Using Universal Design for Learning to Support All Online Students

Access for All Conference, Miami University of Ohio  
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## I. What is Miami U of Ohio doing right?

### A. Reputation

1. One of the “public Ivies.”
2. Freshmen must live on campus.
3. More than 500 student organizations, “Mother of Fraternities.”
4. Huge support system, student couple who marry are “Miami Mergers.”

### B. Core Strengths

1. Graduation rates among the highest in the nation, 1st for Ohio public universities.
2. 18-to-1 student-faculty ratio
3. 74% full-time faculty
4. US News & World Report 2014: 3rd best undergrad teaching (Dartmouth & Princeton).

## II. What is the real problem?

- A. Blame it on the vendors?
- B. Lack of proper training for faculty and support staff?
- C. Neither: this is an opportunity that is open to the whole campus.

## III. What is Universal Design for Learning (UDL)?

- A. Not just for students with disabilities. Students have bandwidth issues, multiple devices, etc.
- C. Sam Johnston is a research scientist at the Center for Adaptive & Special Technology (CAST).

1. “We want a situation that is good for everybody . . . part of it is thinking about what has to happen at the level of design that makes accommodation less necessary.”

- D. UDL provides paths for all; accommodations are taken to address specific learner needs.
- E. UDL is a design strategy that creates multiple means of ...

1. representing information,
2. expressing skills and knowledge, and
3. engaging with content and people.

## IV. Why isn't this presentation about accommodating students with disabilities?

- A. UDL strategies reach out beyond students with disabilities.

1. Thousands of Miami students work their way through school.
2. Students are often away from campus.
  - a. on field-experience assignments
  - b. study abroad opportunities
  - c. outside the “Oxford bubble” at Hamilton, Middletown, Westchester campuses
  - d. participating in sports

B. Remember, UDL helps all learners to have ...

1. better access to materials,
2. more ways to demonstrate their skills, and
3. many ways to stay engaged.

C. UDL is a strategy of designing course content so it makes accommodation less necessary.

1. Make course content so easy to navigate that even *he* can follow it.  
[image of NFL quarterback and Miami U alumnus Ben Roethlisberger]

## VI. Five strategies for incorporating UDL into your courses.

- A. **Start with text:** Build multiple paths based on a text foundation. This reveals gaps and needs.
- B. **Create alternatives:** At first, create just two versions of content/materials, then branch out.
- C. **Let 'em do it their way:** Faculty set the objectives, students define the method & medium.
- D. **Go step by step:** Break processes into units, steps, phases, and create separate resources.
- E. **Set content free:** Use tools that are accessible and easy for faculty and students to learn.

## VII. Where can faculty members and staff turn on campus for help?

- A. Office of Disability Resources: [accessibility@muohio.edu](mailto:accessibility@muohio.edu), (513) 529-1541
  1. [Resources for Creating Accessible Content](#) web page:
    - a. "Page under construction, but it will be amazing shortly."
  2. [Faculty Resources](#) web page:
    - a. Instructors can expect all students, regardless of disability, to perform and complete all essential components of their course. This can be accomplished with, or without, accommodations.
    - b. Instructors are not expected to accommodate disabilities that they are not made aware of in advance. It is strongly recommended that faculty put a statement on their syllabus that invites students to talk with them about needed accommodations.
- B. Kenya Ash, Section 504 & ADA Coordinator: [ashkd@MiamiOH.edu](mailto:ashkd@MiamiOH.edu), (513) 529-7157
- C. Accessible Technologies Committee (ATC): [mu-accesstech@muohio.edu](mailto:mu-accesstech@muohio.edu)
- D. Miami University Ambassadors for Students with Disabilities (MUASD)
  1. Lauren Davis: [davisle5@miamioh.edu](mailto:davisle5@miamioh.edu)
  2. Kristin Kuhn: [kuhnka@miamioh.edu](mailto:kuhnka@miamioh.edu)

## VIII. Where are professional resources available for specific accommodations?

- A. Faculty and staff can reach out and consult with many resources.
  - **Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD):** this is an umbrella advocacy group that can put faculty members and staff in touch with local and national experts and resources (<https://www.ahead.org/>). **Bonus:** our keynote speaker, L. Scott Lissner, is the current president of AHEAD.
  - **Boston College:** Brian Charlson and Mark Sadecki of the Carroll Center for the Blind have an in-house seminar entitled "Introduction to Web Accessibility for Content Developers." Although it is designed only for Boston College staff, both creators are willing to share their expertise and content. Also, BC partners with CAST to offer a postdoctoral fellowship in UDL leadership (<http://www.cast.org/about/udlfellows/>).
  - **CAST [Center for Applied Special Technology]:** <http://www.cast.org>. One-stop web resource for learning about Universal Design for Learning.

- **CollegeSTAR [Supporting Transition, Access, and Retention]:** <http://www.collegestar.org>. North Carolina college consortium formed to implement strategies to reach out to “students who learn differently from what is most typical.”
- **EASI [Equal Access to Software and Information]:** <http://easi.cc/clinic.htm>. Resources and free seminars on accessibility concerns.
- **National Center on Universal Design for Learning:** <http://www.udlcenter.org>. General Resources for implementation in higher education, especially the *UDL Guidelines Worksheet* at <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines/downloads>.
- **San Francisco State University:** <http://ctfd.sfsu.edu/udl>. The Center for Teaching and Faculty Development has several guides to designing accessible multimedia that can be used in an online environment.
- **University of North Colorado:** <http://www.unco.edu/cetl/UDL/UDLonline/index.html>. Stephanie Moore’s online tutorial, *Presuming Competence By Design: A Tutorial for Systems, Environment, Curricular, and Materials Design in Learning Systems*, contains a unit on “Universal Design in My Online Course.”

## IX. Thank you!

A. I’d enjoy continuing the conversation with you.

1. I consult on issues that help to extend education beyond its traditional boundaries.

- a. Accessibility
- b. Copyright & intellectual property
- c. Academic integrity
- d. Evaluation of teaching practices
- e. Institutional project management

2. Here’s how to contact me.

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