



Cornell University Student Assembly

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Type of Action:	TYPE: Recommendation
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S.A. Resolution #41

Cornell Commitment to Web Accessibility

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4 ABSTRACT: This resolution requests that the University adopt a Web Content Accessibility Policy to be
5 applied to all new websites and to legacy websites upon major update.
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8 Sponsored by: Jordan Berger '17, Sarah Park '20
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10 **Whereas**, the University of Washington has found that approximately 6% of undergraduate students have
11 disabilities.
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13 **Whereas**, there are 285 million people worldwide with visual impairment, 275 million people worldwide with
14 moderate-to-profound hearing impairment, and many more with physical, speech, cognitive, neurological
15 disabilities; and
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17 **Whereas**, Cornell University's global community both includes and interacts with many of these people, as
18 well as many people with a limited understanding of English, all of whom could benefit from web
19 technology that meets accessibility standards; and
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21 **Whereas**, modern accessibility standards benefit all individuals by making websites more accessible through
22 mobile devices, in locations where sound is not permitted or cannot be heard, from areas with slow internet
23 connections, or through text-based browsers such as Lynx; and
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25 **Whereas**, in 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal civil rights law that prohibits
26 discrimination against people with disabilities in areas of public life, was passed; and
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28 **Whereas**, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states, "No otherwise qualified individual with a
29 disability in the United States...shall...be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be
30 subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any
31 program or activity conducted by any Executive agency...";
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33 **Whereas**, under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, federal agencies are required to make their
34 electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities, and standards are provided; and
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36 **Whereas**, the Cornell motto reflects our inclusive goal of "... any person ... any study"; and
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38 **Whereas**, The University's Equal Education and Employment Opportunity Statement declares that Cornell
39 is "committed to assisting those persons with disabilities who have special needs related to their educational
40 pursuit or employment" and prohibits discrimination on this basis; and
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42 **Whereas**, The Campus Master Plan states that, "Cornell campus will support and cultivate academic success
43 and growth, providing high quality open, collaborative and adaptable environments for teaching, research,
44 service and outreach, the exchange of ideas and the nurturing of innovation..."; and
45

46 **Whereas**, Cornell's websites are one of our most visible communications tools, and any site on the
47 Cornell.edu domain is a representation of the university, reflecting our competency, values, and standards;
48 and
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50 **Whereas**, in order to meet our stated institutional commitment to accessibility, our web administrators,
51 content providers, and developers need institutional support and a set of published standards to work from
52 when creating new websites and remediating legacy sites; and
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54 **Whereas**, an inaccessible website can exclude faculty, staff, prospective and existing students, and their
55 families, due to their abilities or the method they use to access the web; and
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57 **Whereas**, the University Assembly and the Employee Assembly have passed similar resolutions,
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59 **Be it therefore resolved**, the Divisions of University Relations, Cornell Information Technologies, and
60 Human Resources by August 1, 2017 will set, publish, and disseminate to all levels of University personnel, an
61 Accessibility Policy for all websites on the Cornell.edu domain which will:

- 62 1. Set a baseline standard to meet WCAG 2.0 AA Standards.
- 63 2. Require all newly created sites to conform to this standard.
- 64 3. Require all legacy sites to be remediated for conformance upon any major update.
- 65 4. Using the model for IT Security exemptions, provide a process for exemption of sites for which
66 conformance would impose an undue burden.

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68 **Be it further resolved**, Cornell Administration, in consultation with the Department of Inclusion and
69 Workforce Diversity, the ADA Coordinator Team, the Divisions of University Relations, and Cornell
70 Information Technologies, will name and/or identify an office or person(s) as a point of contact on campus
71 to handle reporting, assist with procedures, and periodically assess the resources needed to ensure successful
72 implementation of the policy.
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74 **Be it finally resolved**, the Divisions of University Relations and Cornell Information Technologies will:

- 75 1. Revise the Brand Book by August 1, 2017 to include accessible templates for items including but not
76 limited to presentations, videos, posters, and digital media.
- 77 2. Provide and make readily available information on making digital information accessible and using
78 automated tools to check the accessibility of content.
- 79 3. Provide guidance, incentive, and encouragement to all University academic, administrative, and
80 business units, aiming for the highest level of conformance in all possible cases.
- 81 4. Provide tools to all University academic, administrative, and business units to perform standardized
82 evaluations of conformance.
- 83 5. Compile annual surveys from all University academic, administrative, and business units for their
84 level of conformance, making the survey results available to the Assemblies. The first survey is to be
85 completed before January 1, 2018.
- 86 6. Set a goal for domain-wide conformance exceeding 85% within 5 years.
- 87 7. After this goal is reached, refer any non-exempt sites falling below 75% conformance to the
88 administrator for remediation or exemption.
- 89 8. Re-evaluate exemptions at least once per year.

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91 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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93 Jordan Berger '17
94 *President, Student Assembly*

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96 Sarah Park '20
97 *Undergraduate Representative, University Assembly*

