

Cornell University  
University Assembly

**U.A. Resolution # 6**

**Cornell Commitment to Web Accessibility**

*March 14, 2017*

1 **Sponsored by:** Jeramy Kruser, Employee; CIC Chair, University Assembly;  
2 Ulysses Smith, Employee; CWC Chair, University Assembly

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4 **On Behalf Of:** UA Campus Welfare Committee (U. Smith, J. Anderson, L.  
5 Copman, M. Indimine, J. Kruser, E. Loew, S. Park, S. Taborski)

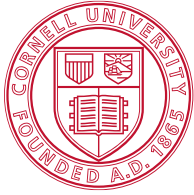
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7 **Whereas,** worldwide there are 285 million people with visual impairment, 275 million  
8 people with moderate-to-profound hearing impairment, and many more with physical,  
9 speech, cognitive, neurological disabilities; and

10  
11 **Whereas,** Cornell University’s global community both includes and interacts with  
12 many of these people, as well as many people with a limited understanding of English,  
13 all of whom could benefit from web technology that meets accessibility standards; and

14  
15 **Whereas,** modern accessibility standards benefit all individuals by making websites  
16 more accessible through mobile devices, in locations where sound is not permitted or  
17 cannot be heard, from areas with slow internet connections, or through text-based  
18 browsers such as Lynx; and

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20 **Whereas,** in 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal civil rights law  
21 that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in areas of public life, was  
22 passed; and

23  
24 **Whereas,** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states, “No otherwise qualified  
25 individual with a disability in the United States...shall...be excluded from the



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26 participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any  
27 program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or  
28 activity conducted by any Executive agency...”;

29

30 **Whereas**, under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, federal agencies are  
31 required to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with  
32 disabilities, and standards are provided; and

33

34 **Whereas**, the Cornell motto reflects our inclusive goal of “... any person ... any study”;  
35 and

36

37 **Whereas**, The University’s Equal Education and Employment Opportunity Statement  
38 declares that Cornell is “committed to assisting those persons with disabilities who have  
39 special needs related to their educational pursuit or employment” and prohibits  
40 discrimination on this basis; and

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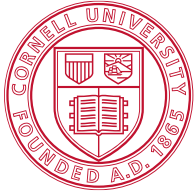
42 **Whereas**, The Campus Master Plan states that, “Cornell campus will support and  
43 cultivate academic success and growth, providing high quality open, collaborative and  
44 adaptable environments for teaching, research, service and outreach, the exchange of  
45 ideas and the nurturing of innovation...”; and

46

47 **Whereas**, Cornell’s websites are one of our most visible communications tools, and any  
48 site on the Cornell.edu domain is a representation of the university, reflecting our  
49 competency, values, and standards; and

50

51 **Whereas**, in order to meet our stated institutional commitment to accessibility, our  
52 web administrators, content providers, and developers need institutional support and a



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53 set of published standards to work from when creating new websites and remediating  
54 legacy sites; and

55

56 **Whereas**, an inaccessible website can exclude faculty, staff, prospective and existing  
57 students, and their families, due to their abilities or the method they use to access the  
58 web; and

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60 **Whereas**, a similar resolution has been passed with the unanimous support of the  
61 Employee Assembly on December 21, 2016;

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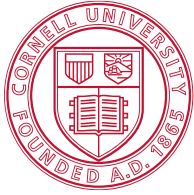
63 **Be it therefore resolved**, the Divisions of University Relations, Cornell Information  
64 Technologies, and Human Resources by August 1, 2017 will set, publish, and  
65 disseminate to all levels of University personnel, an Accessibility Policy for all websites  
66 on the Cornell.edu domain which will:

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

73

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

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81 **Be it finally resolved**, the Divisions of University Relations and Cornell Information  
82 Technologies will:

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

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100 **Adopted by Vote of the Assembly ( \_ - \_ - ), \_\_\_\_\_, 2016,**

101 **Gabriel Kaufman** Chair, University Assembly

Chair, University Assembly