



The Long Road from *Reactive* to *Proactive*: Project Highlights from Mason's ATI

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Accessing Higher Ground Conference

8:00am – 9:00am
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What we'll cover

- **About Us**
- **Issues/Challenges**
 - Trending
 - IT Accessibility Working Group
 - Issues/Challenges facing ITAG
 - Findings
- **Strategies/Recommendations in Practice**
 - Policy Updates
 - Updated Training Resources
 - Updated Service Workflows
 - Current/Future Projects
- **Q&A**





Our Mission, Services, Staffing, Laws & Policies

ABOUT US



Our Mission...

...to provide equivalent access to electronic and IT resources for members of the Mason community, as well as visitors to Mason campuses. This is accomplished by working collaboratively with the ITU, academic and administrative departments/units, faculty, as well as library personnel to develop, coordinate, and implement a university-wide technology accessibility plan that ensures conformity with the technical standards outlined in WCAG 2.0 and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

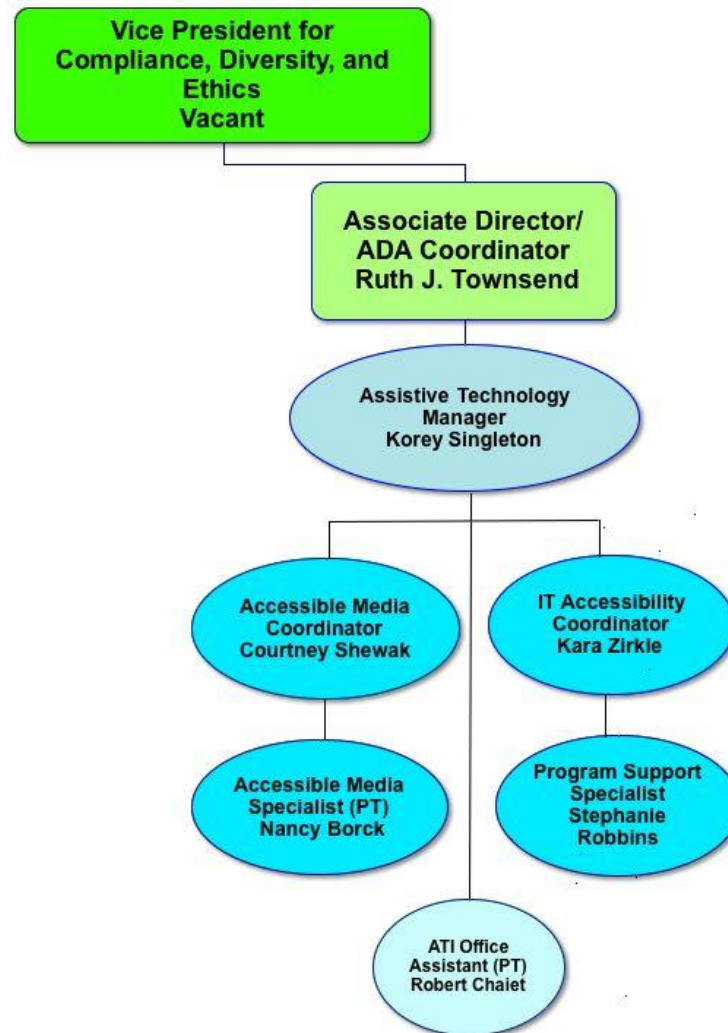
Services

- **Accessible Text (e-text conversion/OCR) & Media**
 - Provision of accessible text to students, faculty, and staff with print-related disabilities (referral only).
 - Provision of accessible media: closed captioning and audio description.
- **Web Accessibility**
 - Section 508/Web Accessibility Training and Support for Mason employees and students.
 - Web Accessibility Testing for all Mason websites and web-based resources used in the classroom.
- **Assistive Technology Assessments, Support, and Training**
 - Informal assistive technology assessments and trainings for Mason students, staff, and faculty (walk-ins and referrals).
 - Maintenance of Assistive Technology Labs on all campuses.

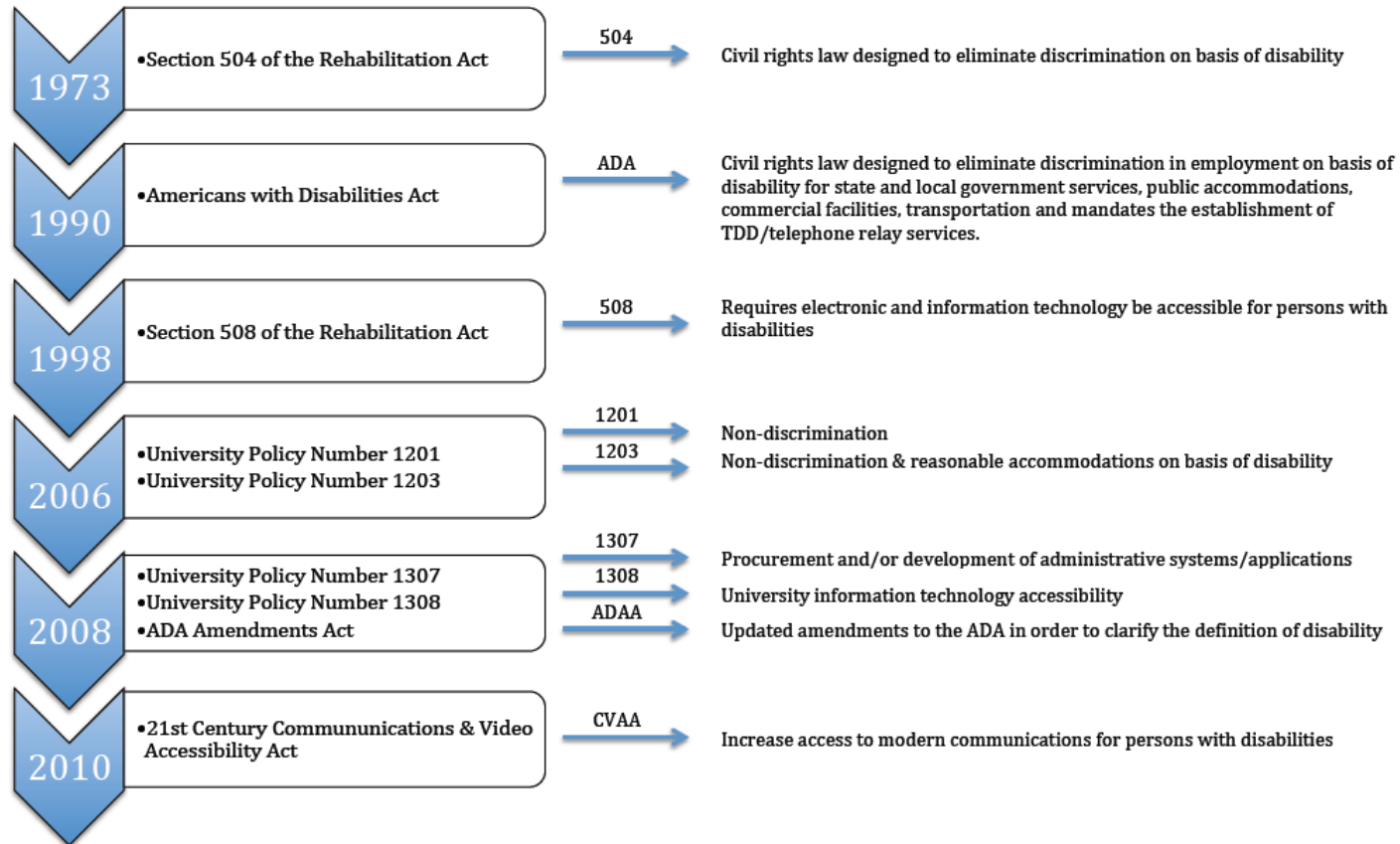
ATI Staff & Reporting Structure

ATI operates under
*Compliance, Diversity,
and Ethics Office*

- Reports up through ADA Coordinator to VP for CDE, who reports directly to University President



Accessibility Laws/Policy @ GMU





Trending, IT Accessibility Working Group, Issues

ISSUES/CHALLENGES



Trending in Higher Education...

- ✓ Increasing numbers of students with disabilities entering IHE
- ✓ Greater implementation of online/e-learning technologies in higher education classrooms
- ✓ Growth in distance education offerings by IHE
- ✓ Growing number of legal challenges/judgments against IHE by students with sensory impairments...and they are winning those challenges

Roadmap of Legal Challenges against IHEs

- [Arizona State](#) – June 2009
- [Google Apps for Education](#) (NYU, NU) – March 2011
- [Penn State](#) – Late 2011/Early 2012
- [Florida State University](#) – March 2012
- [University of Montana](#) – September 2012
- [South Carolina Technical College System](#) – March 2013
- [Louisiana Tech University](#) – July 2013

What was happening at Mason?

- **National cases had Mason equivalents!**
 - MyLabs and other supplemental applications
 - Captioning
 - Inaccessible websites/web-based documents
 - DE courses
 - Communication breakdowns
 - Purchasing/procurement issues
- **University's IT infrastructure was changing**
 - Shift away from 'siloes' delivery model
 - Enterprise systems overhauled/updated

IT Accessibility Working Group (ITAG)

- Established in/met throughout Spring 2013
- Stakeholders from Library, UL, ITU, CTFE, DE, Legal, Academic Depts., and CDE
- Issues and challenges centered on addressing needs of students with sensory impairments
 - At the time, we had 81 total students with sensory impairments...included 8 incoming blind students (grad and undergrad)

Issues Identified by ITAG

- Accessibility vs. Accommodation
 - JIT vs. Development
 - Time/Staffing
 - Inconsistency
- E-Learning Technology
- Non-Inclusive Practices/Awareness
- Procurement
- Compliance/Enforcement
- Costs
- Legal Issues





ITAG Recommendations

HIGH IMPACT/HIGH PRIORITY



ITAG High Priority/High Impact Recs

- **Improving Student Access in the Classroom**


- Provost's Letter
- Established Basic Design Considerations (captioning, accessible document design)
- Accessibility reviews for DE courses
- Improved communications/collaboration
- Training with Academic Units/Depts./Instructional Designers
- Accessibility testing of e-learning and IT resources

- **Improving Web Accessibility/Procurement**

- ASRB Changes/Updates
- Prioritization of websites for accessibility testing

- **Structural Improvements**

- Video management platform
- Staffing for document accessibility support



Communication/Collaboration, Policy Updates, Training Resource Updates, Workflow Updates

RECOMMENDATIONS IN PRACTICE



Improved Communication and Collaboration

- **Top-down Approach**

- Provost's letter
- Meetings with Deans/Directors
 - Identified *Accessibility Liaisons* for each College/School

- **Emphasis on Strategic Partnerships**

- Joint meetings with faculty members that will have a student with a sensory impairment in their courses (ATI/Disability Services)
- Collaboration with ID Team and Office of Distance Education
 - Accessibility training provided for Academic Units c/o Instructional Designers (IDs)
- Collaboration with Library (AT Labs, e-Reserves, Captioning, Procurement)
 - *Accessibility Coordinator* position established

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Updates to Policy, Purchasing/Procurement

Recent Policy Updates

- [Policy 1307 – Procurement and/or Development of Administrative Systems/Applications](#)
 - Updated in 2012 to reference the Architecture Standards Committee
 - Architectural Standards Review Board
 - ASRB reviews all technology purchases
- [Policy 1308 – Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility](#)
 - Updated April 2014
 - Expanded definition for “electronic and information technology” and whom it applies to
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - Findings and Recommendations from *IT Accessibility Working Group*

Architecture Standards Review Board

- The ASRB is under the [Architecture Standards Committee \(ASC\)](#) and is responsible only for approving the beginning of a given project.
- Initial review includes an accessibility review by ATI and any other reviews (e.g., IT security) necessary. At the ASRB's discretion, changes may be required before approving a project.
- Projects under the purview...include all requests for new development, installation and/or integration of applications at GMU...includes activities from internal ITU, Mason University offices, mobile apps developed by university faculty and staff, and all software produced by 3rd party vendors and consultants including pilot projects...committee will not review upgrades, bug fixes, and incremental improvements to existing programs.
- ATI provides a *risk analysis and recommendations* for Mason purchaser.

Purchasing Contract Language

- Worked with Purchasing, ITU, and Legal to include accessibility language on all purchasing contracts, including eVA purchasing agreements.
- Sample purchasing agreement language - <http://ati.gmu.edu/policy/procurement/>
- Added protection for technology purchases that are not reviewed for accessibility.



Baseline Design Considerations/Training Resources



Baseline Design Considerations for Accessible IT Resources

- **Visual:**
 - Provide alternative text descriptions for all meaningful graphics (images, charts, graphs, SmartArt, objects)
 - Provide descriptions for videos where visual content is important to understanding subject matter.
 - Use styles in Office documents, headers to mark-up tables or frames (for websites)
 - Choose applications that support keyboard navigation and are compatible with screen readers
- **Hearing:**
 - Provide captions for all videos
 - For audio, provide transcripts
- **Cognitive, Neurological:**
 - Use consistent navigation, tab order, appropriate language level

Guide to Creating Accessible Electronic Materials



This JIT training resource provides faculty/staff with step-by-step instructions on ensuring that their electronic documents/videos are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

<http://ati.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-Creating-Accessible-Electronic-Materials-7-MB-pdf.pdf>

Updated ATI Website

Website: <http://ati.gmu.edu>

- Usability-group tested
- Easier navigation
- Video training library to go along with JIT training guide
- *Streamlined service request process*
 - *Captioning and Audio Description*
 - *Website and Applications Testing*
 - *Reporting Issues*

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Structural Improvements/Updated Service Workflows

Kaltura Pilot

- ITU purchased and implemented Kaltura video management platform during Spr/Sum 2014...full implementation Fall 2014/Spr 2015
- Solved a number of captioning issues
 - Easy process for addressing last-minute requests
 - Standardized video management process
 - RFP for captioning/transcription vendors with Kaltura partnerships
 - Streamlined workflows/timelines/costs
 - Allowed for scalability

Updated Accessible Media Workflow (updated Spr. '14)

