# Successful Strategies for Creating Readily Accessible Online Courses

Presented by:

Jason Altmann, Director of Access and Disability Services

Joanne Ivory, Ph.D. Dean, Career and Technical Programs

# Disability and College Students

11% of undergraduates report having a disability (US Dept of Education National Center for Education Statistics )

6 -7 % of students enrolled request services through access/disability offices (Association of Higher Education and Disability)

Colleges the size of Harper College in the US average about 752 students registered with access/disability offices
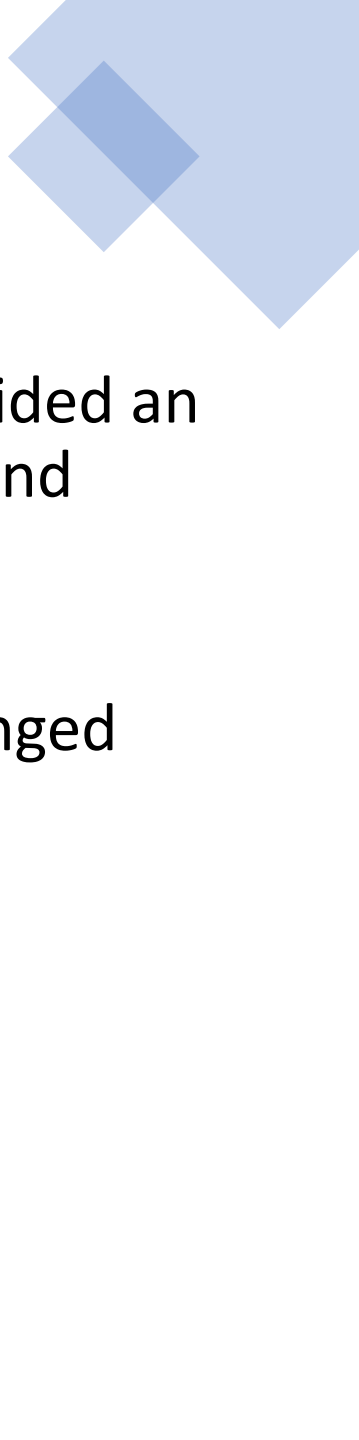
# Disability and Harper College

In 2019, Harper College served approximately 1,200 students, almost 9% of the student population

According to the 2019 Harper Fact Book, the ADS office had the third highest number of individual contacts with students and community members, after New Student Orientation and Academic Advising and Counseling

# Reflection of the Data

- In reviewing the numbers, it also provided an opportunity for us to review process and consider:
  - What was working
  - What needed to be improved/changed
  - What needed to be added

# Identifying Improvements

While we were meeting student needs, we also saw an opportunity for improvement by enhancing the classroom experience.

Previously we had faculty to complete the course design review process-through our Academy of Teaching and Learning.

This process included reviewing their existing courses and then making modifications (such as layout, delivery timeline, etc.) that would be more user-friendly for students.

The pandemic and the need to move to totally virtual learning environment, provided the opportunity to review courses from a completely different perspective

# Digital Accessibility Workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to provide faculty with a better understanding of online course standards.
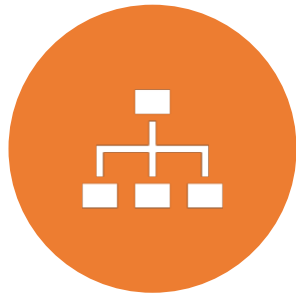
This also included standards for accessibility

Faculty teaching Career and Technical programs were given preferential enrollment. It was later opened to faculty in all other divisions
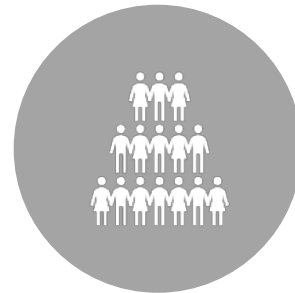
Adjunct faculty were included as well

The goal was to enroll a total of 25 faculty

# The Workshop Process

The workshop consisted of three (3) sessions

Each session lasted for an hour and a half (1.5hrs)

Combined total of four (4) hours

Faculty received CEU's and a stipend of $360

# Expected Outcomes

**1** The faculty will know how to evaluate their content for digital accessibility.

**2** The faculty will understand the importance of creating a readily accessible online course for the students with disabilities.

**3** The faculty will know how to create accessible syllabus and digital course materials.

**4** The faculty will know how to create captions for the videos and transcripts for the audio files.

**5** The faculty will be able to identify the potential challenges an online course may present to students with disabilities and utilize the strategies to work with students to ensure that the course is accessible and inclusive.

# Session I: Fundamentals of creating an accessible online course

What does an accessible online course experience feel like for students with disabilities?

What is the difference between accommodations and accessibility?

Universal Design for Learning Principles

Evaluating your content for digital accessibility (Ally, Word Doc checker, Power Point)

Q&A

# Session II: Improve the Accessibility of Course Materials w/Ally for Blackboard

Understand the common accessibility issues that may be present in their course(s)

Identify which courses they would like BlackBoard Ally enabled for

Apply Ally tools to assess and remediate course content for accessibility

Deploy alternative file formats for students

Q&A

# Session III: Digital Accessibility Essentials for Online Courses

Identify opportunities to increase the accessibility of the virtual learning environment in their courses

Review techniques of UDL for envisioning and remediating materials, methods and assessments

Employ remediation techniques for documents, presentations and interactions

Q&A

# Session IV: Methods for Ensuring Accessibility for Instructional Media

Recognize and locate applications that are readily available to them for generating automated captions

Understand a process for auto-captioning and downloading captions of instructional video

Identify methods for providing captions and transcripts for instructional materials

Q&A

# Workshop Protocols

Once registered, attendance for each session was mandatory

Check-ins and Support

Action Plan to Remediate Course Content with Ally

Action Plan Due June 1

# Check-ins and Support Provided

**Work with Academy –Ally**

**Used the Ally Instructor Toolkit**

**Keep 'before' score-compare upon completion**

# Action Plan to Remediate Course Content with Ally

- Expect to spend approximately 8-12 hours remediating your course content during this program.
- Faculty were provided with ways for you to get started with Ally and improve the accessibility of your course.
- The last step involves working with Academy to identify content that you are unable to remediate or would require time beyond the expectations of this program.
- An accessibility specialist is available upon request
- Specialist can assist in conducting remediation of files so that they can be upload back into Blackboard course shell.
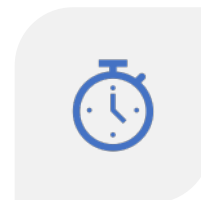
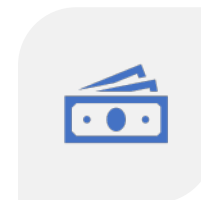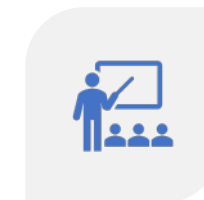SUBMIT BEFORE/AFTER SCREENSHOTS OF COURSE ACCESSIBILITY SCORE
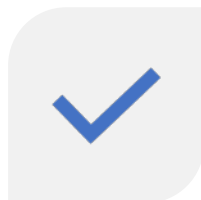
COMPLETE THE CHECKLIST

MUST EARN A SCORE OF 90% OR BETTER

COMPETE WORK BY THE DEADLINE DATE

RECEIVE CEU'S AND STIPEND

*FACULTY STILL RECEIVED CEUS FOR ATTENDING THE WORKSHOP IF THEY HAD NOT COMPLETED REMEDIATION WORK AT THE COMPLETION OF WORKSHOP
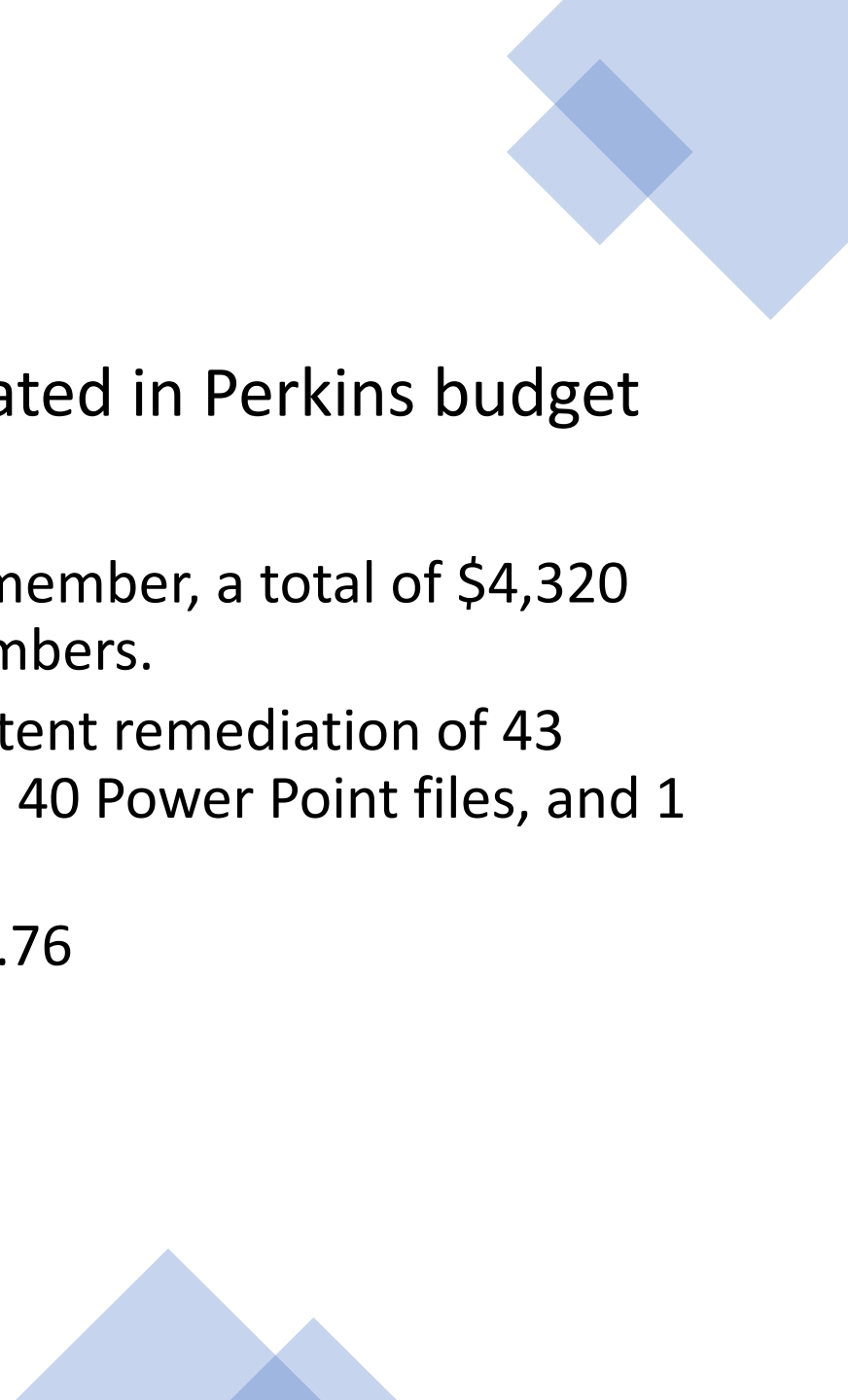
# Completion Requirements

# Actual Outcomes

- Attendance for Digital accessibility workshops:
  - Workshop 1: 15 faculty members.
  - Workshop 2: 16 faculty members.
  - Workshop 3: 15 faculty members.
  - Workshop 4: 12 faculty members.
  - 12 faculty members attended all four workshops.
- 12 faculty members completed the remediation of their courses.
  - Average Blackboard Ally course accessibility score is 95%.
  - 84 course files were remediated and made accessible by an accessibility specialist for two faculty members.

# Overall Cost

- $32,000 was allocated in Perkins budget
- Breakdown:
  - $360 per faculty member, a total of $4,320 for 12 faculty members.
  - $1,358.76 for content remediation of 43 Word documents, 40 Power Point files, and 1 PDF file.
  - Total cost: $5,678.76

# Benefits of the project

- Infusing the culture of offering readily accessible courses among faculty members.
- Reduces the need for students with disabilities to advocate for accessible course content, preserving the students' bandwidths in the process.
- For FY22: the digital accessibility component is embedded in the Academy for Teaching Excellence's course design review.
  - During the review process, the faculty will receive a stipend for achieving Ally score of 90% or better for their courses.
  - This action received support of the Faculty Senate.
  - Satisfies one of the distance education operations team's goals of increasing the accessibility of online courses.
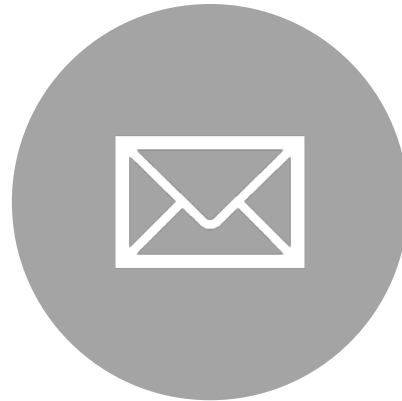
# Questions?

# Thank you



CONTACT INFORMATION:

JASON ALTMANN

JALTMANN@HARPERCOLLEGE.EDU

JOANNE IVORY

JIVORY@HARPERCOLLEGE.EDU