# Example of a Captioning Policy

*Below is an example of a captioning policy used by one of the author’s institutions. We encourage you to review it for ideas on language and format as you develop your own.*

**Purpose:** (*IHE*) is committed to providing digital environments that is accessible to all, including individuals with disabilities. Digital environments include, but are not limited to, information technologies, webpages, web-based applications, online instructional content, services, and resources. (*IHE*) commitment to digital accessibility is grounded not only in principles of equity and inclusion, but also with the knowledge that accessible content generally enhances usability for everyone.

**Scope:** This policy applies to all university digital environments that conduct core university academic, student and business activities beginning the date the policy is enacted by the Institution. Individual webpages published by students, employees or non-university organizations that are not hosted by the university and do not conduct university academic, student or business activities are outside the scope of this policy.

**Standards of Accessibility:** The institution is committed to ensuring equal access to digital environments for all people engaging with institutional content. (*IHE*) requires any information posted digitally to be compliant with legally applicable accessibility requirements (including, but not necessarily limited to, the most recent version of, or successor standards to, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (“WCAG”) 2.1, as published by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium) as set forth below:

#### Active webpages or digital content, launched **after** (*Date*)*,*must be in compliance with the applicable standards and guidelines described in the STANDARDS section of this policy.

#### Legacy webpages or digital content, that has been modified **after** (*Date*)*,* must be updated to be in compliance with the applicable standards and guidelines described in the STANDARDS section of this policy, or the content must otherwise be made available in an equally effective accessible format, and in a timely manner, to any individual requesting access. The unit responsible for its maintenance must make it compliant with the applicable standards, or provide an equally effective accommodation within a reasonable timeframe.

#### Archived webpages or digital content that has been requested to be changed must be made available in an accessible format to any individual eligible for, and needing access to, such content. The unit responsible for its maintenance is responsible for providing the information resource in an accessible format.

**Statement of Accessibility on all Webpages and Web-based Applications:**

All webpages and web-based applications must display in a consistent location (e.g., menu or text in the banner or footer) a statement, or link to a statement, referring to a commitment to accessibility by the university, college, department, program or unit. In addition, each page must have a link allowing users to contact the designated responsible position or positions within a college, department, program, or help desk (instead of individuals, who often change positions or duties).

*“The (Name of Department or Unit) is committed to making its digital environment accessible to all users, and welcomes comments or suggestions on access improvements.  Please send comments or suggestions on accessibility to the* (P*osition to Contact*)*.”*

All digital environments should also contain a link to the Report a Physical or Online Barrier form which will help to generate awareness around inaccessible content.

**Exemptions:** Where compliance is not technically possible or may require extraordinary measures due to the nature of the information and the intent of the web technology, a request for exception must be made.  Lack of sufficient funding for any particular unit, department or college of the university would not be considered for an exemption.

Units seeking an exception to this policy must submit a written request through the Accessible Web Site Exception Request Form (Appendix 1) to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) in consultation with the institutional Counsel, detailing why compliance is not feasible and how the unit will make information posted online available to individuals with a disability in an equally effective manner.

**Definitions:**

* **Assistive Technologies:** Adaptive, rehabilitative devices that promote greater independence for individuals with disabilities by changing how these individuals interact with technology. Examples include special input devices (e.g., head or foot mouse, puff-and-sip switches, speech recognition), screen-reading software, and screen magnifiers.
* **Accessible format** – The structure and composition of digital documents and applications that are readable and usable by people with disabilities, using assistive technologies, and/or special configurations for user agents.
* **Active Online Environments** – Online environments that are regularly accessed by people greater than or equal to 5 times per year is considered active.
* **Legacy Online Environments** – Online environments that are accessed less than 5 times per year.

**Authority:** This policy is issued by the (A*uthority Offices)*.

**Enforcement:** If necessary, at the discretion of the university leadership or their designees, some or all non-compliant portions of webpages and resources may be brought into compliance by designated staff or contractors and the expense of that work may be charged to the unit that is responsible for assuring the accessibility of that information on the web.

**Questions:** Individuals with questions, comments, or concerns about this policy or any of the related procedures should contact the (N*ame of Office to Contact with Questions*).

**Training:** Individuals interested in being trained in making their websites or contents accessible should contact your representative from the (N*ame of Group Responsible for Training*).

**Approval Entity(ies):** (*Names of Approval Entities – usually Academic Council, the President or the CIO)*

**Approval Date:** (*Approval Date)*

**Effective Date:** (*Expected Date*)

**Executive Sponsor(s):** (*Sponsors of the Policy*]

**Revision:** The institution reserves the right to change this policy from time to time. Proposed changes will normally be developed by those responsible for the policy with appropriate stakeholders. The approval entities have sole authority to approve changes to this policy.

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