



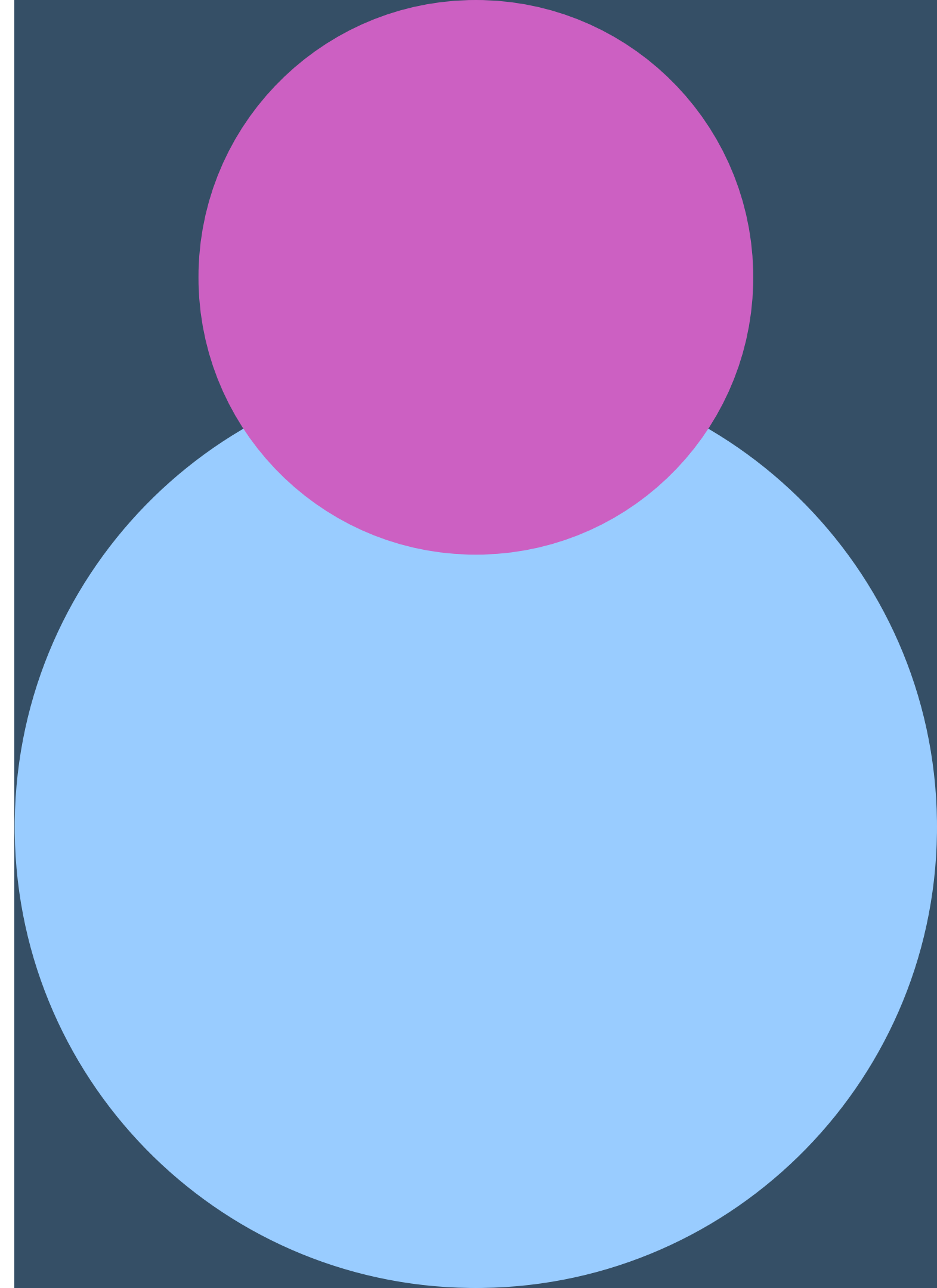
National Disability Center
for Student Success

Brand Guidelines and Toolkit

Version 2.0

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**Millions of Disabled
College Students Want
to Succeed.**

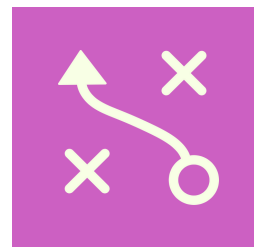
**The Center's Mission is
to Make That Success
Possible.**



**Establish the first actionable research
foundation to support success in college**



**Cultivate a greater understanding of
disability by all campus stakeholders**



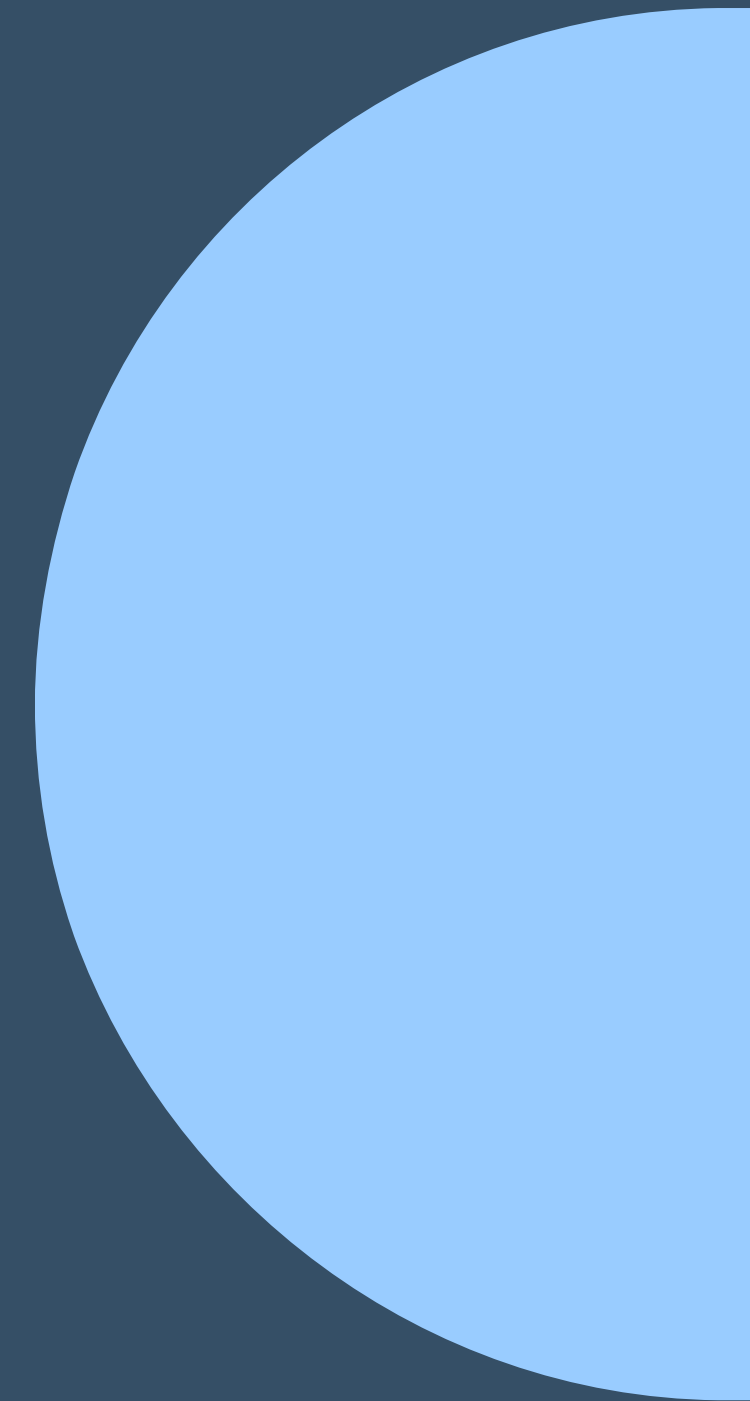
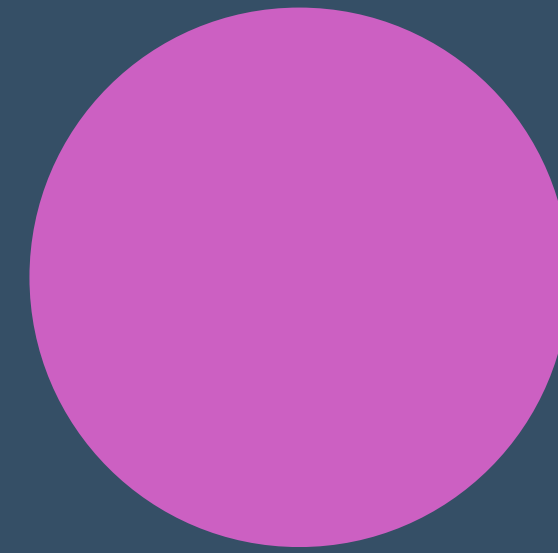
**Create practical strategies to boost
enrollment, inclusion, and completion**



**Collaborate on a student-centered model
focused on equity and accessibility**

Brand

The National Disability Center for Student Success (the Center) strives to ensure educational success for disabled students across the country. The brand reflects its commitment to accessibility, equity, and impactful research. Consistency in branding reinforces trust, credibility, and recognition.






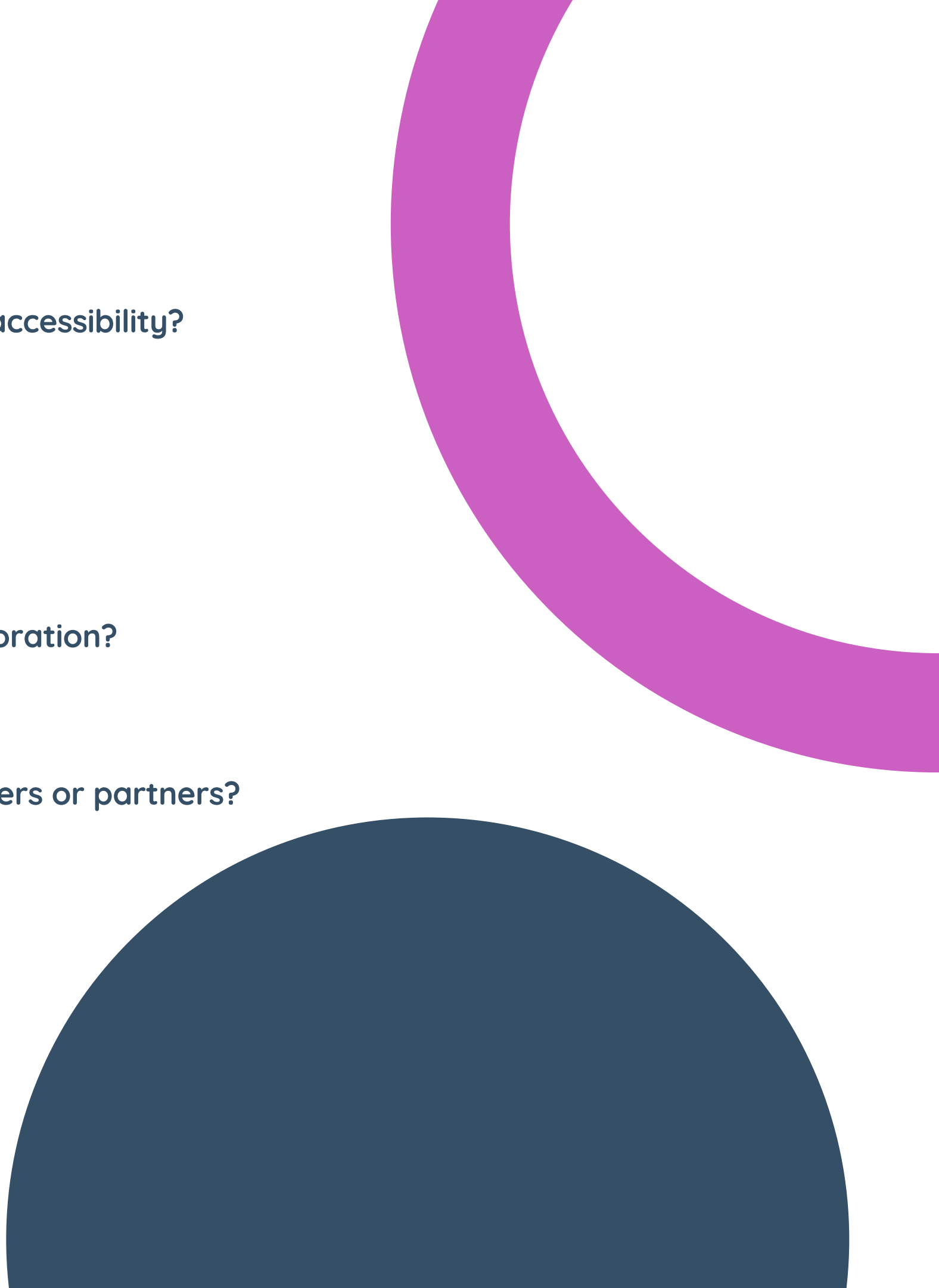
Brand Essence

Empowering Accessible Success

The National Disability Center for Student Success is driven by a singular purpose: empowering every student, regardless of ability, to reach their highest potential in postsecondary education. Its brand essence is firmly rooted in accessibility, equity, and an unwavering commitment to inclusion. The Center strives to create a world where disabled students not only access all aspects of higher education but also thrive within it. This mission guides every action—from pioneering research to collaborative initiatives and student mentoring—demonstrating that success becomes a reality when barriers are dismantled and opportunities are equitably provided.



Brand Essence Questions

1. Does this communication reflect the National Disability Center commitment to accessibility?
 2. Is the message focused on equity and inclusion?
 3. Does this visual or written content convey empowerment?
 4. Are you promoting innovative and impactful solutions?
 5. Does this communication demonstrate the Center values of support and collaboration?
 6. Is the tone inclusive and welcoming?
 7. Are you highlighting success stories of disabled students or other Center members or partners?
 8. Does this content emphasize the importance of accessible education for all?
- 

Brand Essence Examples

Faculty/Staff

Faculty and staff at the National Disability Center for Student Success embody its brand essence by creating accessible, inclusive environments that empower disabled students to succeed. Their work isn't just about educating—it's about removing barriers, fostering collaboration, and ensuring equitable opportunities for all students. Faculty members are leaders in their fields, driving innovative solutions for accessibility and ensuring every student can reach their full potential. Through their dedication, they help redefine what it means to be an inclusive and impactful educator.

Students/Family

For students and their families, the brand essence of the Center is about empowerment through education. The Center provides resources, support, and advocacy to ensure that disabled students have the tools they need to succeed. Families can trust that their students will be welcomed into an inclusive environment where their needs are met, and their successes are celebrated. The Center ensures that every student's journey is one of growth, achievement, and opportunity.

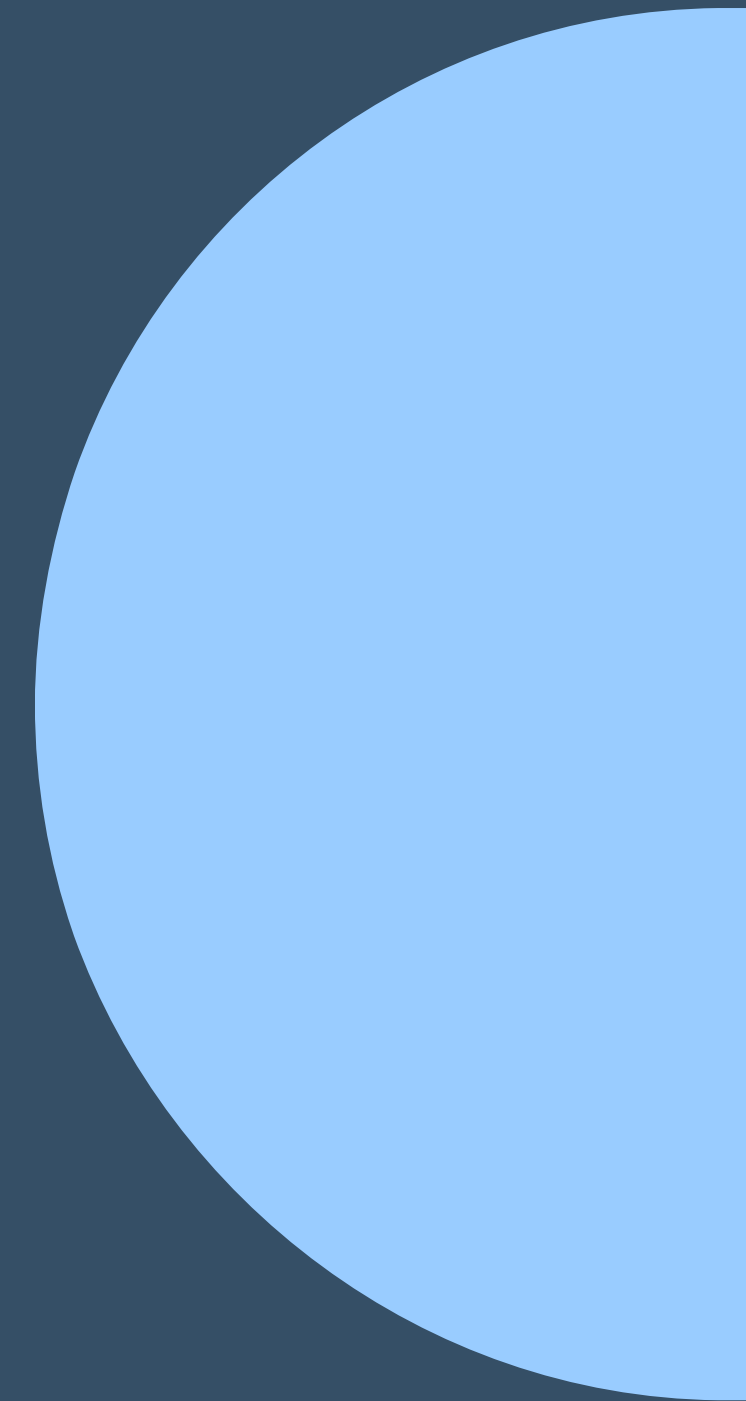
Researchers

Researchers at the Center are at the forefront of accessibility innovation. Its brand essence shines through their work as they seek new ways to improve educational environments for disabled students. By pushing boundaries and leading cutting-edge studies, these researchers are changing the landscape of higher education. Their work translates into real-world solutions that make education more accessible for everyone, ensuring lasting impact and systemic change.

Voice and Tone

The Center's brand voice is inclusive, knowledgeable, and supportive. It aims to communicate with empathy, creating content that empowers disabled students, educators, and advocates.

- **Inclusive:** Ensure all voices are heard and respected.
- **Knowledgeable:** Demonstrate expertise in accessibility research.
- **Supportive:** Encouraging, always focusing on problem-solving and partnership.



Tone Guidelines

Understanding Tone of Voice:

The National Disability Center tone of voice reflects the core of its mission: to empower, inform, and support. It's crucial for building trust and establishing authority in the field of disability education and advocacy.

Tone Characteristics:

- **Empowering and Encouraging:** Uplift and motivate the audience by focusing on ability, opportunity, and success.
- **Clear and Informative:** Provide well-researched, straightforward information that educates and informs stakeholders.
- **Supportive and Respectful:** Offer support and understanding, acknowledging the challenges while focusing on solutions and positive outcomes

Use of Third Person:

The center consistently uses third-person language to maintain a professional and objective tone in its external communications **outside of those used in social media and email marketing**. This approach reinforces the organization's authority and ensures clarity. By referring to itself as "The Center," rather than using first-person pronouns like "we" or "our," the organization positions itself as a reliable and impartial source of information. This technique also helps to keep the focus on the audience and the subject matter, rather than on the organization.

Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar guidelines ensure clarity, professionalism, and consistency, adhering to Oxford grammar rules.

Key Principles:

- **Oxford Comma:** Ensure clarity by using the Oxford comma in lists.
 - Example: "The National Disability Center for Student Success provides research, learning opportunities, and helpful resources."
- **Grammar and Punctuation: Follow these rules for clarity:**
 - **Commas:** Use in lists, after introductory elements, or to set off non-essential information.
 - Example: "After reviewing the data, the Center found significant results."
 - **Colons:** Introduce lists, quotes, or explanations.
 - Example: "The Center's focus areas include: research, education, and advocacy."
 - **Apostrophes:** Indicate possession or form contractions.
 - Example: "The Center's mission is to support students."
 - **Em Dashes:** Add emphasis or set off additional information.
 - Example: "The Center's goal—supporting every student—drives its efforts."

Special Spelling, Style and Word Usage

Adhere to specific spelling and style rules tailored for the Center's communications.

Spelling

- Always Capitalize T in Townhall. Also do not use “town hall” with the space.
- After the first usage of the full center name, National Disability Center for Student Success you can then shorten to National Disability Center or the “Center”.
- Do not use Acronyms such as NDC or NDCSS or NDCFSS. Instead use National Disability Center, and then “the Center” for 3rd use if needed.
- You can use either “,PhD” or “Dr.” but be consistent within the same document.

Style

- Students Come First: Mention students before faculty or staff.
- Example: “Ryan Mata, Doctoral Candidate, and Dr. Stephanie Cawthon are set to release two research papers this year.”

Messaging

The Center's messaging emphasizes the importance of accessibility, equity, and research. Communications highlight the real-world impact of the work the center achieves, ensuring that all students—regardless of ability—have the opportunity to succeed in higher education.

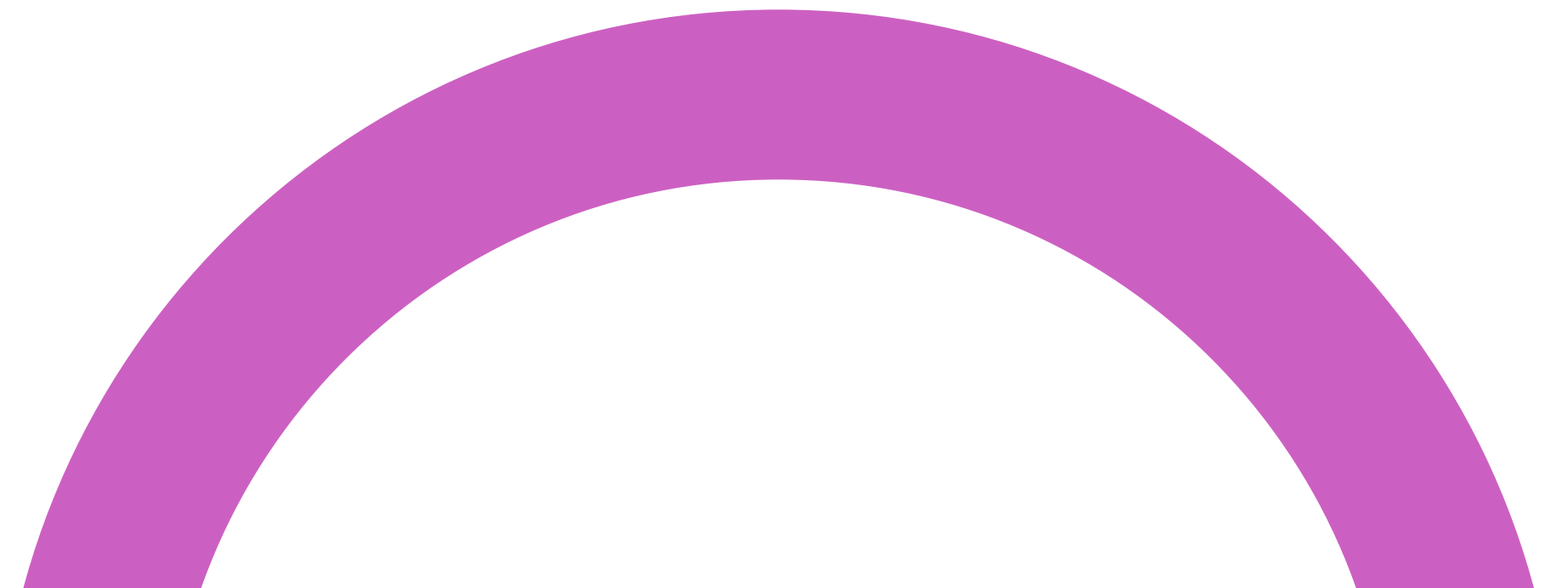
Focus on clear, compelling, and solution-oriented messages that inspire action, whether that's through policy change, research initiatives, or direct student support.



Brand Positioning Statement

Brand Positioning Statement: The National Disability Center for Student Success positions itself as the leading authority on creating accessible and inclusive educational environments for disabled students in higher education. The Center focus on innovative research, advocacy, and actionable solutions ensures that all students have equal opportunities to thrive. By working closely with faculty, students, families, and researchers, the Center creates sustainable pathways to success for all, making us the go-to resource for higher education institutions committed to accessibility.

Differentiation: What sets the National Disability Center for Student Success apart is its comprehensive approach that integrates research, real-world solutions, and collaboration with key stakeholders. Unlike other organizations, The Center bridges the gap between theory and practice by working directly with faculty, students, families, and researchers to implement practical, data-driven changes that have a measurable impact on educational outcomes. The Center doesn't just advocate for accessibility—it leads the way in making it a reality in higher education.



Audience Pillars

Faculty/Staff

For faculty and staff, the National Disability Center offers expertise and tools to create accessible learning environments that meet the needs of all students. The Center provides professional development, research-based strategies, and support to help educators implement inclusive practices in their classrooms and campuses. Its goal is to empower educators to become advocates for accessibility, ensuring that every student can succeed.

Message to Faculty/Staff: Be part of the change. Gain access to cutting-edge research and practical solutions that help you create an inclusive learning environment for all students.

Students/Family

For students and their families, the Center provides the resources, support, and advocacy necessary for navigating higher education as a disabled student. It helps students overcome challenges and access opportunities, while ensuring families feel confident that their students are receiving the support they need to succeed in college and beyond.

Message to Students/Family: The National Disability Center for Student Success is here to support your journey. With resources and guidance, every student has the opportunity to thrive in an inclusive and accessible educational environment.

Researchers

For researchers, the National Disability Center is a hub for groundbreaking studies on accessibility and disability in higher education. It provides a platform for collaboration, funding opportunities, and a network of experts dedicated to advancing the field of educational accessibility. The Center's research informs policy and practice, making a tangible difference in the lives of disabled students.

Message to Researchers: Lead the future of accessibility research. Join a community of innovators committed to transforming education through cutting-edge studies and real-world impact.

Key Messages

Key Messages:

- "Empowering disabled students to succeed in higher education."
- "Building a foundation of research to support disabled student experiences."
- "Fostering collaboration to create accessible, equitable educational models."

Examples and Application:

- **Website Content:** Use clear, empowering language that highlights research and community efforts.
- **Promotional Materials:** Incorporate key messages to succinctly communicate the value of the Center's research and initiatives.

Why It Matters:

- Consistency in messaging ensures that the Center's mission is clearly understood and embraced internally and externally.
- Well-crafted messages help in building a strong, recognizable brand.

Do:

- Integrate key messages into all forms of communication, ensuring they are adapted appropriately for different formats and audiences.
- Highlight the impact of the Center's work using data and testimonials in its communications.

Don't:

- Don't stray from approved messaging which could dilute the Center's brand and confuse its audience.
- Avoid using technical jargon that might not be easily understood by all stakeholders.

Key Messages for Faculty/Instructors/Staff



Professor

Alt: FacultyStaff, Instructor, etc.

Key Message to Faculty/Staff:

Be part of the change. Gain access to cutting-edge research and practical solutions that help you create an inclusive learning environment for all students.

Do's and Don'ts:

Do: Use the Center's research and tools to enhance accessibility practices.

Example: "Incorporate the Center's research-backed strategies to better support students with diverse needs."

Don't: Use the Center's data to pry into students' personal accommodations or pressure students into disclosing information.

Example: "Don't assume that all students with a disability need or want to disclose their accommodations. Respect privacy and do not use data as a tool for prying."

Do: Engage in ongoing professional development to create more inclusive learning environments.

Example: "Access resources that equip you with practical approaches for creating accessible and supportive classrooms."

Don't: Misinterpret or misuse research to generalize about all disabled students.

Example: "Avoid drawing broad conclusions from individual cases. Each student's needs are unique, and data should not be used to stereotype or overgeneralize."

Key Messages for Students



College Student

Alt: Four year, trade school, community

Key Message to Students/Family:

The Center is here to support your journey. With resources and guidance, every student has the opportunity to thrive in an inclusive and accessible educational environment.

Do's and Don'ts:

Do: Highlight the Center's resources that support self-advocacy and understanding of rights.

Example: "Explore the Center's guides on self-advocacy and discover how to navigate your college journey with confidence."

Don't: Promise that the Center will provide direct accommodations or act as an intermediary with the school.

Example: "The Center will ensure you get the accommodations you need from your school." (Incorrect)

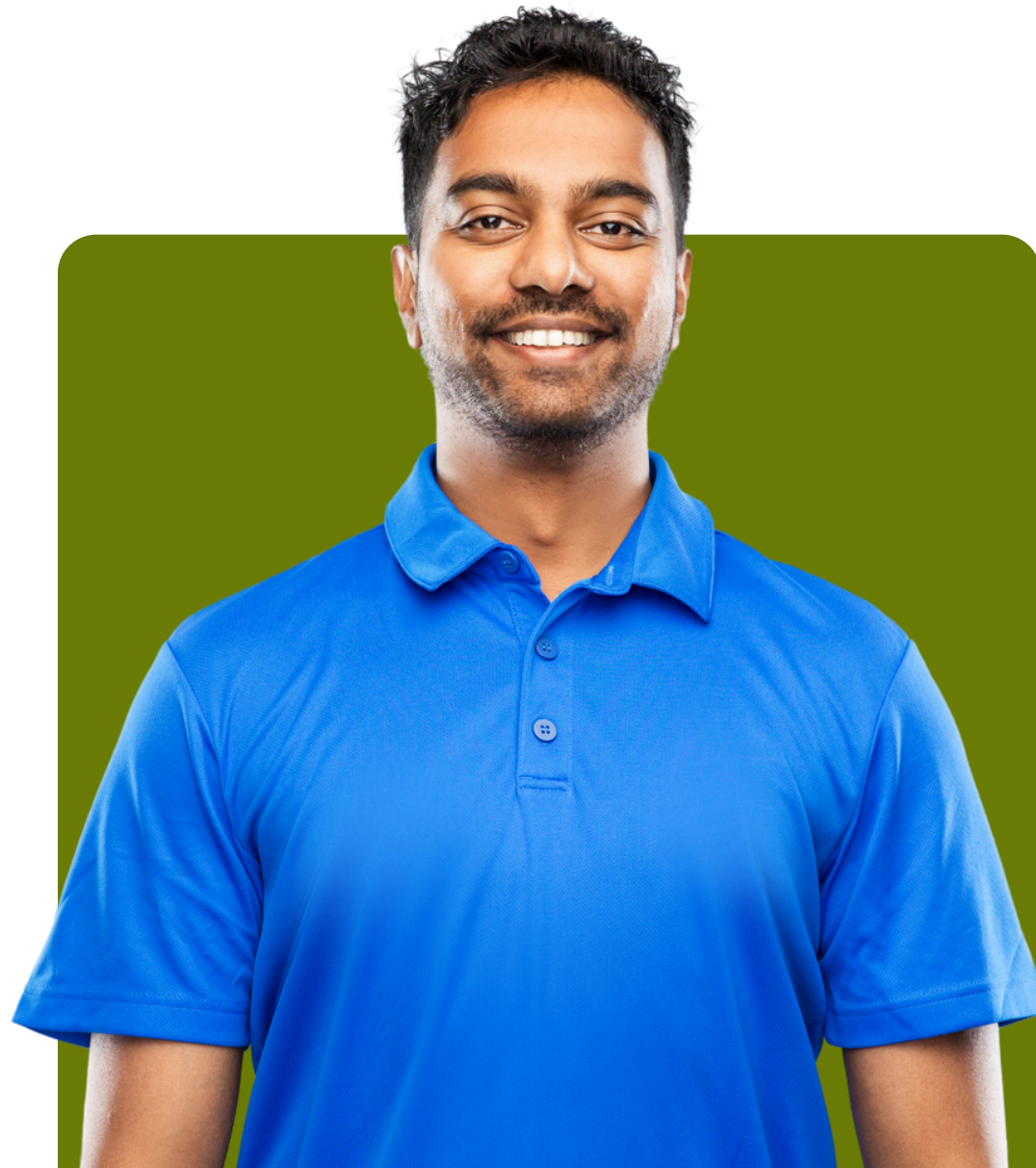
Do: Encourage students and families to use the Center's data and research in their own advocacy.

Example: "Use the Center's research-backed resources to advocate for your needs and create a more inclusive learning experience."

Don't: Imply that the Center provides individual legal assistance or intervenes directly with institutions.

Example: "The Center will represent your case to your university." (Incorrect)

Key Messages for Researchers



Researcher

Alt: Analyst, Examiner, Scholar

Key Message to Researchers:

Lead the future of accessibility research. Join a community of innovators committed to transforming education through cutting-edge studies and real-world impact.

Do's and Don'ts:

Do: Leverage the Center's platform for collaboration and data sharing to drive innovative research.

Example: "Collaborate with peers across disciplines and use the Center's data to explore new areas of accessibility research."

Don't: Use the Center's data to draw unsupported correlations or make broad assumptions.

Example: "Ensure that your conclusions are based on sound methodology. Avoid making causal claims without sufficient evidence."

Do: Focus on research that drives policy and institutional change through evidence-based findings.

Example: "Use the Center's research to inform educational policy and create systemic changes that benefit disabled students."

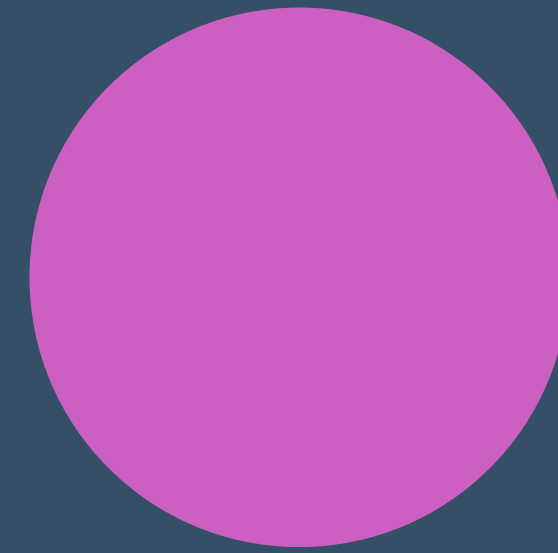
Don't: Misuse data to overgeneralize findings or apply them beyond their intended scope.

Example: "Be cautious in interpreting data, recognizing that findings about one group of students may not apply to all students with disabilities."

Logo

The Center's logo is a powerful visual representation of its mission. It symbolizes accessibility, innovation, and unity, representing the Center's role as a leader in the fight for inclusive education. Whether on digital platforms or printed materials, the logo must be used consistently to maintain the integrity and recognizability of its brand. It serves as an emblem of trust and professionalism in the field of disability advocacy.

[VIEW FULL BLOG](#)



Logo



National Disability Center for Student Success

THE INSPIRATION: A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO CHANGE - CLEAR, OPEN, COMMUNITY-FOCUSED

elements

A PERSON WITH ARMS
OPEN AND FLEXIBLE A
CROWN OF LEAVES IN
STRONG OUTREACH



CONTINUOUS LINE W/ LOOP (PERSON)

REPRESENTS NDC AS AN CONSISTENT, INVITING AND
COMMUNITY-FOCUSED RESOURCE TO SUPPORT ALL



4 LEAVES

THE NUMBER 4 SIGNIFIES GROUNDING +
STABILITY. THE LEAVES REPRESENT THE
VARIOUS SUPPORTERS BEHIND NDC

Primary Logo

VERTICAL



HORIZONTAL



GRAPHIC



VERTICAL STACKED



HORIZONTAL STACKED



TEXT ONLY



Color

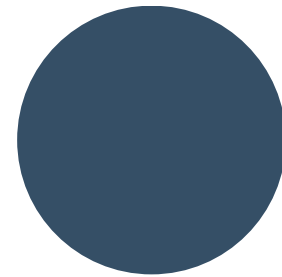
The colors of the National Disability Center for Student Success represent the Center's core values: trust, inclusivity, and optimism.

The primary color palette reflects a balance between professionalism and warmth, creating an inviting and trustworthy identity. Consistent use of these colors across all materials strengthens brand visual identity and fosters instant recognition.



Color

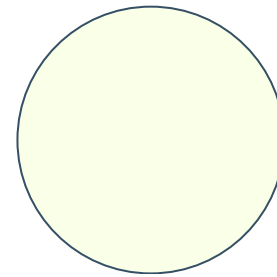
PRIMARY



LAGOON

CMYK	87 63 40 23
RGB	52 79 102
HEX/HTML	#354F66

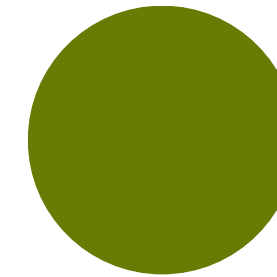
WHITE CONTRAST= 9:1



DAYLIGHT

CMYK	20 11 0 251
RGB	255 233
HEX/HTML	#FBFFE9

BLACK CONTRAST= 21:1

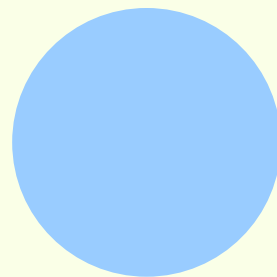


GROWTH

CMYK	63 33 100 16
RGB	105 122 5
HEX/HTML	#697A05

WHITE CONTRAST= 5:1

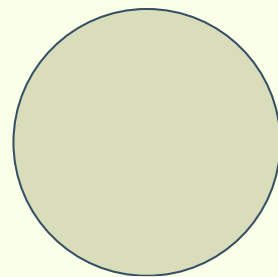
SUPPORTING



SKY

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RGB	204 255
HEX/HTML	#99CCFF

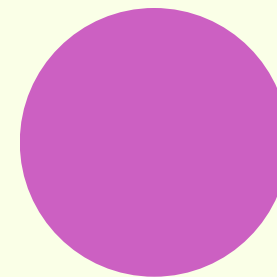
BLACK CONTRAST= 12:1



SAGE

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RGB	221 186
HEX/HTML	#D9DDBA

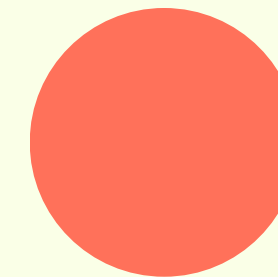
BLACK CONTRAST= 15:1



HIBISCUS

CMYK	22 75 0 0 204
RGB	96 194
HEX/HTML	#CC60C2

BLACK CONTRAST= 6:1



SUNSET

CMYK	0 76 65 0 255
RGB	113 90
HEX/HTML	#FF715A

BLACK CONTRAST= 8:1

Approved Color Contrast Pairs

PRIMARY

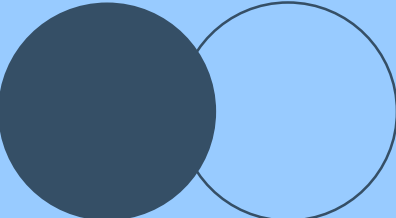


LAGOON + DAYLIGHT



GROWTH + DAYLIGHT

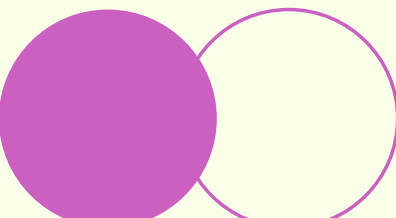
SUPPORTING



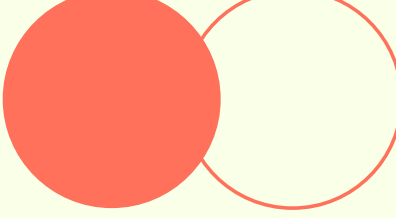
LAGOON + SKY



GROWTH + SAGE



HIBISCUS + DAYLIGHT

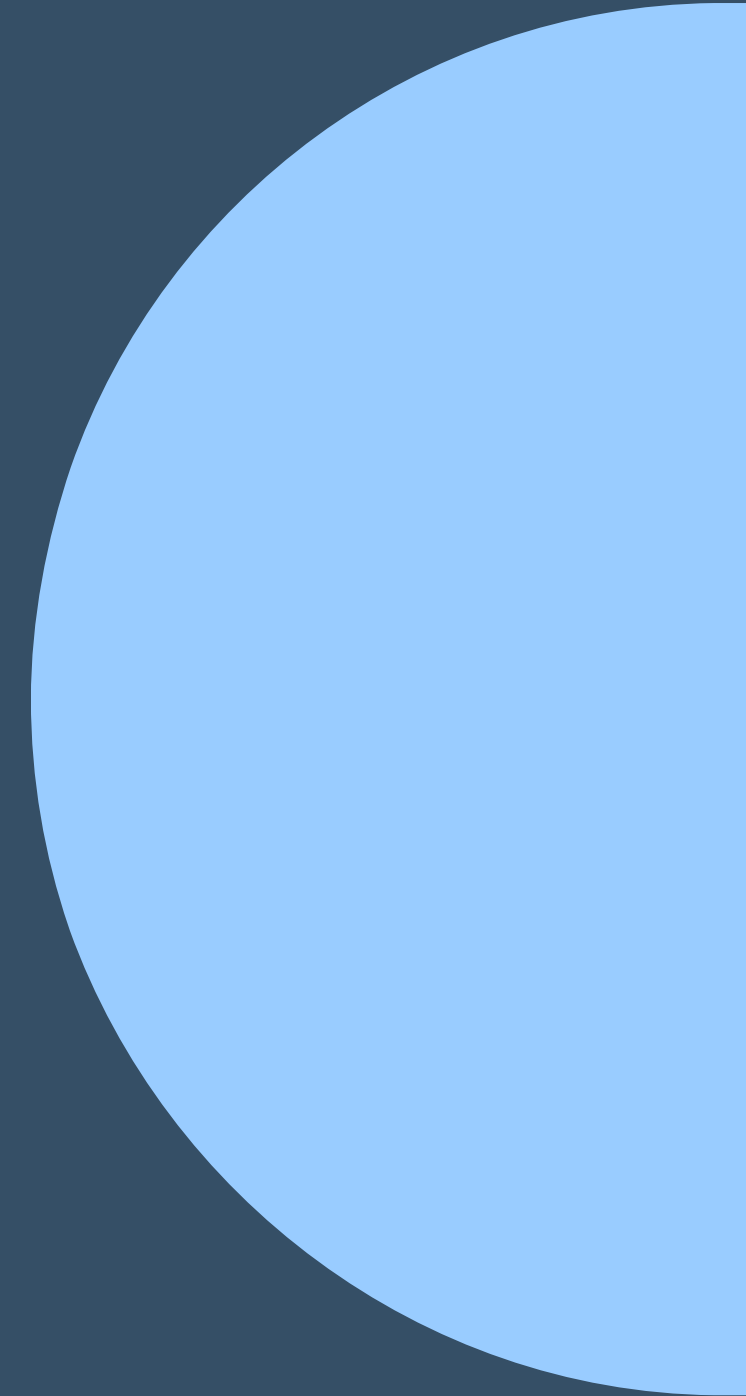
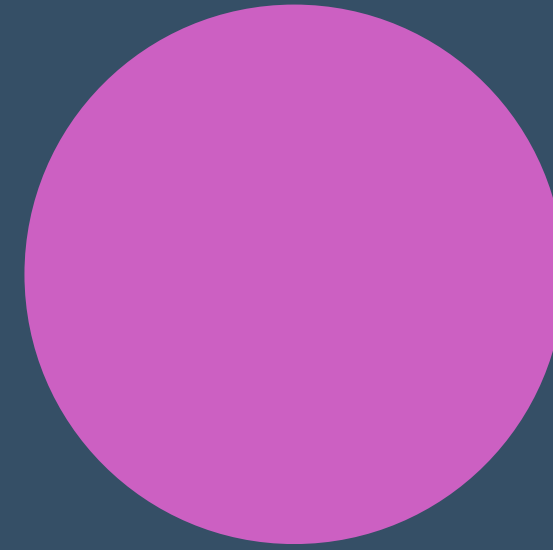


SUNSET + DAYLIGHT



Typography

Typography is a key element in ensuring that the Center's communications are clear, accessible, and professional. The Center's typeface choices are made with readability and accessibility in mind, ensuring that all audiences, including those using assistive technology, can engage with the content. The Center's typography reflects a modern and inclusive identity, adaptable across print and digital platforms.



Typography

Use a custom font selected for readability and elegance. This typography helps to reinforce our brand identity and should be used in all communications.

Headings

**Red Hat
Display**

Italic

Medium

Bold

Aa

Body

Quicksand

Medium

Bold

Aa

Typography

HEADING

Red Hat Display - Black

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZa
bcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789|!?;@#%&

SUBHEADING

Red Hat Display - Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
Zabcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789|!?;@#%&

primary

RED HAT DISPLAY IS
CONFIDENT AND
STRAIGHT-FORWARD,
YET IT DOESN'T TAKE
ITSELF TOO SERIOUSLY.

QUICKSAND IS
SUPPORTIVE AND
YOUTHFUL.

Digital Fonts

PARAGRAPH

Filson Soft - Regular

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a
b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 | ! ? ; @ # \$ % &

secondary

A LIGHT, EASY-TO-READ
AND CLEAR TYPEFACE,
FILSON SOFT IS OPEN,
WARM AND CLEAR

Photography

Photography used by the Center captures real stories of disabled students, educators, and partners, reflecting the diversity and vibrancy of its community. The imagery focuses on empowerment, inclusion, and the impact of accessibility on education. The goal is to visually communicate the Center's mission through authentic, bright, and dynamic images that celebrate success and progress.



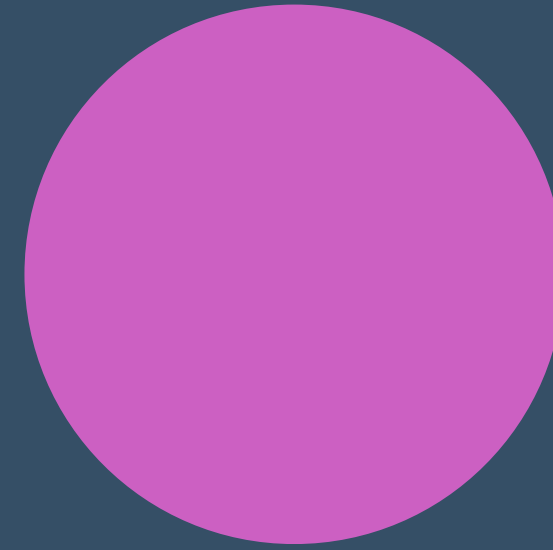
Imagery



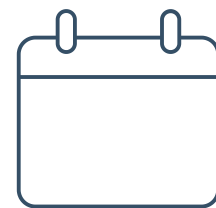
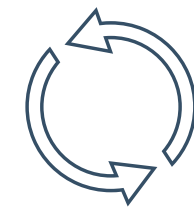
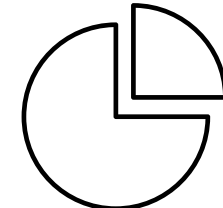
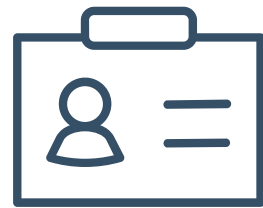
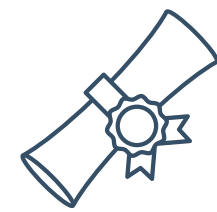
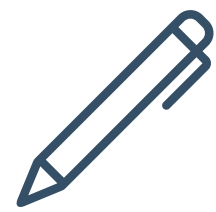
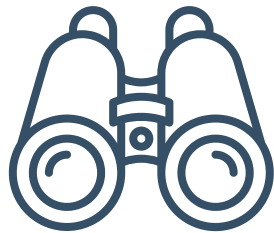
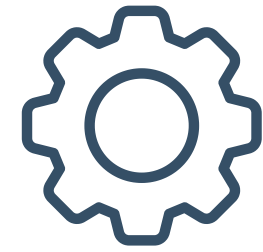
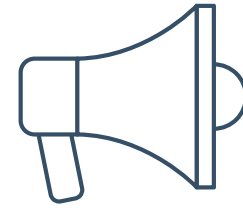
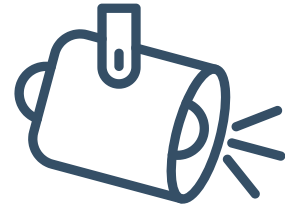
NATURAL LIGHT | UNFILTERED AND POSITIVE | AUTHENTIC COMPOSITION | REAL PEOPLE WITH REAL BEAUTY

Iconography

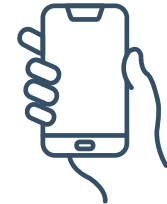
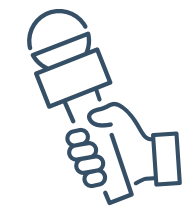
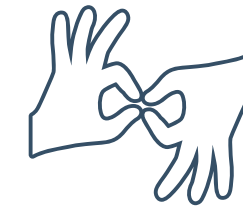
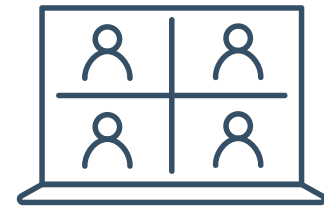
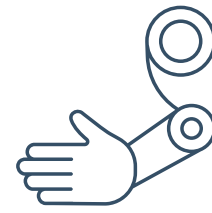
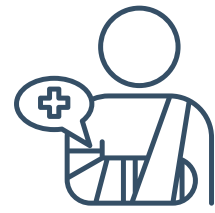
The iconography is designed to complement the Center's visual identity while being simple, modern, and accessible. Icons used in reports, presentations, and social media should reflect the Center's mission of advocacy and education for disabled students. Clear and intuitive, icons are part of a visual language that communicates ideas quickly and effectively.



Iconography

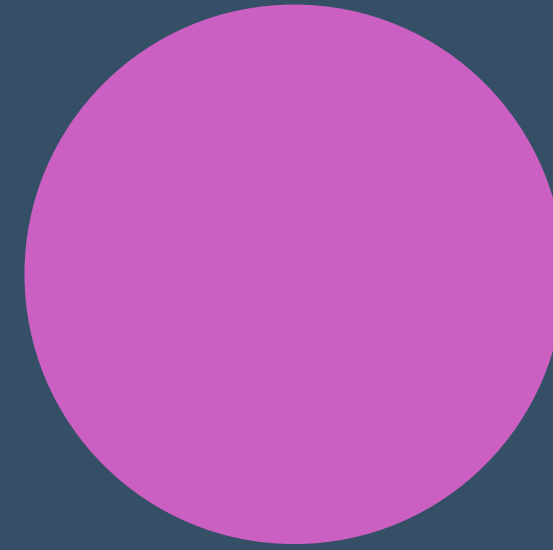


Iconography



Accessibility

Accessibility is at the heart of the National Disability Center for Student Success. Every piece of communication created—whether digital or print—must be fully accessible to all audiences, regardless of ability. This includes providing clear and descriptive alt text for all images, image descriptions for social media posts, and ensuring that all materials meet accessibility standards such as WCAG 2.1. Our commitment to accessibility extends to all elements of design, including color contrast, readable fonts, and the use of assistive technology-compatible formats.



ALT Text

When writing alternative text (alt text) for images, it's important to keep it simple and context-specific.

- **Describe like you're talking to a friend:** Keep it simple, clear, and relevant to the image.
- **Context matters:** Tailor the description based on your audience (e.g., technical details for experts, light for general readers).
- **Be concise:** Provide essential details, avoid unnecessary descriptions.
- **No need to say "Image of":** Screen readers already identify it as an image.
- **Punctuation is key:** Use proper punctuation to guide the screen reader.
- **Include race if relevant:** Describing race can help avoid unintentional bias.
- **Not all images are decorative:** Ensure the image doesn't contain important information before omitting alt text.

ASL Translations

When translating American Sign Language (ASL) to spoken or written English, it is important to ensure the translation is complete and accurately conveys the intended message. Here are the key steps to follow:

Add Missing Words:

- Carefully review the ASL-to-English translation to identify any missing words or phrases.
- ASL often omits articles (a, an, the), prepositions, and auxiliary verbs which are essential in English for clarity and grammatical correctness.
- Ensure that all necessary words are included to make the sentence complete and coherent.

Maintain Meaning and Context:

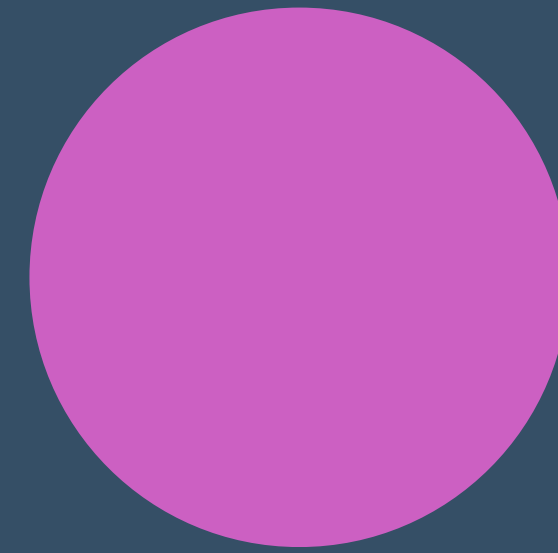
- Ensure that the added words do not alter the original meaning or context of the message.
- Preserve the intent, nuances and cultural differences of the ASL message while adapting it to proper English grammar and syntax.

Example:

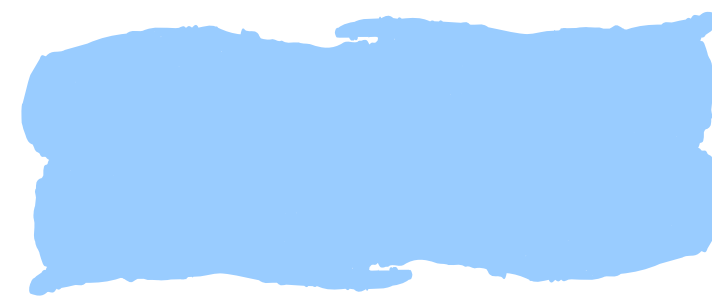
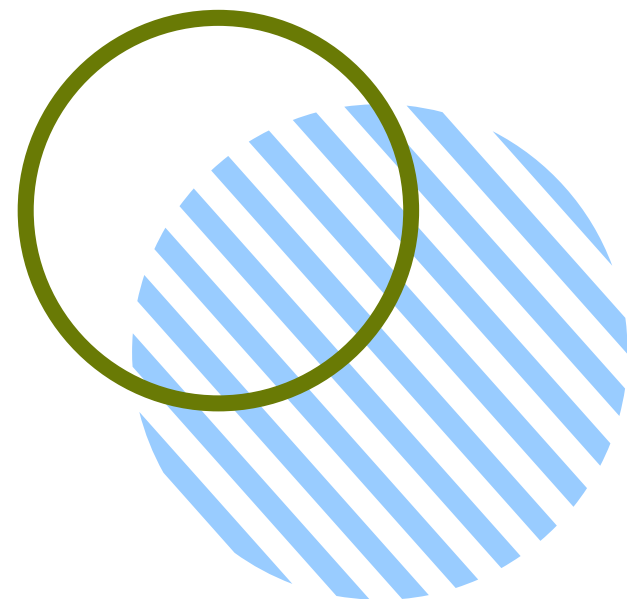
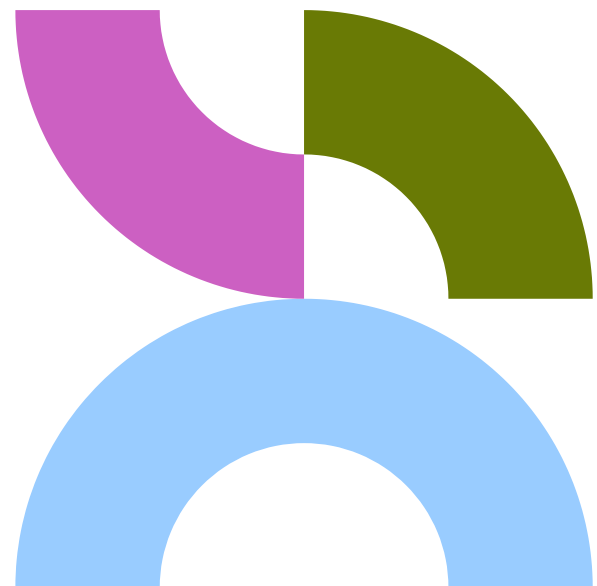
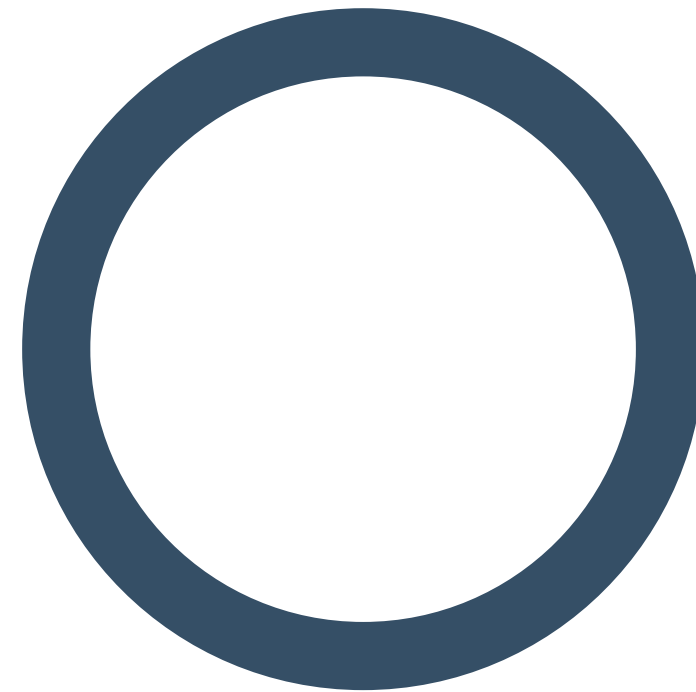
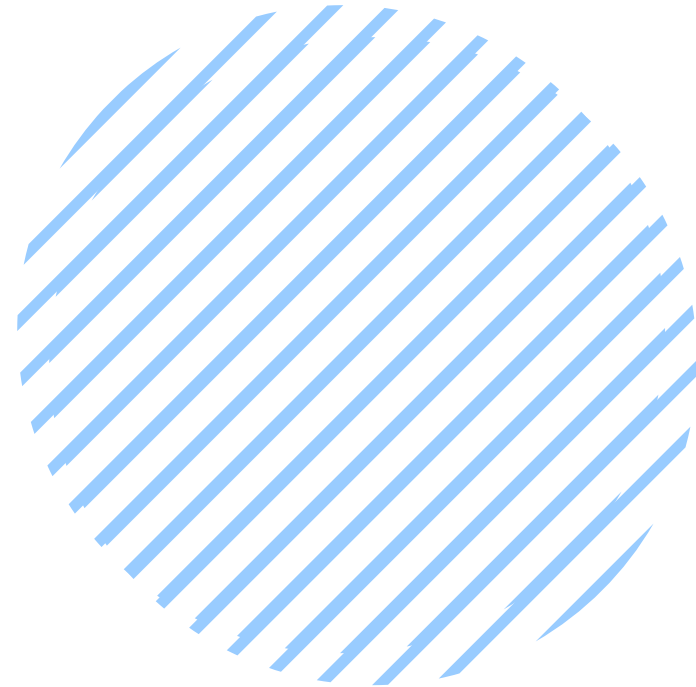
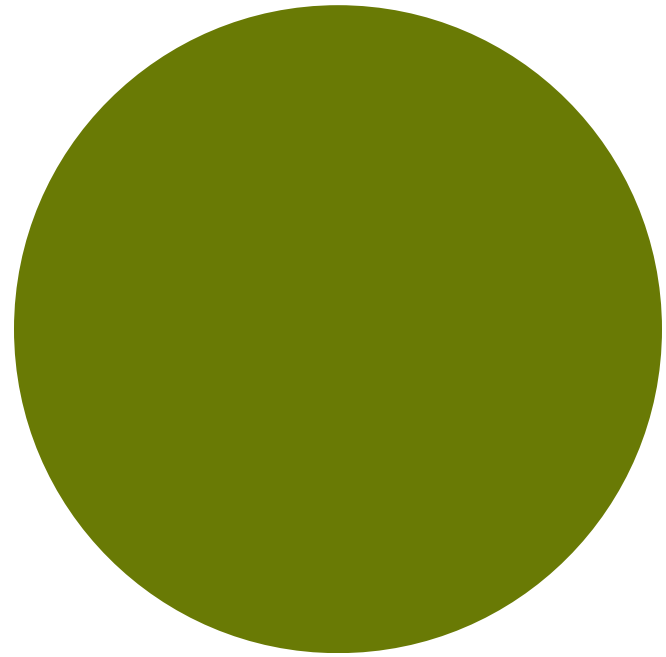
- ASL: "Student go library"
- Edited Translation: "The student is going to the library."
- By carefully editing ASL-to-English translations, it ensures that the final communication is accurate, respectful, and understandable to all audiences.

Design Elements

The design elements of the National Disability Center for Student Success are crafted to convey professionalism, inclusivity, and clarity. Every visual component—from layout to icons—serves to support the Center’s mission of accessibility. Simplicity, legibility, and consistency are at the core of the Center’s design philosophy. Design elements are carefully considered to make content easy to navigate, emphasizing both functionality and aesthetic appeal. These elements work together to create a welcoming and inclusive experience for all users, reflecting dedication to accessible education.



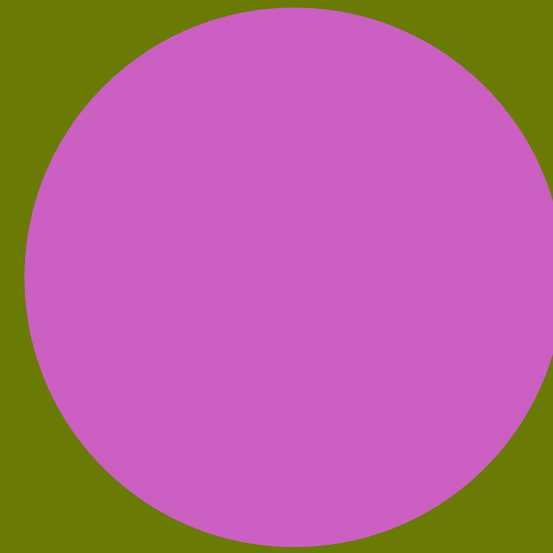
Design Elements



Templates

Consistency is key in every communication. The Center's toolkit provides essential templates for reports, presentations, social media, and more, ensuring that every message aligns with our brand identity.

These templates streamline the creation of branded materials while maintaining a professional and cohesive look across all platforms.



Do's and Don'ts

✓ Do

Use Official Color Palette

Ensure you use the brand's specified colors in all assets.

✓ Do

Typography Consistency

Use the specified fonts and styles in the brand guidelines for all written communications.

✓ Do

Follow Imagery Style

Use photography and illustrations that match the brand's aesthetic.

✓ Do

Consistent Messaging

Ensure the message delivered is aligned with brand values.

✗ Don't

Modify the Logo

Do not alter, distort, or change the logo colors without permission.

✗ Don't

Misuse Design Elements

Avoid using the brand's graphic elements in a way that is not consistent with the guidelines.

✗ Don't

Inappropriate Color Usage

Do not use colors that are not included in the brand's official palette for brand representation.

✗ Don't

Conflicting Messages

Avoid communications that contradict or obscure our brand message.

Legal Disclaimer Usage

© 2024 National Disability Center for Student Success. This document was developed with grant #R324C230008 from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). However, its contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the IES or the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government. Project Officer: Akilah Swinton Nelson, PhD.

NOTE: The term “document” can be replaced with type (i.e. website).

Citations and References

Follow APA for general research citations and legal citation standards for acts and regulations.

- **APA Format for Research Publications**

- Author Last Name, First Initial(s). (Year). Title of Work. Institution, Location. Funding or Grant Information (if applicable).

- **Example:**

- Mata, R.A. & Borrego, M. (2024). Disabled Students in U.S. Postsecondary Education. National Disability Center for Student Success, The University of Texas at Austin. Funded by IES Cooperative Agreement #R324C230008.

- **Legal Citation Format**

- Act Name, Statute (Year).

- **Example:**

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 USC § 12131-12134 (1990).



Flyers



National Disability Center
for Student Success

**WE ARE
HIRING**

**JOIN OUR
TEAM**

- Paid Student Fellow position for UT Austin Sophomores and Juniors
- All majors welcomed
- Work at an innovative disability research center
- No research experience required

Apply by Sep. 30th



National Disability Center
for Student Success

**WE'RE
HIRING!**

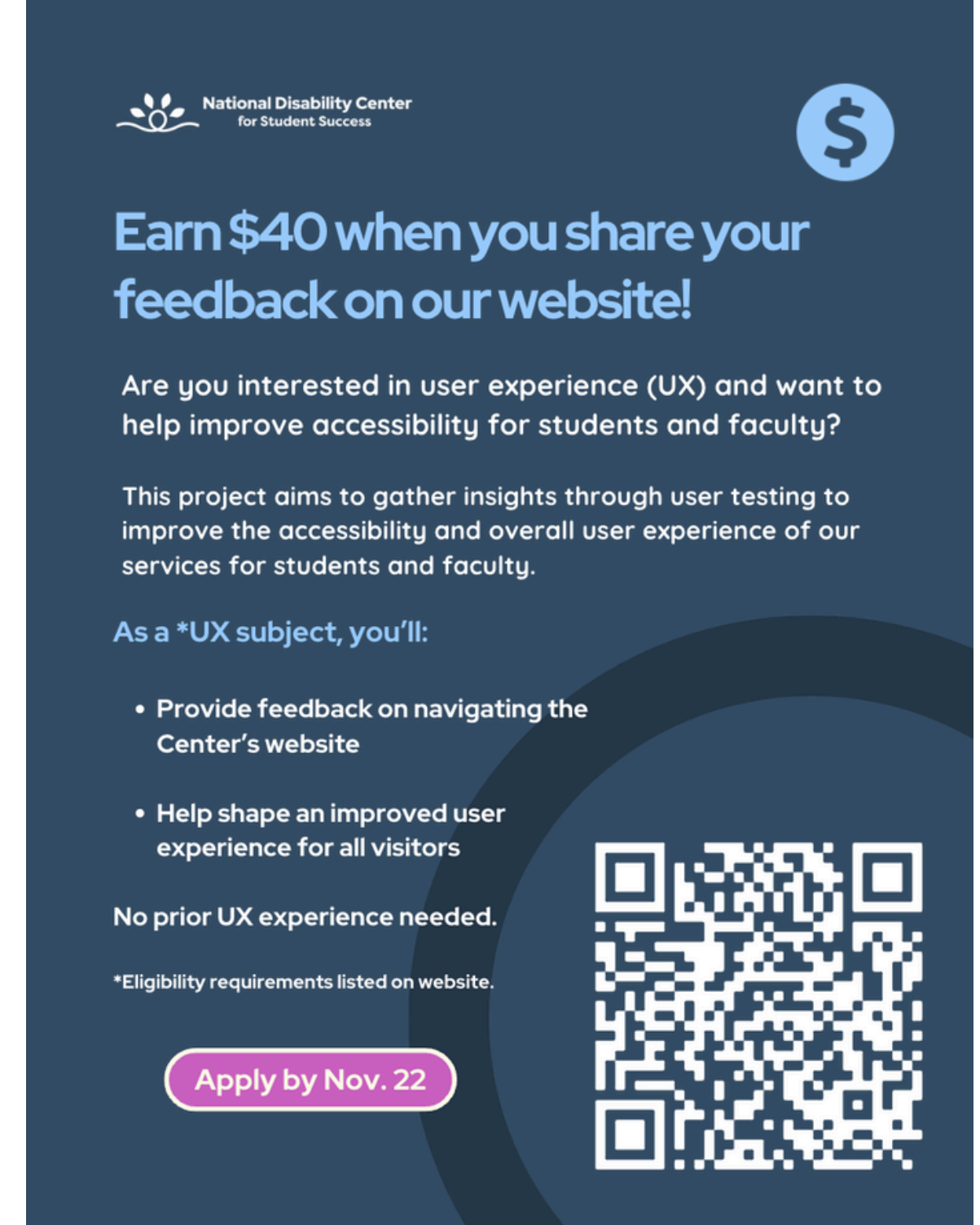
Are you a sophomore or junior? Join an innovative research center in the field of disability.

2 Student Fellows needed. Paid position. All majors welcomed. No research experience required.

Why Join Us?

- Build connections with students and professionals across UT Austin.
- Explore a future in research or academia.
- Contribute to improving outcomes for disabled students.

Apply by Sep. 30th



National Disability Center
for Student Success

**Earn \$40 when you share your
feedback on our website!**

Are you interested in user experience (UX) and want to help improve accessibility for students and faculty?

This project aims to gather insights through user testing to improve the accessibility and overall user experience of our services for students and faculty.



As a *UX subject, you'll:

- Provide feedback on navigating the Center's website
- Help shape an improved user experience for all visitors

No prior UX experience needed.

*Eligibility requirements listed on website.

Apply by Nov. 22



Research Reviews


Research Review
Disabled Students in U.S. Postsecondary Education
Published: July 30, 2024

Contributors

Ryan A. Hays, MA Doctoral Research Affiliate The University of Texas at Austin	Maura Borrage, PhD Faculty Cadre Member E. P. School Professor in Engineering Professor in Mechanical Engineering and STEM Education The University of Texas at Austin
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1

Rising Enrollment, Yet Achievement Gaps Persist

More disabled students than ever are enrolled in postsecondary education.

- Having made strides through federal legislation, enrollment has steadily grown to more than quadruple past rates. (1,2,3,4)
- Non-apparent disabilities such as mental health conditions and attention deficit disorders are skyrocketing categories. (5)

Yet their graduation and employment rates are lower.

- Students with disabilities graduated from college at lower rates than those without disabilities. (5)
- Those who did graduate were less likely to be employed full-time than peers without disabilities. (5)

2

The Undercount: A Lack of Disclosure and Awareness

The numbers don't add up.

- As of 2019, there are reportedly more than three million disabled students across U.S. postsecondary education, making up nearly 21% of all students in higher education and about 20% of all four-year college students.

21%

Disabled Students in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions

- However, the CDC estimates that one in four U.S. adults has at least one disability – an estimate that would equate to over 4 million disabled students. (7)

3


Up to
1 in 4
(or 27 percent) of adults over the age of 18 have at least one type of disability

The CDC estimate means
4M+
college students in the U.S. have a disability
(more than the population of the entire city of Los Angeles)

4

Students aren't disclosing their disabilities (or don't know they have one).

- Disability disclosure happens in both formal and informal ways, whether they have registered for accommodations or not, such as coordinating their learning needs with instructors or TAs and talking with classmates and other peers on campus.
- Only about half of students with disabilities disclose to their institution's disability services office. (12)
- For some postsecondary students, their disability isn't identified until college – either with an official diagnosis or the realization their existing health or mental condition is a disability and qualifies for accommodations.

“Disabled students can benefit from additional support beyond legal compliance, including from initiatives aiming to improve engagement and belonging and protect against dropout.” (18,23)

5

There are hidden costs of disclosure.

- The bias against disabilities holds a lot of people back from disclosure, including discomfort sharing with peers due to fears of social stigmas or being met with disrespect. (11)
- Disabled students want to avoid embarrassment, being seen or treated differently, or simply don't find disclosure necessary or relevant to their studies. (12)

Persistence and the Path to Graduation

A disabled student enrolls. Now what?

- Typical barriers to higher education include transitioning from secondary school, navigating campus, and registering for academic accommodations. (4,19,20,21,22)
- The good news: Census data reflects that between 2008 and 2021, degree achievement doubled from about 10% to 20% of all disabled adults aged 25-34. (15)

2008 10%
2021 20%

6

- However, persistence and program completion rates have only seen modest increases that routinely trail national averages and rates of non-disabled counterparts. (14)

Support resources can make a difference.

- Disabled students are more likely to stay in college after seeking and receiving campus support resources, including those universally available to all students and that do not require disability disclosure. (15)
- Some support is provided through special programs for disabled students, but most resources are a patchwork of accommodations for regular and typically inaccessible classroom experiences (and aren't usually available for non-classroom experiences on campus).
- Few students use the same accommodations in college as they did in high school. (16) Furthermore, the process for receiving accommodations is much different in college, and due to FERPA, parents cannot assist as they may have in secondary settings.

7

Tips and Strategies for Institutions

- Understand your legal requirements.**
More than one law supports disabled students' success in higher education – including Section 508's legal requirements for digital content accessibility.
- Take an asset-based approach.**
Disability is not the problem; an inaccessible system is the problem. Disabled students are not less than or lacking, and many statistics that compare outcomes about them use a deficit model.
- Supports and resources work.**
With proper support, resources, and accommodations from their institutions, faculty, and peers, disabled students can persist through their studies and complete their degrees.
- Make support universal.**
Design campus support resources that are universally available to all students and do not require disability disclosure. Be flexible and proactive with accommodation requests.
- Access is more than accommodations.**
Embrace a culture of inclusion by providing forms of support that extend beyond legal compliance offices on campus, to include initiatives that aim to bolster student engagement and belonging. (17,18)

8

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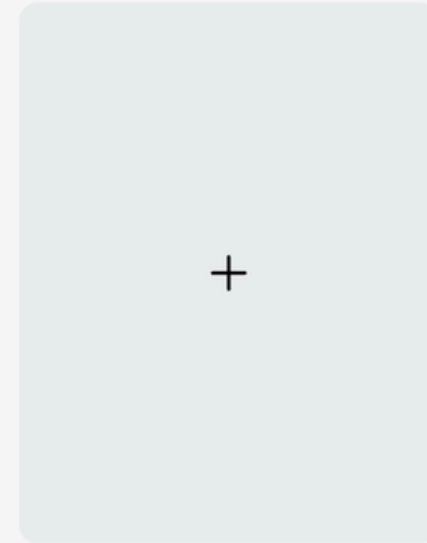
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Campus Studies

Campus Accessibility Spotlight Series

Digital Content Accessibility

Published: July 30, 2024



Institutional Innovation: Ally Accessibility Platform

The Ally Accessibility Platform on The University of Texas at Austin is an accessibility plugin for its learning management system (LMS), Canvas. Visit for course content delivery and student-faculty interaction, LMS accessibility is crucial for inclusive learning environments — and legally required for compliance with federal law.

1

Some Pain Points

- It's a massive undertaking. Digital content accessibility includes online learning platforms and digital documents, websites, and digital applications used to support student-facing support services.
- Compliance is legally required. Any institution with federal grants or scholarships must comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Other pain points in higher ed exacerbate it, in particular institutional silos of resources, funding, and accessibility initiatives.
- It is pervasive. Today, learning is driven by digital assets and platforms — even in-person learning — and online learning platforms are largely inaccessible.
- Band-aids don't work. Remediation and intervention efforts are reactive and expensive.

2

Meet the People

Ally initiative leaders were extensively interviewed by the National Disability Center about their work since 2022 to raise expectations, create tools, and build the internal infrastructure to support digital content accessibility at a large public university. Those leaders interviewed were:

Mario Guerra
Director of Longhorn Technology Experience
Information Technology Services

Role: Deliver technology solutions and services that enable all members of the UT Austin community to learn, teach, connect, and flourish; understand and address the diverse needs of users; and ensure everyone has a seamless and equitable IT experience.

Jeff Freels, PhD
Director of Academic Policy & Research |
Academic Affairs

Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

Role: Academic policy, digital learning, and applied research in almost every area of UT Austin's academic enterprise. This includes accreditation, curriculum planning and practices, learning assessment and analytics, digital accessibility, and student success.

3

Implementation Steps and Milestones

- Collaborative dialog** | Determine how to both comply with legal accessibility requirements and create a vision for accessible online learning experiences.
- Procurement and installation** | Acquire Ally by Blackboard, which reverts the accessibility of all online digital content within each course instance and generates multiple formats for course content, such as speech-to-text, language-translated items, etc.
- Complete initial pilot and campus launch** | Ensure Ally will successfully embed within the LMS.
- Learn pain points and opportunities** | The pilot included data collection from a set of faculty to learn their pain points and opportunities afforded by Ally and the technical support team.
- Tap strategic partners** | This included the National Disability Center, which consulted through the onramp and extension of digital content accessibility initiatives, providing both technical expertise and data from campus students about both accessibility strengths and concerns.
- Full implementation** | Ally was fully implemented in the 2023-24 academic year.

4

By The Numbers

500k PDFs and other files in Canvas per semester (on average)

60-70% Files were moderately inaccessible when Ally was adopted

14% Improvement in accessibility scores after the first year

Fresh Insights

PDFs, tags, headers, and alt text caused the biggest barriers during our implementation.

The Ally Team

The appetite for big budget top-down initiatives is limited. This is not something that is being led top-down. It is middle management led. It is the kind of change that must happen in an organic, deliberate way — over the course of years until the opportunity is there for top-down leadership.

Jeff Freels

5

Providing an inclusive digital experience gives all students more opportunities. It levels the playing field. It provides more ways for students to access their learning all the time without needing accommodation or the intervention of another person.

Mario Guerra

Creating a Culture of Accessibility on Campus

- Joint leadership from within academic technology, disability services, and institutional research spearheaded efforts to significantly improve campus digital accessibility.
- A shift in organizational structure opened opportunities for rebalancing staff and taking a systematic approach.
- Alignment with multiple offices that touch upon disabled student experiences, including the disability student service offices, libraries, and faculty development.
- Leveraged peer college relationships and experiences for advice on the best ways to pilot and implement Ally fully on campus.
- Expanding the initial pilot of Ally within Canvas to fully roll out and immediately support faculty in improving the accessibility of their course materials.
- Questions about accessibility are now an option available to faculty as part of their item selection for student course evaluations.

6

Future Vision: What's Next for Ally

- Establishing a centralized administrative home for all Digital Accessibility after leadership approves the proposed structure and funding. This will bolster the specialized accommodations provided by Disability Services for ADA compliance to include captioning, PDF remediation, and other support for online content.
- Hiring the new position of Digital Accessibility Manager.
- Creating an interdisciplinary advising team comprised of disabled students, teaching faculty, program leadership, and those responsible for student success initiatives. This team will review and provide critical insights on both the strategic and tactical work of improving digital content accessibility.
- Exploring further faculty's needs for technical and instructional support.
- Collecting more data, insights, and perspectives to explore student experiences with online digital content and capture the potential benefits of accessible resources for all students, including those with and without identified and disclosed disabilities.
- Collaborating with computer sciences students to conduct usability testing on different versions of accessibility design. One idea: A scavenger hunt to find and understand things under different conditions, to see how long it takes students and what their comprehension is.

7

• Moving toward student autonomy, agency, and learning as key motivations for digital content accessibility.

An Unexpected Revelation

The Ally team realized that bad online design is related to low student performance. Take the example of Canvas pages. Either very few (0-3 pages) or very many (more than 500 pages in some cases) correlated with lower retention and a higher frequency of D and F grades. It is looking forward to joint testing of this insight with accessibility and overall learning design research questions.

8

Strategies For Success on Your Campus

- Understand legal compliance for digital access.**
This is not just about websites, especially in light of new U.S. Department of Justice regulations published in 2024. This checklist can help your team determine the scope of Section 508 and the many technologies it covers.
- Go above and beyond requirements.**
This effort is about more than the law, though. It requires a cultural shift toward awareness of the accessibility needs of all students and instructors. Section 508 and the ADA are the floor — not the ceiling — for true access and inclusion.
- Be a leader in breaking down barriers.**
Change begins with conversational. Start conversations throughout campus and begin to break down departmental silos.
- Find accessibility partners.**
Find strategic partners at your institution and beyond.
- Find employees who are passionate about accessibility.**
Make connections. Faculty/staff champions and advocates are essential. Help instructors understand that accessibility is a journey and there is no quick fix.
- Find employees who are passionate about accessibility.**
Make connections. Faculty/staff champions and advocates are essential. Help instructors understand that accessibility is a journey and there is no quick fix.

9

6. Take it one step at a time.
This is a step-by-step process. It does not have to be everything all at once, but it has to start somewhere.

7. Put yourself in student shoes.
Students' entire experiences are primarily digital.

- How can we focus on individual needs in that space?
- How can we support them in their self-sufficiency so that they do not need to make formal requests to remediate and implement content?
- How can we make digital accessibility more proactive through both the tools and a change in the institution's culture?

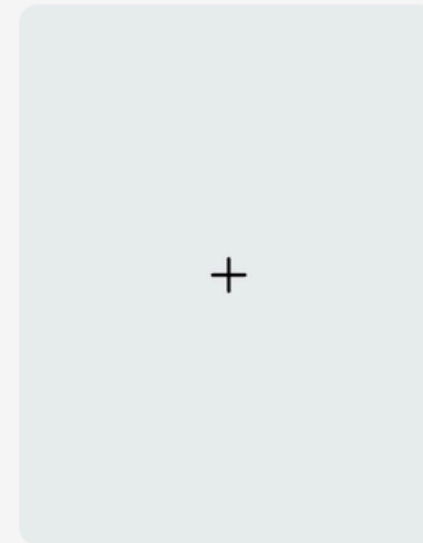
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Banners



Emails


- <https://nationaldisabilitycenter.org/newsletter-archive/>



Last Chance to Register!

Our First Educational Webcast

October 15, 2024 | 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. CT | Zoom



Disability on Campus: The Latest Findings Higher Ed Needs to Know

Discover critical research on disabled students and how it impacts your campus.


Topics Covered:

- Defining disability and its prevalence in higher education
- Dispelling myths about disability disclosure
- Exploring accessibility and student entry points
- Identifying your call to action



Your Webcast Instructor:
Dr. Stephanie W. Cawthon
Executive Director, National Disability Center

REGISTER NOW

As always, all events include ASL interpretation, live captioning, and follow [our accessibility best practices](#).



[View this email in your browser](#)




News

Sneak Peek: Online Townhall | Sep 26

Don't miss our upcoming [national Townhall](#) on Zoom Thursday, September 26th, 3-4pm (Central Time):

- **Meet your panelists:** Dr. Stephanie Cawthon, Executive Director of the National Disability Center; Ryan A. Mata, MA, Doctoral Research Affiliate; and Dr. Maura Borrego, Faculty Cadre.
- **Get the inside scoop:** That includes deep dive into our new research review "Disabled Students in U.S. Postsecondary Education" with its researchers.
- **Request your accommodations:** We'll email a detailed agenda to Townhall registrants the day before the event, plus we will have ASL interpreters, CART live-captioning, and Zoom's screen reader support (and other [accessibility features](#)). Do you need anything else? Just [let us know!](#)

Register Now



Communications Network Spotlight

Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD)

Communications Network Member AHEAD shared this heads-up about the Workforce Recruitment Program — a terrific program for disability service providers and administrators in higher ed.

Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)

The WRP is for college students, graduate students, and recent graduates with disabilities to hone their resume-writing skills, engage in a one-on-one informational interview with a federal recruiter, and make their application and resume available for one year to more than 4,000 federal employers nationwide.

Learn More

What's Upcoming?

Fall Webcast: Mark your calendars for this excellent learning opportunity about disability in postsecondary education | October 15th

Powerpoint Templates

The image displays 28 numbered PowerPoint slide templates arranged in a 4x7 grid. Each template is a rectangular slide with a distinct color palette and layout. The templates are numbered 1 through 28. Template 1 is the title slide for 'More Than Accommodations' and includes the National Disability Center logo and presenter information. Templates 2-7 show various combinations of text and background colors. Templates 8-14 feature headings and lists of items. Templates 15-17 include headings, lists, and optional icons. Templates 18-19 use text and icons in a grid format. Templates 20-21 show slide headings, subheads, and text with icons. Templates 22-24 are more complex, featuring slide headings, subheads, and multiple columns of text with icons. Templates 25-28 show text with icons in various arrangements, including three icons in a row.

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Powerpoint Templates

1 **Disability on Campus: The Latest Findings Higher Ed Needs to Know**
Presented by Professor of Courses

2 **Before We Start**
What is a webinar?
Recorded Course
Please Post Questions
Accessibility

3 **Course Outline**
Defining disability and its prevalence
Disabling myths, including about disability disclosure
Exploring accessibility at all student entry points
Pleading your case to action

4 **About the Instructor**
Stephanie W. Carroll, PhD
Professor and Student Advisor
Director of the Center for Disability & Inclusion
Department of Educational Psychology
The University of Texas at Austin
Co-Director, National Disability Center for Student Success
Healthcare Access: The Most Form of Accessibility in Extracurricular Life

5 **Who are disabled students on your campus or in your program?**

6 **Enrollment Data**
21%
Disabled Students in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institution

7 **An Increase Overtime**
2008: 10%
2021: 20%
The good news: Census 2020 reflects that between 2008 and 2021, higher enrollment increased from about 10% to 20% of an enrolled adult aged 18-24 (17).

8 **Updated Enrollment Data**
44.7%
Disabled Students in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institution

9 **21%**
Disabled Students in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institution were reported in 2019
44.7
Disabled Students in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institution were reported in 2024

10 **SLIDE: 1+, 2+, 3+ FROM RYAN GRAPHIC (will be updated - Coming by October 8)**

11 **What we know about disability is directly related to how and when students disclose.**

12 **What Disabled College Students Say About Disclosure**
65% Disclose to friends
57.5% Disclose to instructors
55% Disclose to their college

13 **When I first came to college, I did not know that my mental health disorder was considered a disability. I also had no idea that I was able to qualify for accommodations. They have helped me out tremendously with my coursework.**
-Undergraduate Student

14 **Disabled student experiences are not one-size-fits-all.**

15 **What Disabled College Students Say About Disclosure**

16 **How accessible is your campus or program?**

17 **Quote from Interviews**
- Disabled Student Name

18 **Quote from Interviews**
- Disabled Student Name

19 **Quote from Interviews**
-Andrew Dillon, PhD
Director of Research, Dissemination and Co-Investigator

20 **Think about accessibility and key student entry points.**

21 **Unfortunately, my college doesn't really provide access for student club meetings. Sometimes there's a person who is willing to just write notes and explain what's going on. The university sometimes does not provide the meeting support that the student organization pays them for.**
- Disabled Student Name

22 **6 Simple Ways to Take Action at Your Campus**
Consider: How accessible is your campus? How accessible is your program?
Identify: All essential strengths and opportunities for accessibility
Audit: Current accessibility and barriers for accessibility
Collaborate: Work with campus accessibility and disability organizations
Advocate: Advocate for accessibility in your campus
Support: Support accessibility in your campus
Monitor: Monitor accessibility in your campus
Evaluate: Evaluate accessibility in your campus

23 **Stay Connected**
Subscribe for Updates
Bookmark the Learning Hub
Join the Communications Network

24 **Share our Feedback!**
QR Code

25 **Thank You**

26 **Q&A**

27 **What is a webinar?**
What are some common questions?
Let's get started!

28 **Feedback**
QR Code

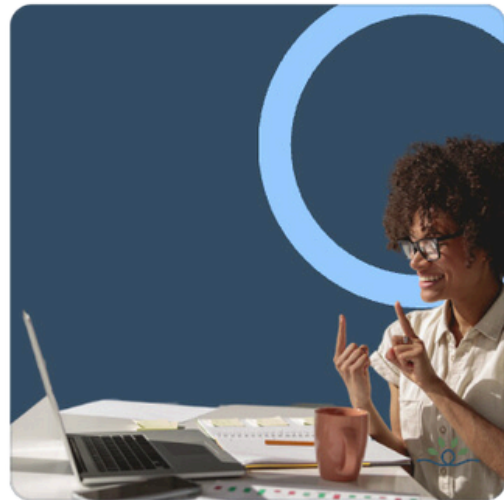
Social Media Platforms

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter (X)	LinkedIn	Pinterest	TikTok	YouTube
Profile photo	170 x 170 px	320 x 320 px	400 x 400 px	400 x 400 px	165 x 165 px	200 x 200 px	800 x 800 px
Cover	851 x 315 px	-	1500 x 1500 px	1128 x 191 px	800 x 450 px	-	2048 x 1152 px
Landscape	1200 x 630 px	1080 x 566 px	1600 x 900 px	1200 x 627 px	-	1920 x 1080 px	-
Square	1200 x 1200 px	1080 x 1080 px	1080 x 1080 px	1080 x 1080 px	1000 x 1000 px	-	-
Portrait	630 x 1200 px	1080 x 1350 px	-	627 x 1200 px	1000 x 1500 px	1080 x 1920 px	-
Stories	1080 x 1920 px	1080 x 1920 px	-	-	1080 x 1920 px	1080 x 1920 px	-
Video	1080 x 1920 px	1080 x 1920 px	1200 x 1900 px	Aspect ratio: 1:2.4 - 2.4:1	1080 x 1920 px	1080 x 1920 px	1280 x 720 px
Ads	1080 x 1080 px	1080 x 1080 px	800 x 800 px	1080 x 1920 px	1080 x 1920 px	1080 x 1920 px	1280 x 720 px

Social Media Templates (Static)



1 - CTA



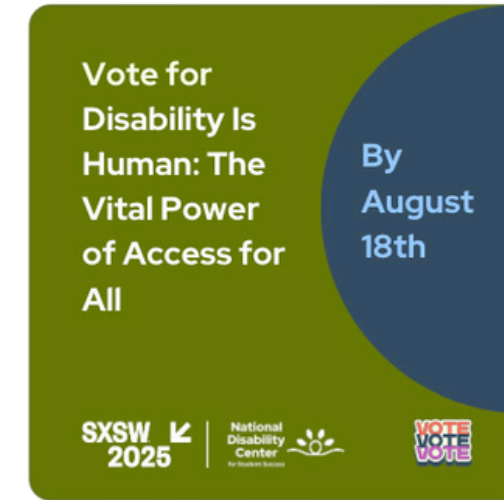
2 - Cut out Image Blue



3 - Cut out Image Green



4 - Image overlaid with ...



5 - Co-Brand



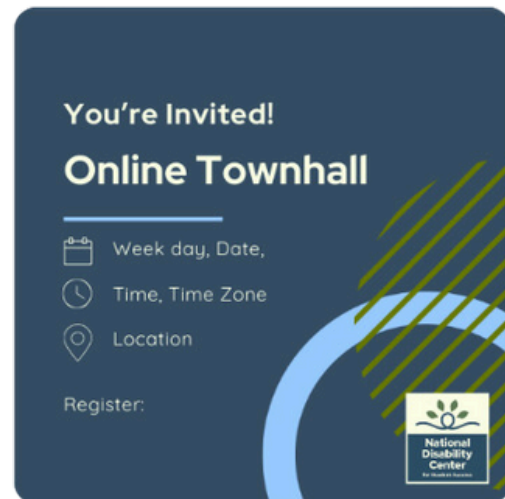
6 - Meet the People



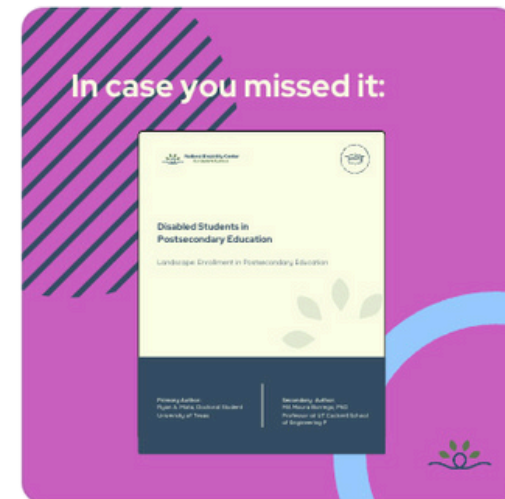
7 - Quote v1



8 - Quote v2



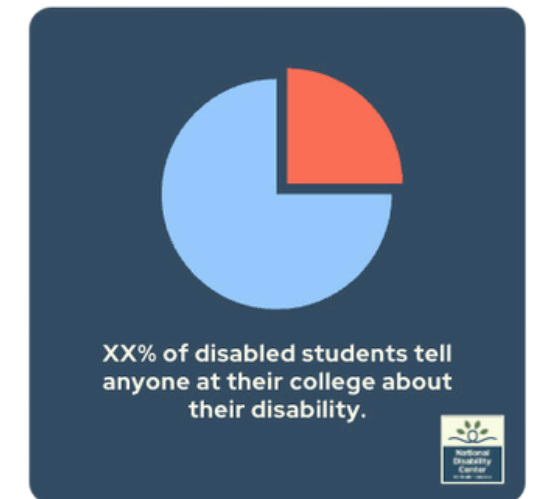
9 - Event



10 - Document



11 - Percentage

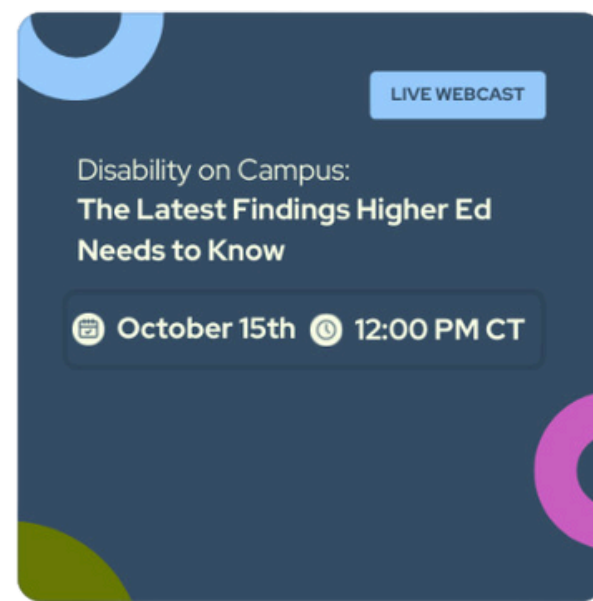


12 - Pie Chart

Social Media Template (Carousel)



🔒 1 - New page



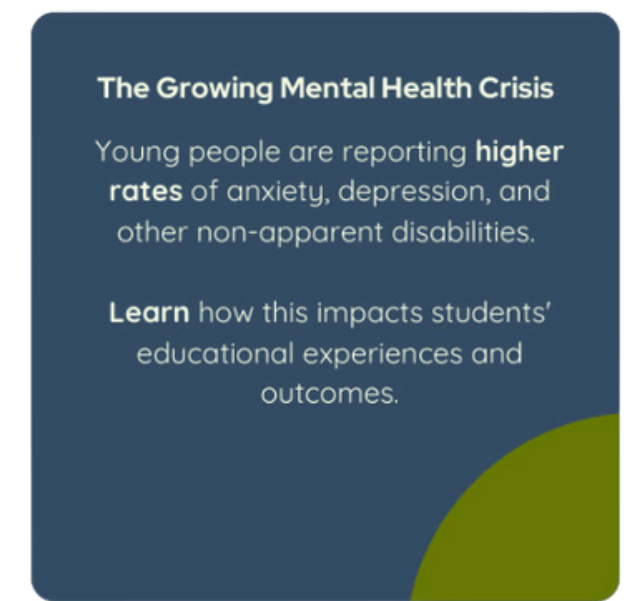
🔒 2



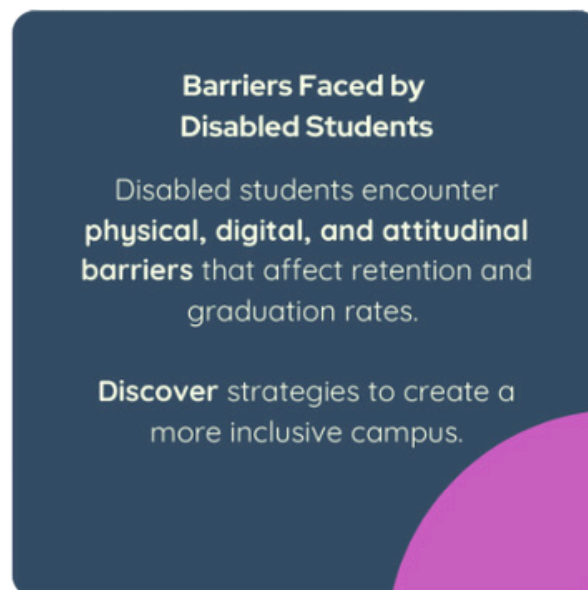
3



4



🔒 5

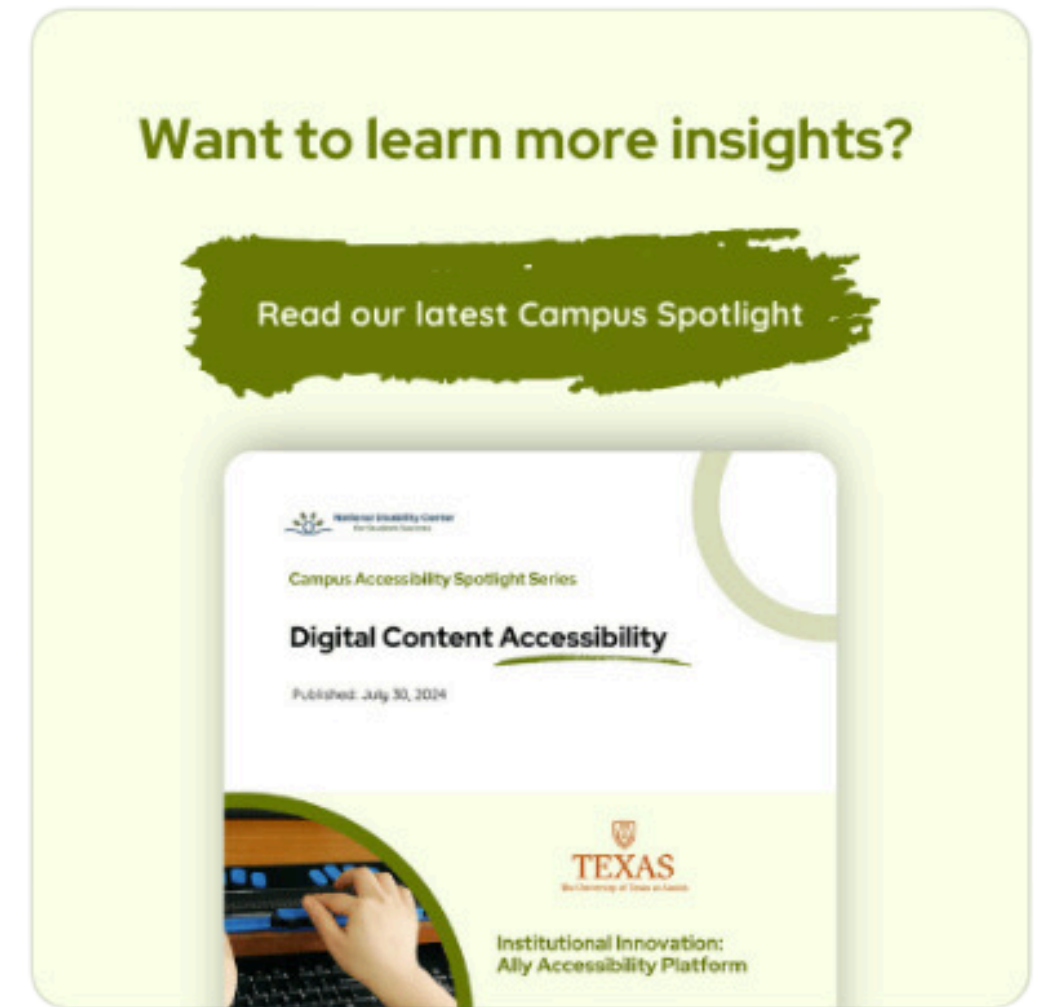
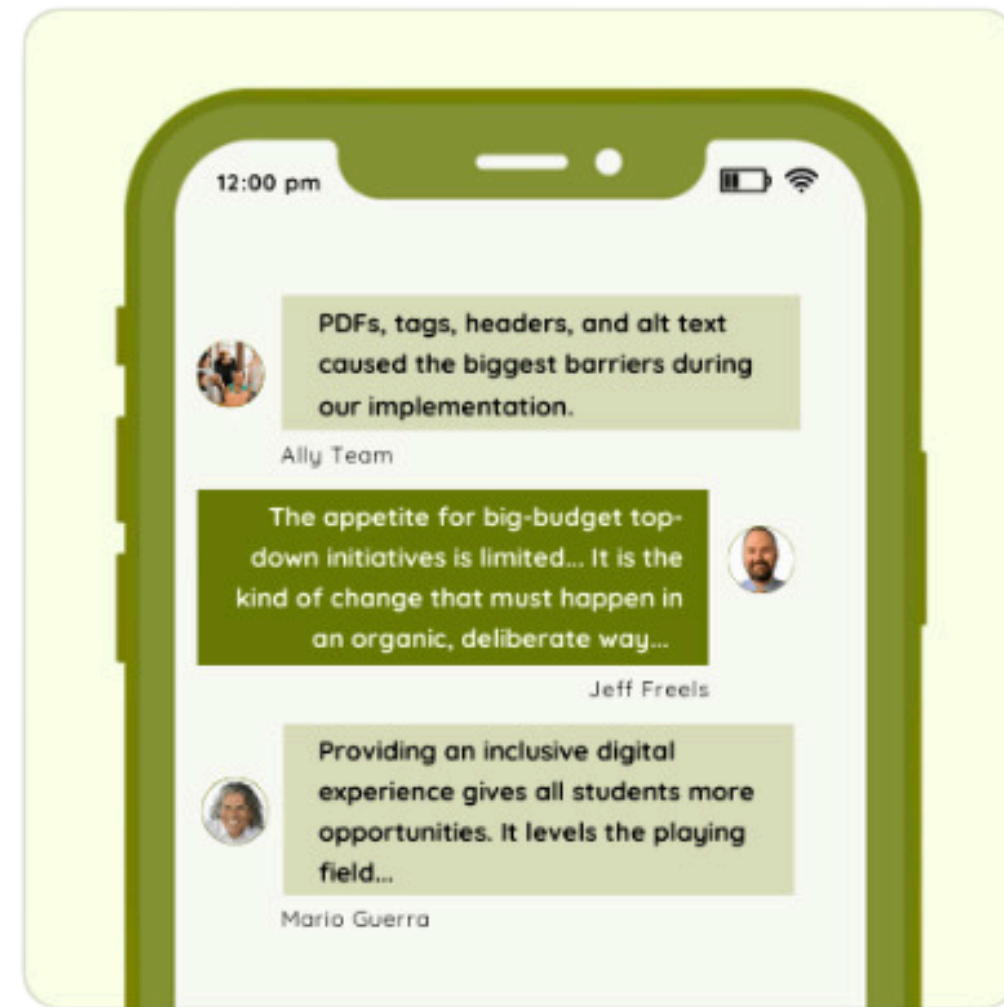


🔒 6 - New page



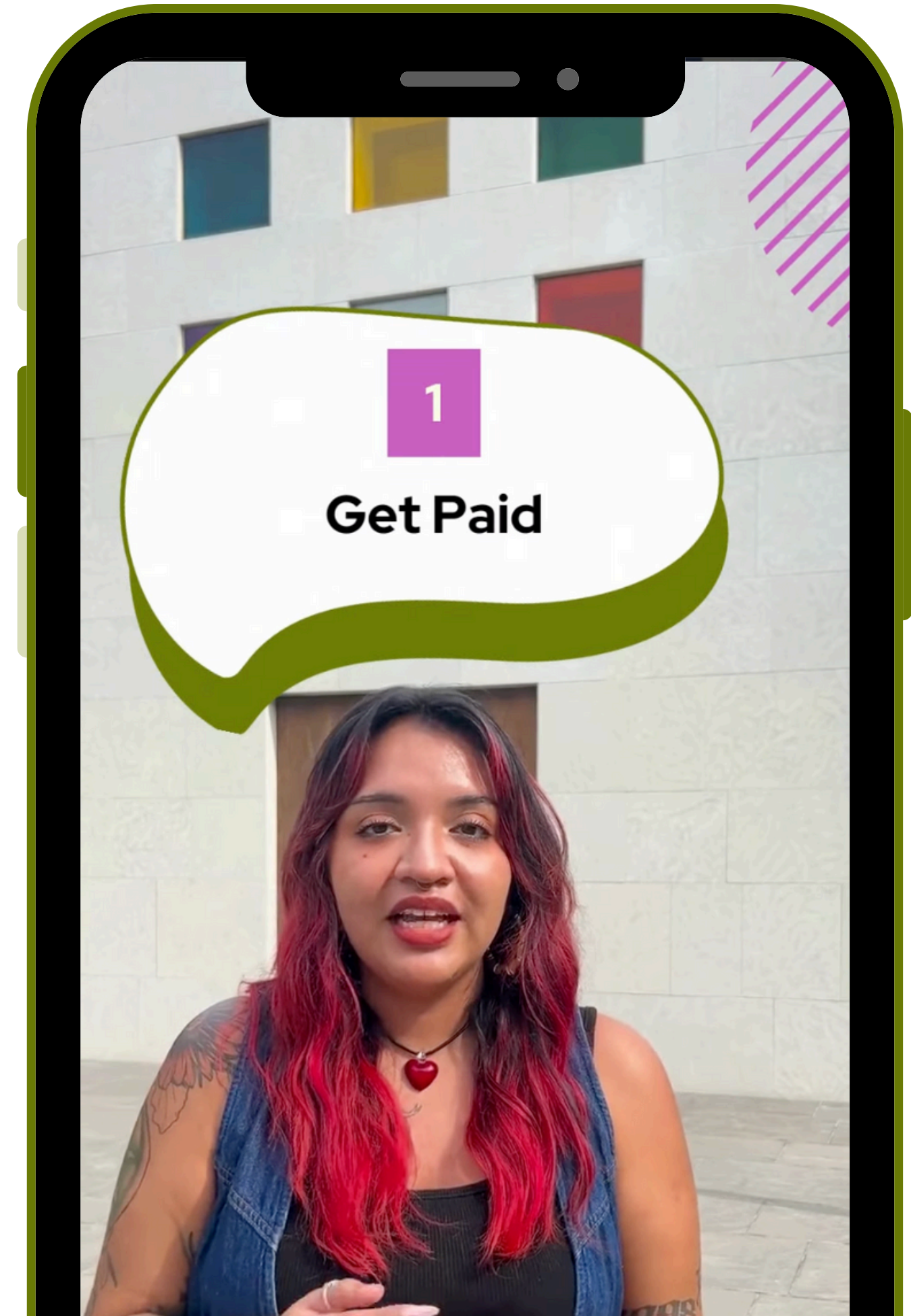
🔒 7 - New page

Social Media Template (Carousel)



Social Media Templates (Animated)

- https://www.instagram.com/reel/C_irl8NCJ8q/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D
- https://www.instagram.com/reel/DAWMt50P9NG/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link



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