December 6, 2000

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans and Directors

FROM: Melany S. Newb

RE: World Wide Web Accessibility Policy

In September, 2000, UW-Madison and UW System joined other presidents and chancellors of major public and private universities in a letter to President Clinton, supporting efforts to make information and communications technologies accessible to individuals with disabilities. Related to this, the attached UW-Madison World Wide Web Accessibility Policy was developed and adopted to guide Web activities on our campus in this regard. The purpose of the UW-Madison policy is to ensure that individuals with disabilities will have access to the increasing amount of Web-based material originating on our campus.

The policy has been reviewed and approved by the Campus Access Committee and tracks a similar policy expected to be issued by UW System. It requires that all campus Web sites launched after January 22, 2001 (the effective date of the policy) comply with the accessibility guidelines cited in the policy. The campus will have until January 22, 2002, to bring existing Web sites ("Legacy Pages") into compliance. The policy also sets forth a method for identifying portions of current Web sites to be brought into compliance as a priority, based on number of "hits" or specific requests for access.

A number of communications and technical assistance opportunities are planned that should help your unit bring its Web sites into compliance. An article in “Wisconsin Week” will describe the policy, the implementation schedule and available technical assistance. Beginning in December and running through Spring semester 2001, DoIT will offer training sessions on developing accessible instructional materials and Web sites, and will add an access component to its Web design courses. DoIT will also be coordinating brown bag sessions for campus webmasters, communicators and other information technology professionals. Detailed information on these sessions will be directed to specific campus groups.

The policy itself includes a resource section that identifies places and people where additional information and help are available. Your inquiries and requests for assistance are welcomed.

Vice Chancellor for Legal and Executive Affairs

Bascom Hall University of Wisconsin–Madison 500 Lincoln Drive Madison, Wisconsin 53706–1380
608/263-7400 FAX: 608/263-4725 TTY: 608/265-6716