Ten Tips for Inclusive Meetings

Sometimes inclusion means more than a welcoming smile. There are often practical issues involved to make sure that as many meeting attendees as possible can participate comfortably. This can include ensuring that people who have food allergies or religious requirements will find things they can eat, that Deaf and hard of hearing individuals will be able to enjoy videos, that nursing mothers know where to find lactation rooms, that signage will be widely understandable, and that anyone can find help when they need it.

The list below is intended as a starting point. Depending on the type of meeting you are planning and the attendees you are expecting, you may want to adjust or augment these ideas. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact the Office for Institutional Equity at oie.disability-accessibility@umich.edu.

1. **Scheduling.** Avoid conflicts with major cultural and religious holidays by consulting the Office of the Provost calendar. Avoid spaces with ongoing construction, new carpeting, or recently used chemicals by consulting with facilities managers.

2. **Accessible presentations**. Provide presenters with guidelines for making content accessible, including videos, PowerPoints, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) and/or American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, and handouts. Costs associated with providing such accommodations should not be passed on to the individuals or groups who have requested or are expected to use these services. Request that presenters start with a summary of what the presentation will cover.

3. **Event promotion**. Include information about proactive measures in all event advertising and invite participants to identify accommodation needs, including food allergies and chemical sensitivities, before the event via email or phone. Promote and advertise using a variety of media: email (including text format), social media, website, posters, flyers, etc.

4. **Restrooms**. Ensure availability of accessible and single stall restrooms and lactation areas by consulting campus lists of gender-inclusive restrooms and lactation rooms.

5. **Food and drink**. Provide a range of food that includes vegan/vegetarian, gluten free, healthy, and Kosher/Halal options, and ensure that these options and ingredients are clearly labeled in large print and either individually packaged or offered in a way that avoids cross-contamination. Serve non-alcoholic beverages in a similar style as alcoholic drinks. Provide water and make straws available.

6. **Personal assistance**. Designate staff who can offer individual assistance (with navigation, food, etc.). Identify them with nametags and encourage them to verbally offer

help. Ensure that emergency plans cover safety issues for people with disabilities.

7. **Offsite Participation**. If an event is being held off-campus, discuss inclusion issues with the venue managers, including emergency planning. For presentations, provide options for remote access, live streaming video and post-event recordings, including captions.

8. **Representation**. Include diverse representation (gender, ethnicity, etc.) when selecting speakers or panel members, and in images used for promotional materials.

9. **Transportation and navigation**. Provide transportation information that includes exact street addresses, distances and obstacles, directions for walking, car, or public transport, and information on accessible parking and entrances. Provide signage that includes graphics as well as text.

10. **Get help.** Contact the Office for Institutional Equity with any questions or concerns about staying in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act or other civil rights issues. Email: oie.disability-accessibility@umich.edu; phone: 734-763-0235.

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