

## **DRA FACT SHEET**

### **Settlement Agreement:**

Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) represented three UC Berkeley students with print disabilities who experienced barriers in receiving instructional materials in alternative formats. The students and DRA entered into structured negotiations with the University of California, Berkeley. The structured negotiations process is a collaborative problem-solving approach that does not involve litigation. The parties engaged joint experts to evaluate existing policies and conditions, and convened focus groups for print disabled students to voice their concerns. After over a year of joint effort, the parties reached the settlement agreement announced today.

### **Q: Why is this settlement important?**

**A:** Individuals with print disabilities cannot read standard print because of vision, physical, developmental, or learning disabilities and require materials in alternative formats. These formats include digital text, Braille, large print, or audio. Having instructional materials in alternative formats provides access for students with print disabilities the same way that ramps and elevators provide access to students who use wheelchairs.

### **Students with Print Disabilities in the United States:**

Of the nearly 19.2 million students enrolled in 2 and 4-year post-secondary institutions, approximately 1 out of every 10 students has some type of disability. Of that number, it is estimated that 5 to 10 percent, or 100,000 to 200,000, have a print disability that requires alternative media.

### **The new policies to improve information access for students with print disabilities include:**

- Students who request course materials in alternative media can now expect to receive textbooks in 10 business days and course readers in 17 business days.
- Portions of materials requested on an expedited basis will be provided with shorter turnaround times.
- The University has created and implemented a new Library print conversion system, the first of its kind in the nation, to enable students with print disabilities to request that a specific library book or journal be converted into an accessible digital format, with an average turnaround time of five business days.
- The University will undertake efforts to encourage instructors to identify the course readings well before the start of classes. When the instructors meet these deadlines,

print disabled students will now be able to obtain complete accessible versions of the materials at least three days before classes start.

- The University has now implemented a system to provide personal readers to students upon request when the student is unable to obtain the accessible version of print material in time to keep up with course assignments.
- Students can now get materials listed by a Professor as recommended reading converted into fully accessible materials.
- The University has implemented a variety of scanning machines to allow students to self-scan materials into a variety of accessible digital formats. The University has agreed to provide assistance to students with physical disabilities that preclude them from using self-scanning machines independently.
- The University also agreed to remedy existing barriers in its online library catalogue system so that students can access that system using their screen reader software programs.

#### **Federal Efforts to Address Access Needs:**

In 2008, a federal commission was established to look at the barriers students with print disabilities face nationwide in colleges and universities. This “Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) in Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities” concluded that comprehensive efforts are needed by colleges and universities nationwide to ensure access for students with print disabilities. Read the full report: <http://ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/aim/publications.html>

#### **Disability Rights Advocates:**

Disability Rights Advocates is a non-profit legal center which for twenty years has specialized in civil rights cases on behalf of people with disabilities. DRA litigates nationally and has offices in California and New York City.

#### **U.C. Berkeley Students:**

U.C. Berkeley students David Jaulus, Brandon King, and Tabitha Mancini participated in the settlement.