

Department of Biological Sciences

Meeting Minutes

Spring Department Meeting

Friday, April 13, 2026 | 1:00 PM (Zoom)

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

- The formal session began at 1:00 PM, with Gerald expressing appreciation for faculty attendance and acknowledging Steven Kolberg for sharing his time and expertise.
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2. Presentation: Accessibility in STEM Education

Presenter: *Steven Kolberg, Senior Coordinator of Accessibility & LMS Administration (OIT)*

2.1 Overview of AI Tools for Accessibility

- Steven introduced the **Boodle bot (“Alternative Format Helper”)**, an AI tool designed to generate accessible alternative text for scientific diagrams and images.
- Demonstrated how the tool processes images and PDFs to create descriptive alt text suitable for Canvas.
- Shared examples from STEM courses (e.g., chemistry lab equipment) illustrating how AI can describe diagrams without revealing assessment answers.
- Provided additional AI prompt resources developed by the University of Alabama, emphasizing that they are AI-agnostic and compatible with tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Microsoft Copilot.

2.2 Enhancing Accessibility of Educational Materials

- Reviewed best practices for:
 - Writing effective alt text for images.
 - Providing data tables alongside graphs for screen-reader accessibility.
 - Creating accessible chemical notation using alternative format helpers.
- Discussed strategies for handling complex alt text, including:
 - Linked slides for extended descriptions.
 - Accordion elements in Canvas for long descriptions.

- Addressed how to obtain accessible versions of publisher-created materials and how to manage accessibility issues in Yuja.
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3. Canvas Accessibility Requirements and Best Practices

3.1 Faculty Questions and Demonstrations

- Question about copying accessible images from textbooks into Canvas.
 - Steven demonstrated how to paste images while preserving alt text and noted that Canvas may sanitize or modify alt text.
- Question about citing alt text from Pearson materials.
 - Steven recommended including attribution when using third-party alt text.

3.2 Yuja Panorama and Accessibility Prioritization

- Steven explained how to use **Yuja Panorama** for accessibility scoring.
- Emphasized:
 - Focus on resolving **severe** and **major** issues first.
 - A perfect score is not required; the goal is functional accessibility.
- Recommended a **module-by-module remediation approach**, especially for upcoming summer courses.

3.3 Publisher Materials and PDF Accessibility

- Discussed challenges with publisher-provided PDFs.
- Recommended:
 - Requesting accessible versions directly from publisher representatives.
 - Using tools such as **BoodleBox**, **Word conversion**, or **OCR HTML in Yuja Doc Hub** when remediation is necessary.

3.4 Additional Canvas and Syllabus Requirements

- For images copied from publisher materials:
 - Ensure alt text is preserved or manually added.
 - Add attribution when using publisher-provided alt text.
- For YouTube videos:
 - Turn on and review closed captions for accuracy.

- If captions are inaccurate, use **Kaltura/My Media** to retranscribe or manually correct.
- For Simple Syllabus:
 - Tables must include a **header row** and a **caption** to meet accessibility requirements.

3.5 Links Shared by Steven Kolberg

1. Alternative Format Helper (Boodle AI)

<https://box.boodle.ai/a/@AlternativeFormatHelper>

2. FSW Accessibility Support – Service Request

<https://fsw.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/2031/Portal/Requests/ServiceDet?ID=54988>

3. Image Accessibility Generator (ASU Teach Online)

<https://teachonline.asu.edu/image-accessibility-generator/>

4. WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool (Browser Extension)

<https://wave.webaim.org/extension/>

5. Alternative Format Helper (Duplicate Link)

<https://box.boodle.ai/a/@AlternativeFormatHelper>

6. FSW Ticket Request Form

https://fsw.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/2031/Portal/Requests/TicketRequests/NewForm?ID=aKzC6tZHpAg_&RequestorType=Service

4. Next Steps and Action Items

All Faculty

- Contact publisher representatives to request accessible versions of PDFs and PowerPoints when needed.
- Unpublish future modules in summer courses if necessary; focus on remediating the first weeks of content before publishing.
- Remediate PDFs using recommended methods (BoodleBox, Word conversion, OCR HTML) and only post PDFs that can be made accessible.
- Ensure alt text is added or preserved when transferring images to Canvas; include attribution when using third-party alt text.
- Review and correct YouTube captions before using videos in course materials.

- Prioritize remediation of severe and major accessibility issues per Yuja Panorama reports.
- Ensure syllabus tables include a header row and caption.

Steven

- Continue refining the Alternative Format Helper (Boodle bot) and welcomes faculty feedback for improvement.
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5. Adjournment

- Gerald thanked all attendees for their engagement and expressed appreciation to Steven for his contributions.
 - Meeting adjourned at the conclusion of the discussion.
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Meeting Recording Link:

https://fsw.zoom.us/rec/share/Z46iJBRBFwq3CJXfd9movBDH3ANy_2ObogQcPPGYSlI2IjEnG5OB1fGfYdvyh3tB.3a6DyAmFTktZ88Bv?startTime=1773421414000

Passcode: 6!K?#cpg

Recorder: Dr. Gerald Anzalone, Department Chair