Inclusivity and Accessibility:
POD Conference Session Recommendations

In every POD session, there will be a wide range of individuals with similarities and differences that are both visible and invisible. The recommendations below are intended to benefit everyone.

General Tips

- Assume and address a diverse audience with multiple, intersecting identities, including differences in ability, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, position, and more.
- Utilize the principles of Universal Design for Learning (http://udlguidelines.cast.org/) and Universal Design (https://www.washington.edu/doit/universal-design-education-principles-and-applications) to increase access.
- Recognize that we all have implicit biases. Try to develop an awareness of your own and adjust for them accordingly (https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html).
- If you have any questions about inclusivity or accessibility, please email pod.diversity@gmail.com or contact one of the POD Diversity Committee representatives at the conference.

Use of Language

- Refer to participants by the terms they prefer, when possible.
- Honor dignity and autonomy (e.g., "a person who uses a wheelchair" rather than "a person confined to a wheelchair").
- Default to person-first language (e.g., "a woman who is blind" rather than "a blind woman"), unless otherwise informed.
- Be specific (e.g., "Dominicans" rather than "Hispanics").
- Consider the implications or effects of word choice for a diverse audience (e.g., "that was crazy" or "hey guys").
- Be transparent and provide context/rationale when you must use language that would otherwise seem ill-advised.
- Recognize that inclusive language is ever-evolving and context-dependent. Assume everyone has good intentions. Accept that you will make mistakes and acknowledge when you do!

Cultural Competence

- Provide a range of examples that reflect diverse backgrounds, cultures, identities, abilities, and perspectives.
- Be transparent about who is included in data… and who isn't. Identify the possible implications of those parameters.
- Use images, graphics, and visual aids that include people with disabilities as well as culturally and ethnically diverse groups.
- Avoid culturally specific idioms (e.g., "quit cold turkey").
- Indicate whether the resources highlighted in your presentation are available in different languages.

PowerPoint Presentations

- Download and follow this Accessibility PowerPoint (https://www.aucd.org/docs/annual_mtg_2008/accessibility_ppt_apha2007.ppt).
- Utilize graphics in conjunction with text only to enhance the meaning of your slide content.
- If graphics are included, add an explanation of their meaning in a subsequent text-only slide. The meaning of the graphic is what's important (e.g., "this chart shows…"), not a description of the graphic itself (e.g., "a chart with blue and red bars").
- Use WAVE (http://wave.webaim.org/) to ensure maximum accessibility of websites.

Spoken/Audio Presentations

- Have several printed copies of your presentation on hand. If sign language interpreters are in the room, give them a copy.
- Speak directly to conference attendees who are deaf or who have hearing impairments, not the interpreter(s).
- When presenting, be sure to describe any slides and graphics briefly (e.g., "this slide covers these three key points").
- Avoid using demonstrative pronouns (e.g., "this") on their own. Clarify meaning with specific nouns (e.g., "this map shows...").
- Use a microphone and ask others to do the same. Don't assume voices will carry or ask if everyone can hear. Speak directly into the microphone and avoid covering your mouth.
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace to give sign language interpreters or CART transcribers enough time to translate (https://www.nad.org/resources/technology/captioning-for-access/communication-access-realtime-translation/).

- When answering questions, repeat them for the entire group.
- If showing any videos, ensure closed captions are turned on.
- Provide a transcript of any videos shown, if possible.

Poster Presentations

- Keep the floor free from sharp objects or other obstructions.
- Bring a version (e.g., flash drive) of your poster in text-only or descriptive PowerPoint format to provide as needed.
- Offer to narrate your poster to participants.
- If you have a laptop with you, you can use voice output software or prepare a brief description of your poster.
- Follow the "Guidelines for Creating Accessible Printed Posters" (https://www.aucd.org/docs/annual_mtg_2008/accessibility_posters_gilson2007.pdf).

Handouts

- Use at least 12-point font size (18 for large-print copies).
- Write in a simple, sans-serif font (e.g., Verdana or Arial).
- Minimize the number of different fonts used.
- Avoid small caps, italics, or all caps.
- Left justify, avoid columns, and use 1-inch margins.
- Unless landscape orientation is necessary, use portrait.
- Make lines heavy/thick in charts and graphs.
- Use grayscale or high black/white contrast, rather than colors (especially green and red) for options or emphasis.
- Omit decorative graphics that do not add any meaning.
- Print on one side, 8.5" by 11" paper, stapled at the top left.

Additional Center Resources:

- Vanderbilt: Diversity & Inclusive Teaching (https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/diversity/)
- Cornell: Inclusive Teaching Strategies (https://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/building-inclusive-classrooms/inclusive-teaching-strategies.html)

Guidelines adapted from:

- Association of University Centers on Disability (https://www.aucd.org/conference/index.cfm/presenter-guidelines-accessibility--inclusion2016#handouts)

This evolving document has been compiled by POD Diversity Committee members Tricia Elam Walker (2014), Jennifer Stanton (2015–16), Riley Caldwell-O'Keefe (2016–17), and Emily Gravett (2018-present). Please contact Emily at graveteo@jmu.edu with any questions, concerns, or suggestions for improving this guide.