



FOREWORD

NO INSTITUTION can truly achieve greatness unless it recognizes and welcomes the full spectrum of human diversity—the vast range of identities, perspectives, strengths, and weaknesses, including people with disabilities. Inclusion cannot be an afterthought; it is foundational for excellence. However, all too frequently, the concepts of diversity and inclusion are held up as institutional values without a meaningful understanding or effective framework by which to make them more than mere slogans.

Even the most well-intentioned colleges and universities can struggle with how to adopt and operationalize policies and practices that fully enable everyone to be seen and heard and to participate. In this, the follow-up to her book *Universal Design in Higher Education: From Principles to Practice*, Sheryl Burgstahler offers a practical, step-by-step guide to put the principles of Universal Design in Higher Education (UDHE) into practice, sharing real-world applications that relate to the business of postsecondary teaching and learning in the United States.

Professor Burgstahler has been a pioneer of UDHE. Her simple yet radical approach has been to ask how courses, technologies, physical environments, systems, and whole institutions can be designed from the ground up to be accessible to people who may be blind, deaf, have mobility limitations, or are neurodiverse. Indeed, she has helped the world redefine and expand the definition of diversity to acknowledge that people with disabilities are and always have been a part of our human family. Through the UDHE lens that she presents, we can all begin to ask ourselves what it will take to construct a world that is as accessible as possible for as many people as possible. Through this lens,

future advances in technology and design will better serve all of us by creating environments that serve everyone.

Just as UDHE invites us to think broadly about how different people interact with the human-made world, Dr. Burgstahler also invites us to think broadly about who can play a role in creating accessibility and to see how nearly everyone involved in the educational ecosystem can be supportive of inclusive teaching and learning. This includes educators and student service providers, but it also includes IT support staff, parents, peers, and policy makers. In a work that covers everything from basic terminology to comprehensive systemic change, there is something for everyone who cares about inclusivity in higher education.

Through stories, examples, and first-person accounts, Dr. Burgstahler presents a pragmatic picture of how to take specific and realistic steps to make institutions more accessible and inclusive. The stories—especially from the people whose lives are most affected by increased accessibility—are a profound reminder that people with disabilities are not an abstraction. They are our colleagues, classmates, neighbors, friends, and family. They are entitled to share the spaces, systems, and technologies that we all rely on. And when those elements of daily life are not available to them, the result is injustice and a price that, ultimately, we all pay.

As the director of Accessible Technology Services (ATS), which includes the DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) Center at the University of Washington, Dr. Burgstahler is a national leader in empowering people with disabilities and promoting a cultural shift toward leveling the playing field for people with disabilities. Through her work, she has educated, advocated, and worked tirelessly to increase access to the classroom and workplace for people with disabilities. By applying the innovative strategies presented in this book, countless others will now have the opportunity to develop more inclusive practices at their own institutions.

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