



Washington State Student Services Commission

COVER MEMO

TO: WACTC Technology, Education Services, and Strategic Visioning Committees
FROM: Washington State Student Services Commission
DATE: 8 February 2018
RE: Concerns about accessibility of the ctcLink online admissions application

The Student Service Commission (WSSSC) supports the concerns raised by the Disability Support Services Council (DSSC) and the Admissions & Registration Council (ARC) pertaining to inaccessibility in the ctcLink online admissions application (OAA). In the attached letter, the councils raise multiple concerns, shared by WSSSC, pertaining to barriers to access posed by the OAA as it currently exists in ctcLink.

In its current form, the OAA does not meet the system, state, or federal policy requirements for accessibility for students (and employees) with disabilities. Further, it is limited in its ability to be presented in languages other than English, and has proven difficult to navigate; and we assume this difficulty will increase as more colleges go live with ctcLink.

Through its leadership, WACTC convened a workgroup to evaluate the language and phrasing of the OAA, specifically to address issues within the application that contradicted our stated commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. While the recommendations of that workgroup are now being implemented, they did not have the opportunity to conduct a broader assessment of how the application is constructed, presented, and used. **The concerns presented here and in the attached letter present similar threats to our equity, diversity, and inclusion work;** indeed, some students may miss the opportunity to benefit from the recent improvements because the application's current structure is a barrier to access.

WSSSC asks WACTC to determine a process for developing an accessible solution that meets our stated goals and obligations. While we agree with and support the councils' recommendation to seek an alternative solution through an RFP, we also recognize other solutions may exist.

It is valuable to note that at least one FirstLink college has already begun development of a "secondary application" through which it can collect information not included in the standard ctcLink OAA. We believe that a broader system solution will ultimately save each college and the system vital resources, help assure that all applications across the system meet accessibility standards, and actively affirm our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.