# **Committee on Accessible Technology Oversight (CATO) Charter**

Last reviewed and edited: 9/4/24

## First Approved:

## Purpose

The primary function of the [Committee on Accessible Technology Oversight](https://www.sbctc.edu/about/task-forces-work-groups/) is to develop and deliver recommendations for accessible technology and accessible IT policy, priorities, and tools to Washington State’s system of Community and Technical Colleges (CTC) and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Serving as a centralizing source of influence across the college system, CATO identifies critical accessible technology and accessible IT issues, needs, and initiatives in accordance with federal and state disability laws and policies pertinent to higher education.

CATO is a standing subcommittee of the [Strategic Technology Advisory Committee (STAC](https://www.sbctc.edu/about/task-forces-work-groups/stac/)), which serves as an advisory resource and coordinating body to the Washington Community and Technical Colleges presidents (WACTC) and to WACTC-Tech, the president’s Technology Committee.

## Authority and Decisions

CATO’s authority comes from the State Board and WACTC Tech through the Strategic Technology Advisory Committee, of which CATO is a standing subcommittee.

CATO provides leadership and system guidance to support the colleges and SBCTC to understand, evaluate, and address policy, legal, and equity issues related to providing equivalent and integrated access to college and system managed information technology for all college staff, students, and the public, especially people with disabilities.

The Committee is responsible for:

* Providing accessibility guidance, policy interpretation, and consultative support on system-wide accessible technology and IT procurement and implementation decisions.
* Participating in system-wide accessible technology planning initiatives with groups such as STAC and ETAG (Education Technology Advisory Group).
* Disseminating information about best practices, recommendations, and changes to accessible IT policy and law to the CTC system.
* Sponsoring capacity-building activities such as professional development and training opportunities for the system colleges and SBCTC to advance our collective commitment to accessible technology and inclusion.
* Fostering system-wide engagement across Councils and Commissions on issues related to accessible technology and IT.

## Reporting

A representative from CATO will regularly attend STAC’s meetings.

In this role, CATO provides STAC with guidance, technical expertise, and focused research related to accessible IT needs and system priorities.

CATO provides updates and reports to member councils and commissions, including the Public Information Commission, Information Technology Commission, Disability Support Services Council, eLearning Council, and Library Leadership Council.

CATO also provides updates as necessary to SBCTC.

## Approach & Outputs

CATO is comprised of college and SBCTC staff engaged in accessible technology/IT, policy, and/or disability services work at their organizations. CATO is a mechanism for these stakeholders to identify, prioritize, and recommend specific action on emergent issues within the structures of system technology governance. CATO also provides opportunities for supporting capacity-building initiatives for the colleges and SBCTC.

Consultative communication channels will be established and maintained between CATO and the Strategic Technology Advisory Committee (STAC), the Educational Technology Advisory Group (ETAG), SBCTC, and represented Commissions and Councils as needed.

Examples of Committee deliverables and assignments from governance stakeholders include but are not limited to:

### Output to STAC

* + Annual Work Plan & Priorities.
  + Accessible technology priorities for strategic planning.
  + Recommendations, Proposals, & Requests.
    - Vetted by CATO.
    - Submitted to STAC.

### Output to ETAG

* + Participate in a minimum of two joint meetings per calendar year.
  + Consultation on technology evaluation and procurement

### Output to WACTC Commissions and Councils

* + Annual report to Commissions/Councils of key accomplishments and challenges.
  + Consulting with commissions on work plan items relating to accessible technology and IT.

### Input from STAC

* + Facilitation of consultative communication between WACTC-Tech and CATO.
  + Support from STAC membership and leadership on system-wide accessible technology priorities, standards, and processes.
  + Requests for guidance on planning
  + Requests for assistance with system technology procurement to ensure accessibility.
  + Other assignments as necessary

### Input from Commissions/Councils

* + Feedback to help CATO shape priorities and yearly Work Plan.
  + Specific requests for guidance and consultation.

## Committee Composition & Membership

Committee members are:

1. Recruited by CATO leadership and its members,
2. Assigned by a Commission, Committee, or Council; or
3. Appointed by STAC leadership; or
4. Added at the request of CATO’s leadership team with majority assent of the full committee.

### Voting Members (11 Total below):

* At least three college Accessible Technology Coordinators/Accessible IT Coordinators from different colleges
* One DSSC Representative (Disability Support Services Council)
* One ITC Representative (Information Technology Commission)
* One LLC Representative (Library Leadership Council)
* One ELC Representative (eLearning)
* One PIC Representative (Public Information Commission)
* One DEOC Representative (Diversity and Equity Officers Commission)
* SBCTC IT Division Representative -- Assigned
* SBCTC Accessible Technology Representative -- Assigned

### Non-voting or ex officio members:

* SBCTC Student Services Director
* SBCTC Ed Tech Representative
* DSSC Chair
* ETAG Liaison
* Ad hoc ATC (Articulation and Transfer Council) members as appropriate

### Liaisons with Technology Governance (may be present committee members)

* STAC Liaison
* ETAG Liaison

## Committee Member Term

Appointed committee members serve at least one year (12 meetings). That term can be extended at the discretion of a) CATO leadership; or b) the appointing governance body such as the Council or Commission. At-large college members, such as Accessible IT Coordinators will serve at least one year and may be reappointed at the discretion of the CATO Chairs and their supervisor at the home institution.

CATO has an interest in adding members from previously unrepresented colleges and may add or replace AT Coordinator members at their discretion.

### Committee Member Selection

For members selected (not assigned nor designated), the following process will be followed:

* A recommendation will be made in writing to the Chairs from

1. voting membership;
2. STAC or other governance entity; or
3. at the request of the SBCTC Policy Associate.

* Chairs present the recommendation to the committee and appoint the new member through consensus or, if necessary, a vote.

## Committee Member Role and Responsibilities

To be an effective participant in these efforts, Committee members should:

* Possess a working knowledge of accessible technology issues, standards, and requirements.
* Have genuine interest and a commitment to accessible technology/IT and be an advocate beyond the Committee for CATO’s recommendations and initiatives.
* Bring a specific perspective from their roles to enrich and diversify CATO’s ability to frame initiatives that address the accessible IT needs of stakeholder groups and to anticipate the consequences of its recommendations.
* Understand the implications and outcomes of issues, proposals and requests considered by the committee.
* Understand relevant laws, policies, and guidelines for accessible IT and technology.
* Be aware of previous initiatives and proposals of the committee.

In practice, this means the members:

* Review relevant policies, laws, and guidelines when onboarded to the committee.
* Attend all scheduled meetings.
  + If an individual member is regularly unable to participate in scheduled meetings, it may become necessary to identify a replacement for those who cannot attend consistently. If needed, action will be taken based on the recommendation of the Chair and a vote by the full committee.
* Review available materials before each meeting and come prepared to discuss and vote.
* Contribute to the guidance, recommendations, and professional development opportunities developed by the committee.
* Work to develop committee decisions regarding issues that are escalated to STAC and/or WACTC Tech.
* Consider ideas and issues raised; seek additional information from governance entities or college stakeholders as necessary, and perform research as needed.
* Foster positive communication outside CATO regarding the committee’s work.

## Committee Leadership Team

CATO’s leadership team is composed of

* Two Co-Chairs from representing college institutions.
* SBCTC Policy Associate for Accessible Technology or other appropriate SBCTC staff member.

### Chair Term

Chairs serve for two years. Terms should be staggered such that there is one new Chair each year.

### Chair Selection

Chairs may be recruited or nominated from the voting membership. In the case of a single nomination the selection may be approved by consensus. In the case of competing nominations, an electronic vote will be held.

## Chair Role and Responsibilities

In addition to the role and responsibilities of committee members, the Committee Co-Chairs and Leadership Team will facilitate and lead the communication efforts with partner commissions, councils, and groups. This includes attending meetings, or ensuring their designee attends, and reporting on behalf of CATO to STAC. Additionally, this means consulting with STAC to determine how the work of CATO might support the work of STAC and vice versa, and which priorities and initiatives require input or approval from WATC-Tech.

The Co-Chairs and Leadership Team members will oversee the completion of CATO’s annual Work Plan and Report. Also, the Co-Chairs will help onboard new committee members, schedule committee meetings, prepare materials in advance, and maintain committee records.

## Committee Meetings

CATO meets monthly, or as required, to manage specific initiatives and projects. Each meeting will be scheduled for 90 minutes (about 1 and a half hours). Additionally, subcommittees may be delegated to meet separately from the main group for the purpose of executing specific tasks.

An annual calendar of the meetings will be developed and communicated to the CATO membership on the SBCTC.edu website, the CATO listserv, and CATO’s electronic collaboration and file sharing space.

With input from SBCTC representatives, the Chairs facilitate the meeting and agenda.

Committee attendees should be present at the agreed-upon location or connected via telecommunications. Minutes from the meeting should document any decisions made and will be posted to the CATO page at SBCTC.edu.

### Meeting Agendas & Minutes

* Meeting information will be posted to the [CATO electronic mailing list](mailto:cato@lists.ctc.edu) and CATO’s electronic collaboration and file sharing space. Sign up for the [CATO electronic mailing list](http://lists.ctc.edu/mailman/listinfo/cato_lists.ctc.edu).
* Calls for agenda items will be posted one week before upcoming meetings. Any current committee member may submit items for consideration.
* Agenda items may be requested by voting members either individually or as representatives of governance entities, CATO leadership, and STAC leadership.
* CATO Chairs will meet with SBCTC staff prior to meetings to prioritize items for current meetings and track submitted items for future meetings.
* Agendas will be posted the [CATO electronic mailing list](mailto:cato@lists.ctc.edu) and CATO’s electronic collaboration and file sharing space at least two days before each meeting.
* Agendas will be made up of procedural items such as reports and updates from governance groups and STAC, ongoing projects, workgroup reports, planning and study sessions, results of action items, Old Business from previous meetings, and new business or action items for consideration and assignment.
* Minutes will be taken, recorded, and posted to CATO’S electronic collaboration and file sharing space.

### Quorum

A quorum is required for voting decisions; fifty percent of the membership must vote to ratify a decision.

### Voting

CATO will strive for consensus as it engages in decision-making. However, it may not be possible to attain 100% consensus on all topics and alternatives.

If consensus cannot be reached, votes will be taken by the Co-Chairs as required. 51% of the vote is required to ratify a decision, though if a decision is reached by an affirmative vote of less than two-thirds of voting members, the Chairs may choose to accept appeals from the membership and re-open discussion at their discretion.

### Appeals

Appeals of decisions by CATO can be brought to the Co-Chairs and Leadership Team by the membership in written form. An appeal should have the support of at least two committee members.

If the appeal is sponsored, then the written appeal goes to CATO’s appointment Co-Chairs and STAC Leadership. It will be placed on the next agenda for discussion and decision. An appeal can be denied, upheld, or it may not be resolved.