

## **Technology, Education, and Accessibility in College and Higher Education Act**

New technologies hold the promise of greater accessibility for students with disabilities. Electronic delivery systems and electronic course materials can more easily adapt to the needs of individual learners. However, not all technologies at use in our colleges are accessible to students with disabilities, even though non-discrimination laws require accessibility. Federal non-discrimination laws were drafted long before the use of electronic instructional materials and other technologies on college campuses became widespread, and they do not contain the performance criteria or specifications that are necessary for accessible electronic materials.

To help ensure that the technologies they adopt are accessible, colleges need better guidance from experts in the field. A 2011 report from a federal commission on accessible instructional materials recommended that the Access Board, an independent federal agency with expertise in the accessible design of information technology, issue guidelines on accessible electronic instructional materials and technologies. The TEACH Act builds on that recommendation.

By offering guidelines on accessibility, the TEACH Act would help colleges select and adopt technologies that can be used by all students. In turn, this increased demand will create a better market for accessible technologies and alleviate the burden that inaccessible course materials put on students with disabilities who are working hard to get an education.

### **The TEACH Act would:**

- Set clearer expectations for accessible education technology by requiring the Access Board to develop guidelines for electronic instructional materials and related information technology.
- Protect colleges by providing that technologies that adhere to the guidelines are deemed to be in compliance with relevant non-discrimination laws.
- Ensure that colleges maintain the flexibility to adopt educational technologies that do not adhere to the guidelines, provided that those technologies are accessible to students with disabilities.