5 EASY STEPS TO BECOMING AN ANTI-ABLEIST RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR

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ASSUME NON-DISCLOSURE

We have to work from this assumption because the biggest challenge for disabled faculty is requesting accommodations. At some institutions, if faculty need accommodations, they have to go to their department chair first (Grigley, 2017). We have to assume that we may be the only person on campus who can truly assist them in meaningful and validating way.

UTILIZE EMAIL ACCESSIBILITY

Did you know Outlook has an Accessibility tool? Run this tool before you send an email, and Outlook will tell you what components of your email may cause a problem for an individual with accessibility needs. This tool will tell you if you should use a different font (a sans serif font for readability), remove a table (screen readers cannot read those), or bullet a list for easy readability.

SAY HI TO FIDO (BUT DON'T PET!)

If your PI has a service dog, choose a meeting location that has easy access to water fountains in case their dog may need water. Or, even better, meet the PI in their office so their dog does not have to navigate campus that day. Just remember - service animals are working - do not pet without permission!

PROOFREAD FOR YOUR PI

An extra set of eyes never hurt! Some of our PIs have dyslexia while many of our PIs use a language other than English primarily, so they will appreciate an extra review of their work. Offer your proofreading services to PIs, and as long as they provide you documents at least 3 additional business days in advance, review for grammar, spelling, typos, and clarity.

REMEMBER

Faculty who have a disability bring so much to our campus and to our institution.

Research administration is customer service focused and we have to create space and time to meet the access needs of all of faculty if we are to truly say we are providing excellent customer service.

References

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