Academic Senate Resolution F-2023-2

Resolution on Positive Accessibility and
the Pope Tech Accessibility App and Review Process
(Academic Freedom, Curriculum, Due Process, Liability, Transparency, Working Conditions)

Moved by Senators Marilyn Kennedy and Irene Naesse, Seconded by Vice-President Rendell Drew
Approved by the OCC Senate on November 28, 2023

Whereas, OCC faculty support and advocate for equal access for disabled students using accurate and trustworthy accessibility tools;

Whereas, the Pope Tech accessibility software plus its summary and review processes have failed to be accurate and trustworthy;

Whereas, the coding and technical flaws inherent in the Pope Tech system were researched and presented to the OCC Senate on November 7, 2023, by Computer Science Professor Stephen Gilbert, in "Problems of Accessibility Course Review" (PACR), and copies of this were sent to OCC faculty, administrators, and Board of Trustee members on November 15, 2023;

Whereas, the PCAR explained that the consequences of Pope's false "errors" have led faculty to delete accessible course content because the software incorrectly identifies content as inaccessible and does not correct or update the false reports;

Whereas, the PCAR also showed that due to the undue burden placed on faculty to manually check Power Point slides and non-Canvas materials, faculty are simply removing those learning resources;

Whereas, the PCAR showed the concerns with potential legal liabilities if faculty sign "yes" to question 10 on the Pope Tech Accessibility Review Form;

Whereas, the current accessibility review process requires only 10% of the faculty to annually review, resulting in a ten-year date to "successful" completion of a process with known and repetitive inaccuracies and reports;

Whereas, the Pope Tech Accessibility Review app, summary, and review process were not vetted or approved by the OCC Academic Senate, and the Senate was administratively informed on March 7, 2023, that "Canvas will use the Pope Tech Accessibility checker" (March 7, 2023, minutes);

Whereas, these issues have led to transparency and 10 +1 issues revolving around curriculum, standards, process, and academic freedom and have added excessive hours to the faculty workload beyond the Coast Federation of Educators (CFE) Contract, Article XI. Hours of Service;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the OCC Senate fully endorse Computer Science Professor Gilbert presenting the PCAR to the Board of Trustees, in order to explain the flaws and failures of Pope Tech;

Therefore, Be It Further Resolved, that faculty are made aware that (CFE) has advised faculty that there will be no repercussions to faculty in evaluations or discipline regarding the Pope Tech Accessibility Review;

Therefore, Be It Further Resolved, that the review form be revised to reflect faculty feedback, and include a time log and/or take a quick survey of their time spent for the process so that CFE may more fully address their additional uncompensated work time;

Therefore, Be It Further Resolved, until the form is revised, faculty who choose to participate consider marking review question #10 as a "no" and follow that with a statement that they made a "good faith effort" to make the course accessible and will post in their Canvas class requesting that any student who finds an accessibility issue in their class to contact the professor immediately; and

Therefore, Be It Finally Resolved, that the Senate appoint representatives to the District work group so that faculty and District may collaborate as per the 10 + 1, in order to find a new way to improve accessibility and ensure instructional integrity while meeting state and federal accessibility regulations in a positive and *productive* way.