

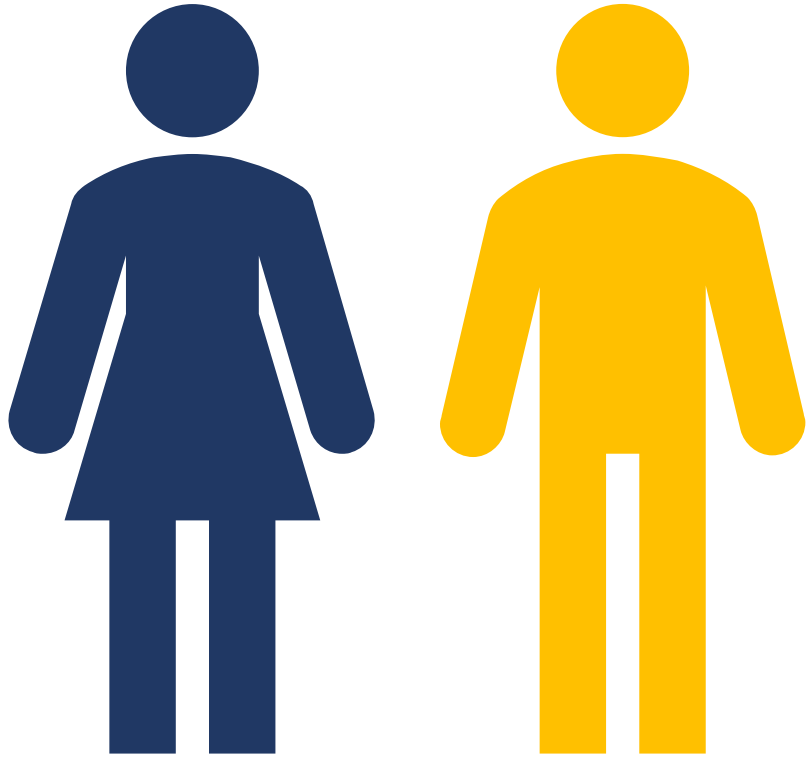
# Blackboard Ally for Faculty

A Tool for Student Success

Kevin Scoles, COE Assoc Dean,  
Undergrad Affairs

Michael Helmet, Dir.  
Instructional Technology, Drexel IT

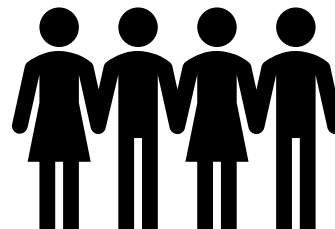




Students success  
is our goal



- Advisors
- Disability Resources
- Faculty
- IT
- Instructional Design
- Provost



# Digital Accessibility

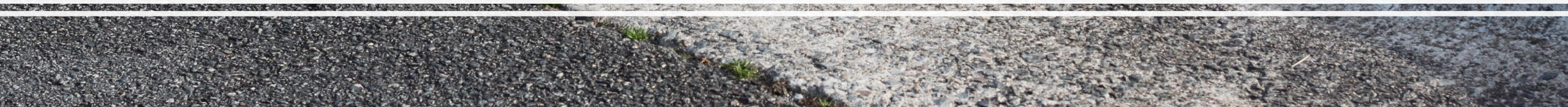
- Benefits everyone
- Required by the law
- The right thing to do







Curb cuts were made for a specific audience







Those with  
disabilities



But others benefit





How is Digital Accessibility  
Helpful?

# Disabilities vary

- Audial impairments
  - Captions for videos
- Visual impairments
  - Audio or braille for text
  - High contrast colors
- Motor impairments
- Cognitive impairments





# Color Contrast Example

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It is important to have high contrast with both images and text

## Low Contrast

Syllabus

Instructor: Charles Xavier

Office: Xavier Mansion

Office Hours: All

Course Information

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing

## High Contrast

Syllabus

Instructor: Charles Xavier

Office: Xavier Mansion

Office Hours: All

Course Information

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing

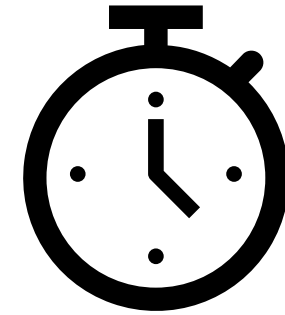
# Universal Design in the built environment





# Reactive versus Proactive

- Reactive
  - Currently how we operate
  - Only students with accommodations
  - Requires quick turnaround time
- Proactive
  - Reduces costs
    - Alternate versions provided
    - Less content needs work
  - Streamline processes
  - Alternate methods of content consumption



# How do we get there?

- Resources and tools are available
  - Library Reserves providing accessible formats
  - Kaltura provides machine generated captions for video
  - Blackboard Ally provides alternate formats
  - Ally for Websites scans [drexel.edu](http://drexel.edu)

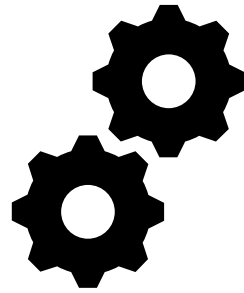
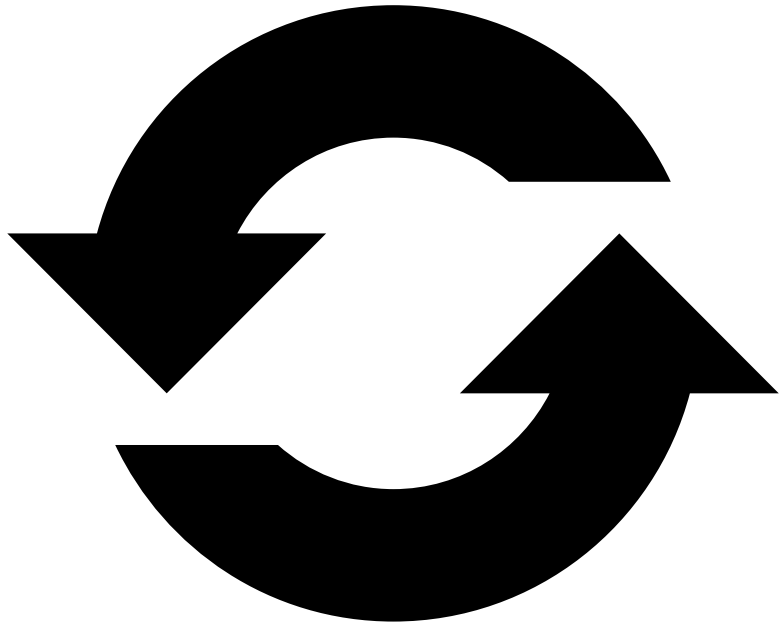




# Move to Proactive

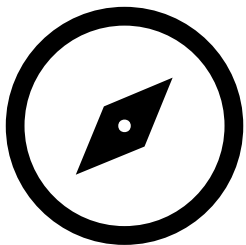
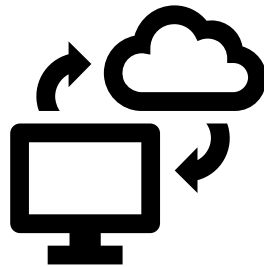
- Drexel's approach for automatic processing
  - Alternate formats
  - Caption generation
- No additional work
- Content more accessible
- Moves us toward our goal





# Blackboard Ally

- Students access
  - Alternate formats
  - OCR, Electronic braille, Audio
- Faculty access
  - Number and types of issues
  - Accessibility information





# Activating Blackboard Ally

Send an email to the Instructional Technology Group, itg@drexel




Provide your name and all details for your course

**Term**

**Rubric**

**Title**

**CRN**



Give a little time to process all existing attachments. New attachments are processed quickly depending on their length

# New Icons For Your Attachments

Accessibility score icon  
Red to Green  
Low, Medium, High, Perfect

Attached Files:   ECEP 380 Syllabus 201935 Rev 2 (PDF)   (391.872 KB)

Alternative formats link

**Students do not see the accessibility score icon**

# Alternate Format Example

- PDFs can be problematic viewed on a mobile device
  - Need to pinch/zoom to navigate
- HTML versions automatically scale to fit the device
  - Creates a better experience for all students













# Alternative Formats

Download alternative formats ▼ ✕

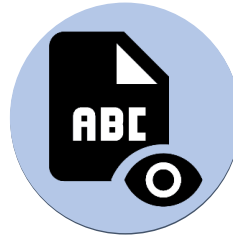
-  HTML  
For viewing in the browser and on mobile devices
-  ePub  
For reading as an e-book on an iPad and other e-book readers
-  Electronic braille  
BRF version for consumption on electronic braille displays
-  Audio  
MP3 version for listening
-  BeeLine Reader  
Enhanced version for easier and faster on-screen reading

 [Help](#)

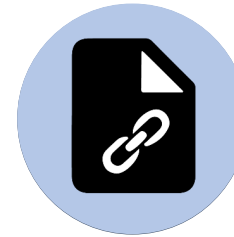
By downloading an alternative format, you agree with the [Terms of Use](#)

Cancel Download

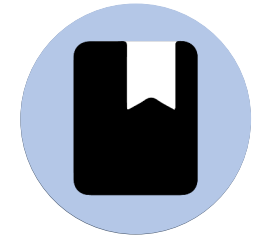
# Examples and Samples



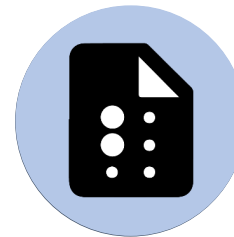
OPTICAL CHARACTER  
RECOGNITION (OCR)



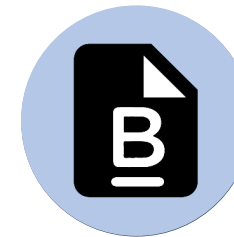
HTML



EPUB



ELECTRONIC BRAILLE



BEELINE READER

# Optical Character Recognition (OCR)



## WHAT IS LITERACY?

It is a piece of folk wisdom that part of what linguists do is define words. In over a decade as a linguist, however, no one, until now, has asked me to define a word. So my first try: what does "literacy" mean? It won't surprise you that we have to define some other words first. So let me begin by giving a technical meaning to an old term which, unfortunately, already has a variety of other meanings. The term is "discourse." I will use the word as a count term ("a discourse," "discourses," "many discourses"), not as a mass term ("discourse," "much discourse"). By "a discourse" I will mean:

a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or "social network."

Think of a discourse as an "identity kit" which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act and talk so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize. Let me give an example: Being "trained" as a linguist meant that I learned to speak, think, and act like a linguist, and to recognize others when they do so. Now actually matters are not that simple: the larger discourse of linguistics contains many sub-discourses, different socially accepted ways of being a linguist. But the master discourse is not just the sum of its parts, it is something also over and above them. Every act of speaking, writing, and behaving a linguist does as a linguist is meaningful only against the background of the whole social institution of linguistics. And that institution is made up of concrete things like people, books, and buildings; abstract things like bodies of knowledge, values, norms, and beliefs; mixtures of concrete and abstract things like universities, journals, and publishers; as well as a shared history and shared stories. Some other examples of discourses: being an American or a Russian, being a man or a woman, being a member of a certain socio-economic class, being a factory worker or a boardroom executive, being a doctor or a hospital patient, being a teacher, an administrator, or a student, being a member of a sewing circle, a club, a street gang, a lunchtime social gathering, or a regular at a local watering hole.

There are a number of important points that one can make about discourses. None of them, for some reason, are very popular with Americans,

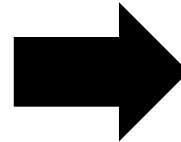
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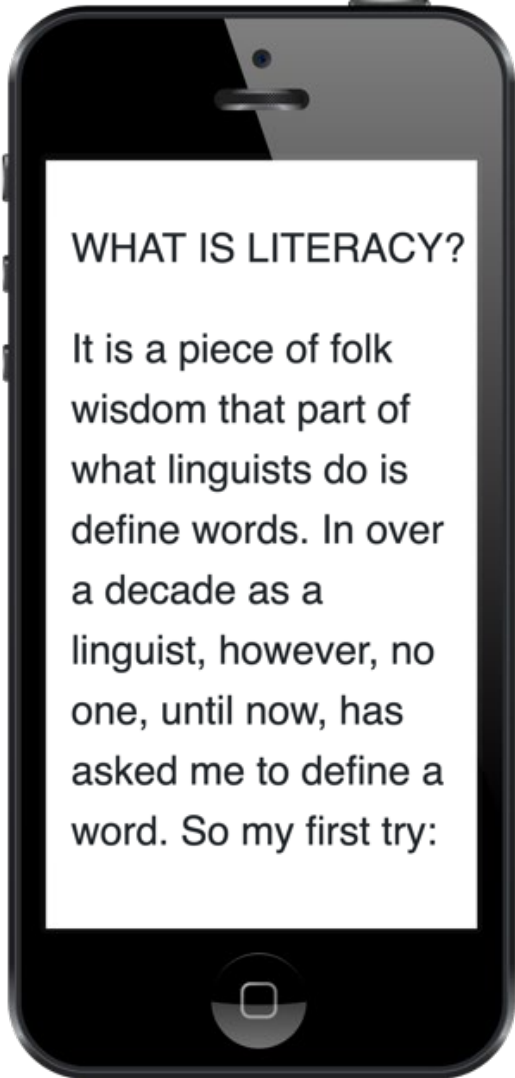
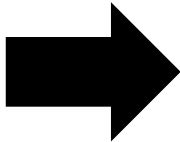
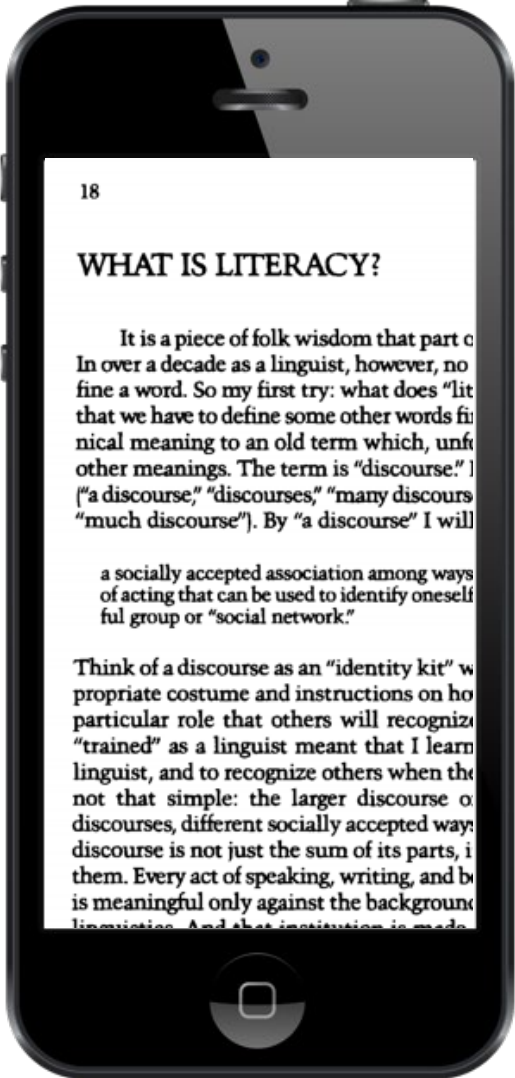
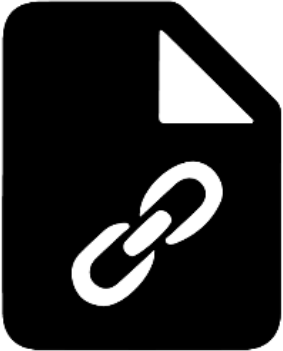
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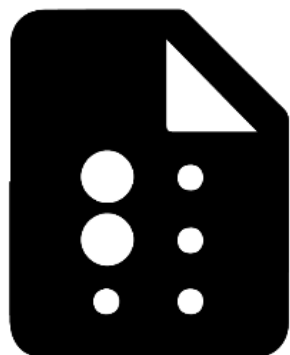




# HTML







# Electronic braille



# BeeLine Reader



 **Bright**    **Dark**    **Blues**    **Grays**

---

18

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

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# Accessibility Score Feedback for Faculty

Accessibility score for: ✕  
2020-Sustainable-Energy-in-America-Factbook.pdf



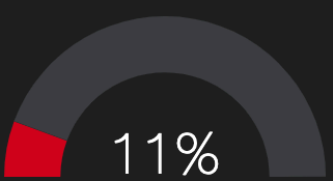
59% All issues ⓘ

This PDF contains images that are missing a description

[What this means](#)

[How to add descriptions](#)

Accessibility score for: ✕  
DUO-Term Course Planner\_Spring 2020(1).pdf



11% All issues ⓘ

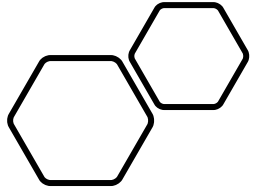
This PDF is untagged

[What this means](#)

[How to tag a PDF](#)

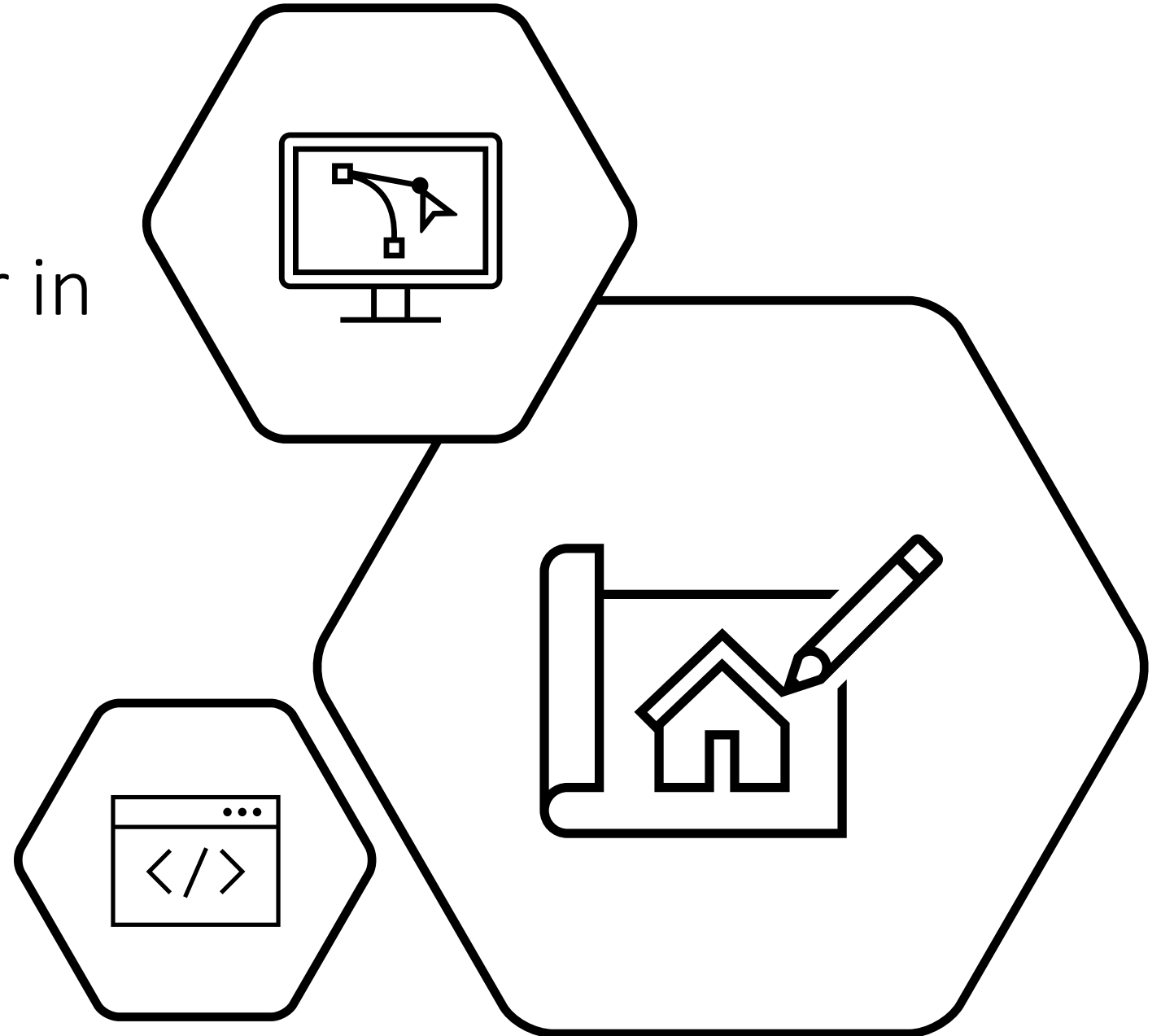
- There is no directive from Drexel to bring all your documents up to Green
- However ...
  - It's better to be proactive than reactive
  - Green should be the goal

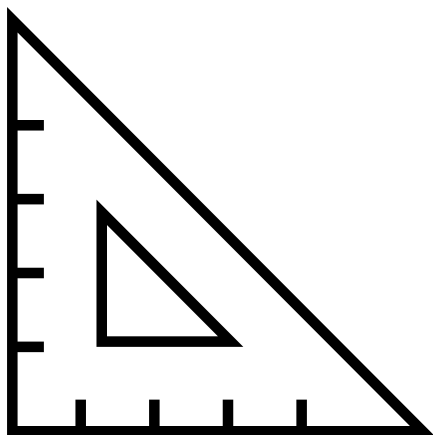
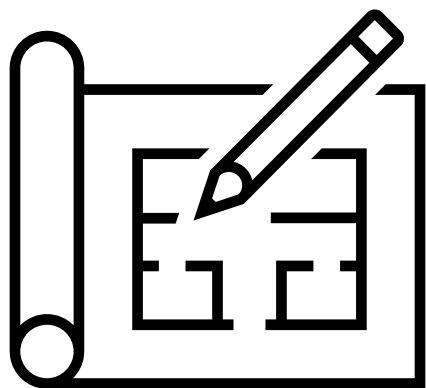




## 3 Issues to Consider in Document Design

- To produce accessible documents from scratch, start by considering these 3 things
  - Use document templates
  - Use headings/styles within your document
  - Include Alt Text for graphics



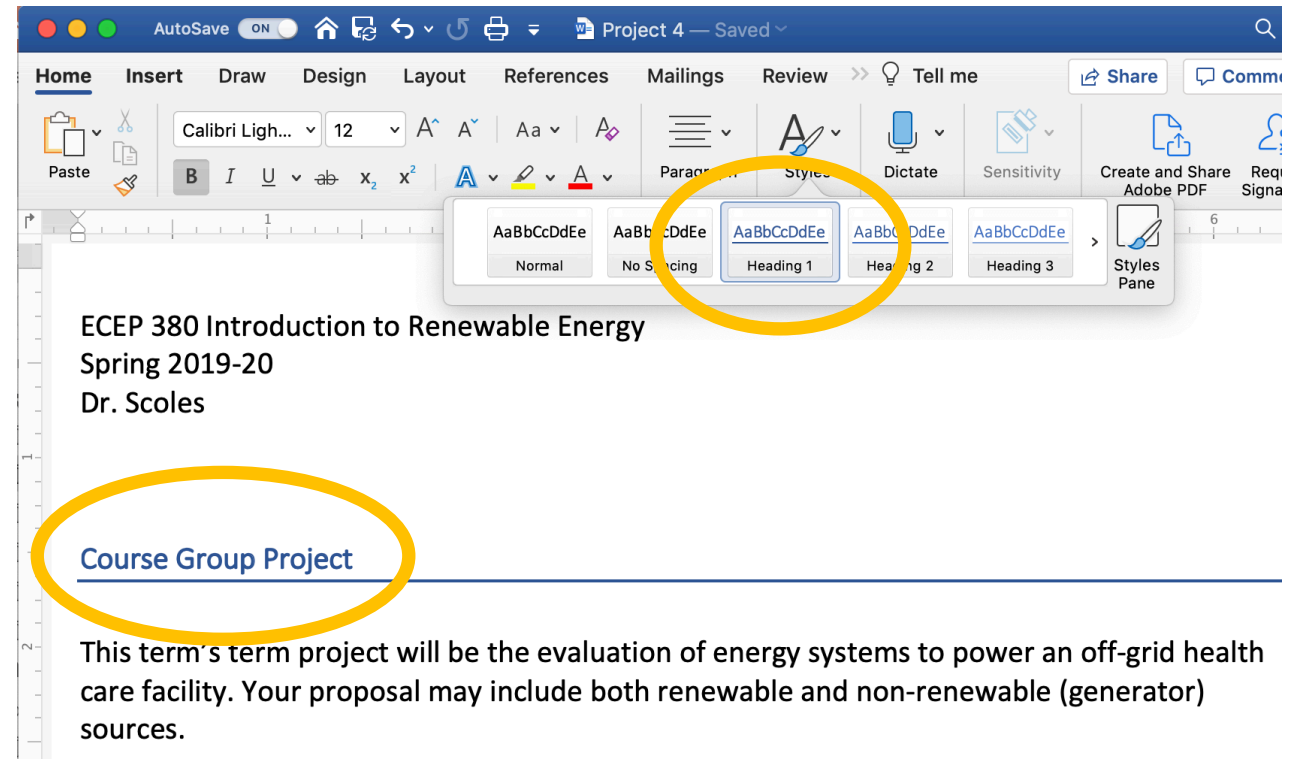


# Templates

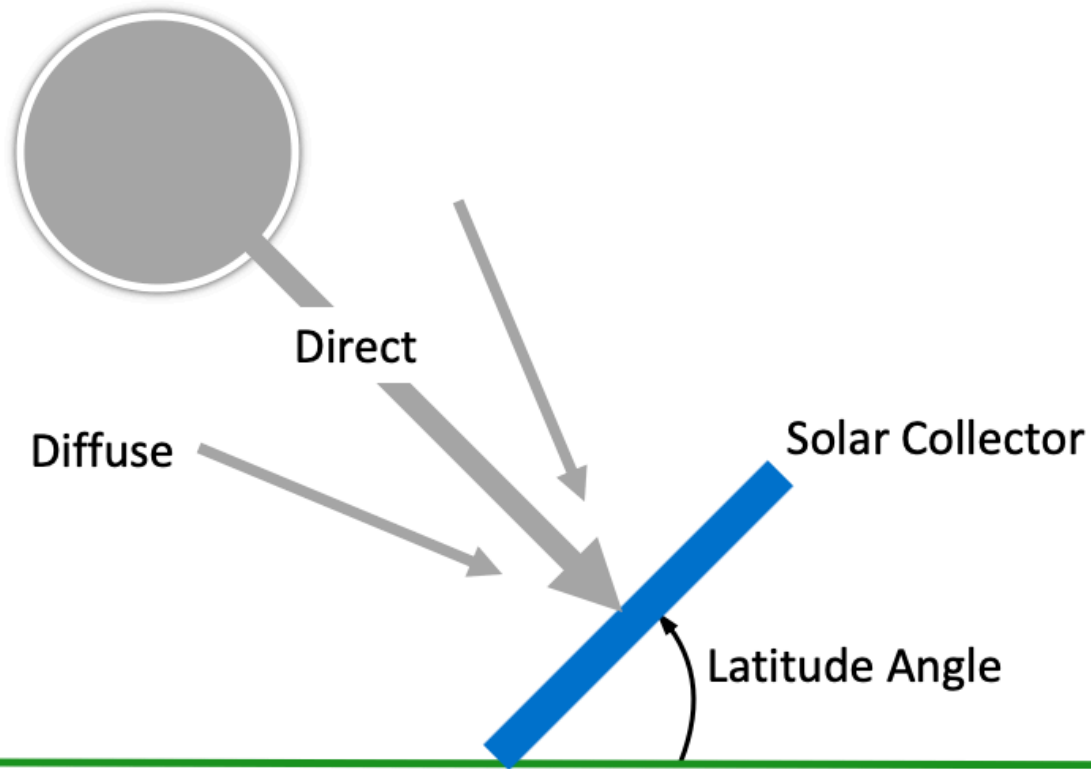
- Use Accessible Templates
  - These templates have accessible styles built in
- Applies to Word and PowerPoint, and Pages and Keynote
  - Hint: if you have a PP template you like, but its headers aren't properly tagged, copy & paste all your slides into a built-in PP template. Adopt the template styles, delete all slides that aren't yours, and fine-tune your slides as needed.

# Headings

- Headings, or Styles, visually define the hierarchy of the doc
- Students using screen readers can review the headings and jump to sections they want to read



# Alternative Text



## Alt Text

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind?

*(1-2 sentences recommended)*

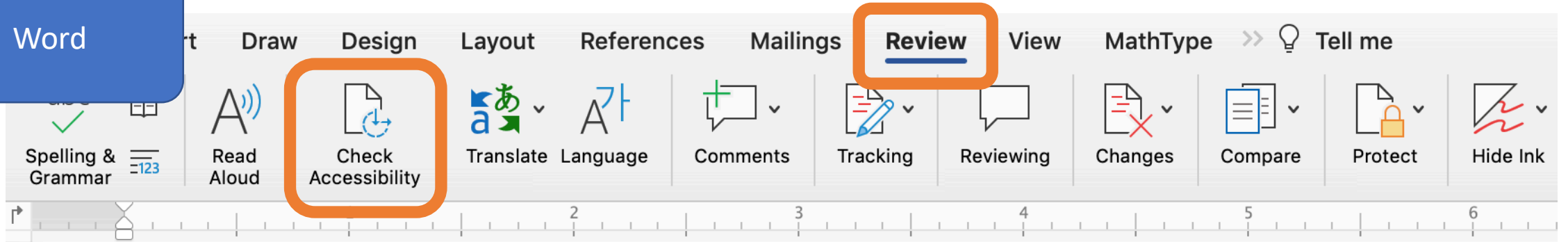
Graphic showing a solar collector tilted up at the latitude angle receiving both direct and diffuse sunlight.

Mark as decorative

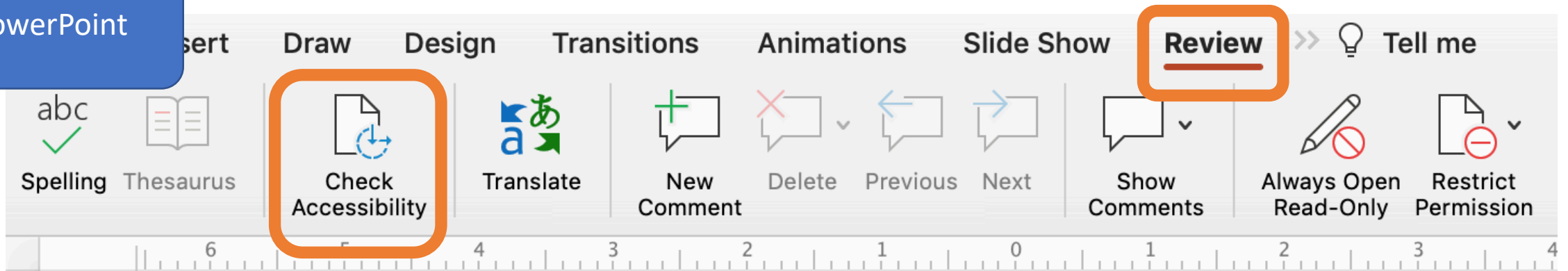


# Checking How You Did

Word

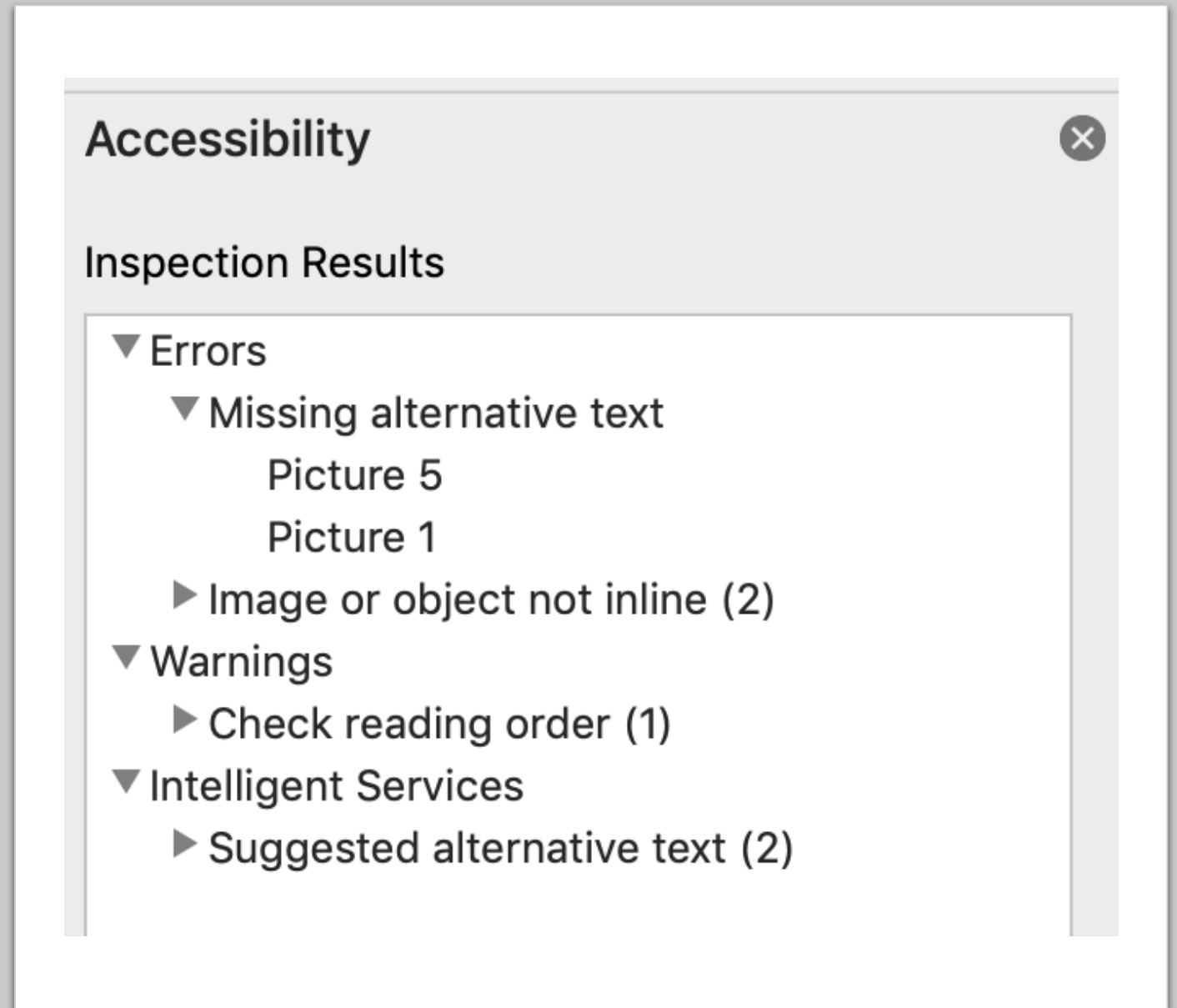


PowerPoint



# Checking How You Did (2)

- Accessibility Report typical of Word or PP
  - Have Errors?
  - What Type?
  - How Many?
  - Where?
- Click to highlight the error



# Accessible Equations

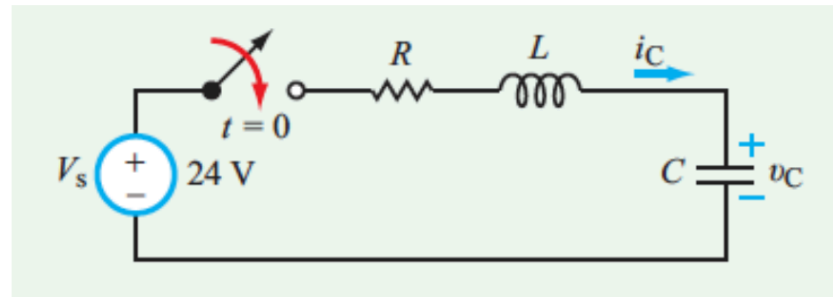
## Series RLC Underdamped Case ( $\alpha < \omega_0$ )

Circuit response to a step input oscillates about the final value before settling into equilibrium

$$\alpha = \frac{R}{2L} \quad \omega_0 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{LC}}$$

$$\frac{R}{2L} < \frac{1}{\sqrt{LC}}$$

$$R < 2\sqrt{\frac{L}{C}}$$

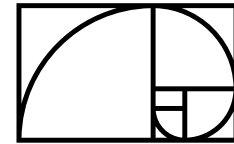


C may or may not have initial voltage when switch closes

Figure 2.2.1 (a) NI Circuits

# Accessible Equations

- Use the free MathType Add-in to generate accessible equations in MS Office and Mac Office apps
- Avoid image files as it's difficult to describe complex equations using Alt Text
- “MathML allows formulas to be displayed on web pages without simply displaying them as images, and allows formula to be printed in Braille or communicated audibly to screen reader users.”  
[Burgstahler]





# Drexel IT Workshops on Ally

- Blackboard Ally is a tool that automatically generates within Learn alternate formats of content, such as audio and HTML files for text-based documents. It also allows faculty to view feedback about the accessibility of their course content, as well as provide descriptions and instructions regarding issues and how to remediate them. This workshop will teach you how check Word and PowerPoint documents for accessibility, how the Ally tool works, as well as how to fix issues encountered in a sample course. Become informed as to why accessibility for your course is important and how to easily improve your course content's accessibility.
- Monday, September 14 (Webcast Only) -> 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
- To register, go to Career Pathway in Drexel One under the **Employee** tab.

# Summing It Up

- Proactively enhancing document accessibility improves the learning experience for all students
- Enable Ally in your course with an email to [itg@drexel.edu](mailto:itg@drexel.edu)
- Blackboard Ally will convert documents you already have into formats that are more accessible to students using mobile devices, Braille readers, or other assistive devices.
- Document accessibility can be enhanced by remembering just a few guidelines
- Equations can be made accessible by using an equation editor
- A workshop on improving the accessibility of Word and PowerPoint documents will be offered on Monday, September 14. Register through Career Pathways.

# Suggested Reading

- “20 Tips for Teaching an Accessible Online Course”, Sheryl Burgstahler, Univ of Washington, [https://www.washington.edu/doit/sites/default/files/atoms/files/20\\_Tips\\_Designing\\_Courses\\_5\\_7\\_20.pdf](https://www.washington.edu/doit/sites/default/files/atoms/files/20_Tips_Designing_Courses_5_7_20.pdf)
- “How can I create math and science documents that are accessible to students with visual impairments?”, Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology, Univ of Washington, <https://www.washington.edu/doit/how-can-i-create-math-and-science-documents-are-accessible-students-visual-impairments>
- “Understanding Document Accessibility: A Reference for Creating Accessible Office Documents”, Digital Education Strategies, The Chang School, <https://pressbooks.library.ryerson.ca/docs/>

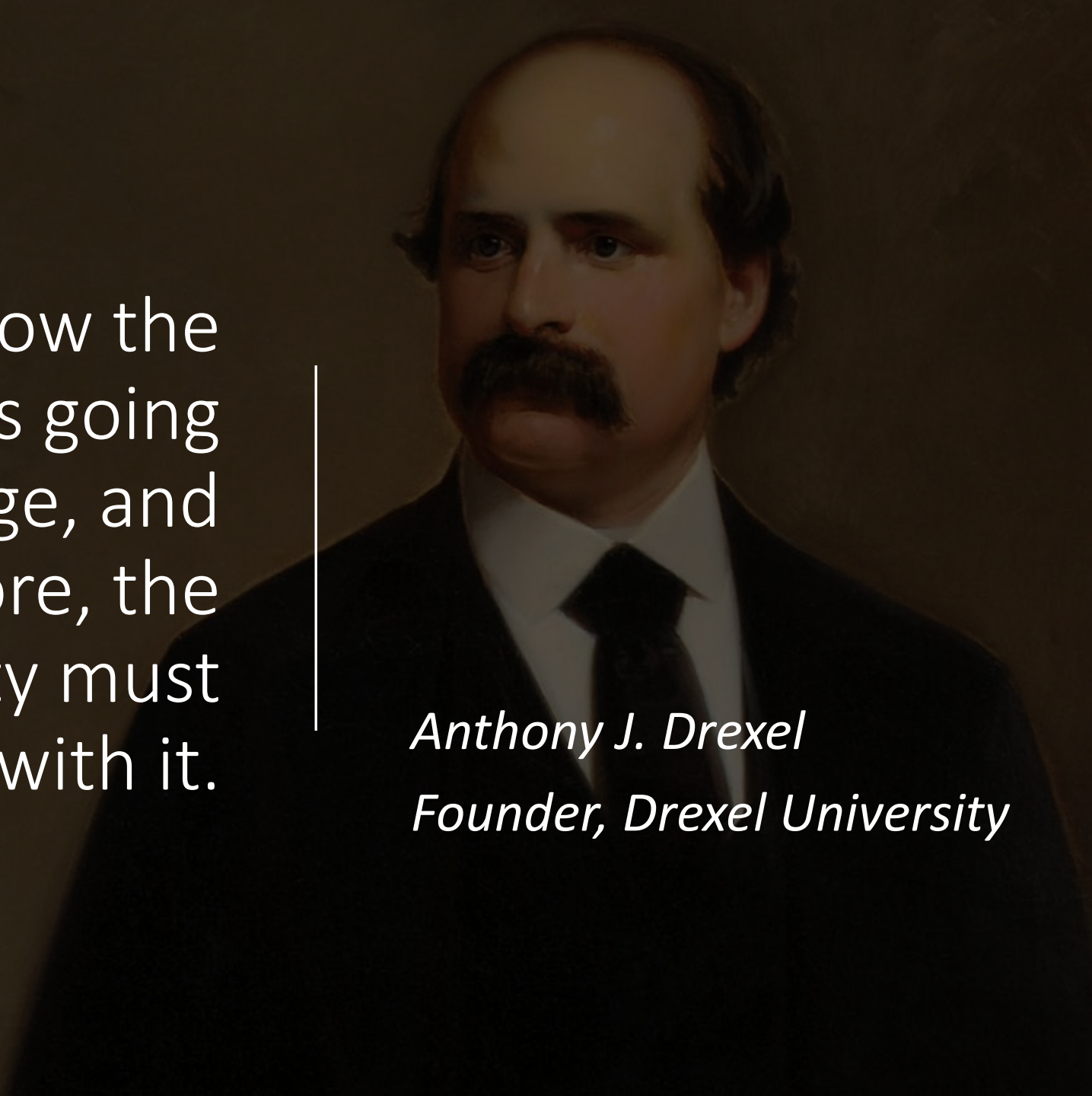


# Suggested Reading (2)

- “Ally for LMS Help for Instructors”, Blackboard, [https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally\\_for\\_LMS/Instructor](https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_LMS/Instructor)
- “MathType for Equations”, Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities, Michigan State Univ, <https://webaccess.msu.edu/Tutorials/mathtype.html>
- “Create accessible tables in Microsoft Word”, Indiana University Knowledge Base, April 2019, <https://kb.iu.edu/d/aqjl>



I know the  
world is going  
to change, and  
therefore, the  
University must  
change with it.

A portrait of Anthony J. Drexel, a man with a mustache, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. The portrait is set against a dark background with a light-colored border.

*Anthony J. Drexel*  
*Founder, Drexel University*

