



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

School of Nursing

## Universal Design for Learning Online: A Case Study and Roadmap

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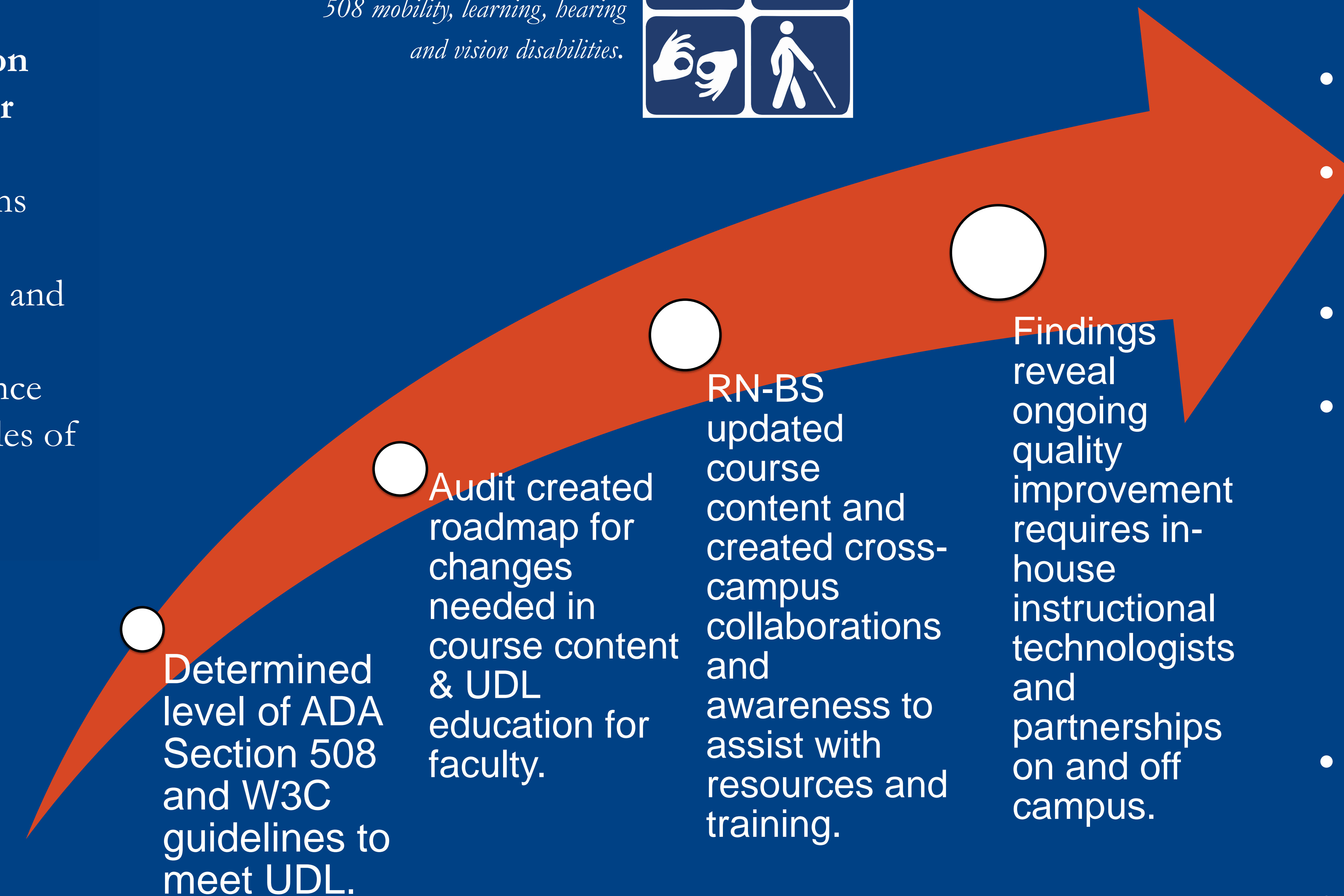
### Purpose

- Over 400 partially or fully online nursing programs in the U.S. (AACN, 2014)
- **An estimated 11% of students in higher education have some type of disability (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.).**
- Success and sustainability of online learning programs should include institutional and technology support, quality course development and instructional design, and student and faculty support (Moore, 2005).
- Educators, administrators, and universities can enhance learning for online students by following the principles of universal design for learning (UDL), and realizing it should be built-in, rather than bolted-on.

### Background

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) utilizes the concept of accessibility incorporated into education design as principles optimizing learning for all students (Coombs, 2010).
- UDL meets legislation guidelines aimed at providing accessible education for students with disabilities (Coombs, 2010).
- UDL can enhance learning for all students, but specifically meets guidelines for meeting the needs for Americans with Disabilities, Section 508 Technical Standards.
- **Disabilities may include issues related to hearing, vision, language, mobility, learning disorders, or mental illness (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.).**

*ADA symbol representing Section 508 mobility, learning, hearing and vision disabilities.*



### Description

- An online RN to BS nursing program evaluated its courses for UDL principles and best practices.
- Findings were that courses and content could better meet needs for accessibility and usability.
- Administrators and instructional technologists identified and developed support for ensuring accessible documents and multi-media content were used in classes.
- Methods for achieving enhanced UDL for the program highlights the importance of a program's commitment to begin and continue course quality assurance work.

### Findings for UDL Improvement

- 115+ course documents (PDFs and .docx) including program syllabi, and 60 images were revised to be compliant.
- More than 30 hours of multimedia was closed captioned, in-house and outsourced.
- 24 online faculty were trained, one-on-one, to produce closed captioned videos; and staff technical skill sets were revised.
- Online repository of how-to's and checklists were created for online faculty and staff.
- Established cross-campus relationships with Boise State University's Disability Resource Center, Office of Info Tech, Library and eCampus along with off-campus entities i.e. Blackboard Learn, 3PlayMedia and Strada Co.

### Conclusions

- Methods for achieving enhanced UDL for the RN-BS highlight the importance of auditing courses, making a roadmap for improvements and performing doable tasks.
- **UDL involves an ongoing focus and commitment to process improvement by administrators and change in skill sets and awareness by online faculty and staff.**
- Achieving usability and accessibility "takes a village" of talented personnel in and across campus units to realize quality, online courses.

### References

