

Access Guide to AU's "Disability, Access, and Teaching" Symposium

Below you will find a detailed access guide for our symposium on April 10. This guide will answer some of the most common questions about how to get to AU, how to find the Butler Board Room, and how to navigate and share our space during the day.

We encourage everyone to read this guide because it suggests some common practices to increase access throughout the day, such as being fragrance-free, using the mic at all times, and how to interact with others while respecting their communication preferences, gender identity, and processing needs.

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1. Transportation & Directions

1.1. Getting to AU

There are many ways to get to AU's main campus. You can find some general descriptions of major travel routes by car [here](#).

Many people choose to arrive by public transportation. There is an [accessible shuttle bus](#) from the AU-Tenleytown Metro stop that goes directly to AU and after a few on-campus stops will also stop in front of the Kogod School of Business, from where you can follow the road down the hill to Butler Pavilion/Bender Arena (where the Butler Board Room is located). This is the closest stop to the elevators by which you can access the Butler Board Room.

Butler Pavilion/Bender Arena is one large and complex building. There are numerous ways to enter the complex and below we describe the easiest/most intuitive ways, but there are others. People on campus in general should be able to point you to the building complex.

Ride sharing cars, taxis, and private vehicles can drive onto campus and stop right under Butler Pavilion, where you will find accessible elevators on both sides of the building that take you directly to the sixth floor. Do keep in mind that there are only two elevators and students use them frequently, so plan time accordingly.

If you drive a vehicle to AU and want to leave it on campus for the duration of your stay, you will find details on parking below.

AU is currently doing a lot of construction and we cannot fully predict what sidewalks and roads will look like in April. We will be updating the site and sending out an access reminder a few days before the conference in an attempt to provide the most up to date information on possible access hazards.

1.2. Parking

There are a number of parking options at AU.

The sixth floor of Bender Arena/Butler Pavilion will be reserved for symposium participants, but since it only has two accessible parking spots, we can make additional reservations/guest passes as needed.

Other parking options include pay-as-you-go parking for visitors at \$2 per hour in Katzen Arts Center, the School of International Service, and the surface lot of Don Myers (East Campus). A parking map and further details can be found [here](#). There is also limited, short-term street parking on Massachusetts Avenue. Parking in the adjacent neighborhoods is not allowed.

Butler Pavilion/Bender Arena parking can be accessed from both AU campus entrances. Do leave enough time to drive through campus and stop frequently for foot traffic, as well as to navigate the parking building.

There is direct floor access from the sixth floor of Butler Pavilion/Bender Arena parking to the Butler Board Room. Both doors have ramps but neither doors have access buttons and must be opened manually. The door to the right, which provides direct access to the registration area, will be staffed by a volunteer from 8 am to 5:30 pm. There are two accessible parking spots per floor.

1.3. Getting to Butler Board Room

If you park in Butler Pavilion/Bender Arena on the sixth floor, there are two doors leading directly to the Butler Board Room. The door on the right side with the wall sign “Butler Board Room / Mary Graydon Center / School of Communication / Quad / Elevator” leads directly to our major registration desk and one of the two elevators. The door on the left side with the wall sign “Bender Arena / Butler Board Room / Butler Conference Room / Elevator” leads to the second elevator, and past the sensory-friendly room and the restrooms to Butler Board Room.

If possible, we encourage everyone to enter through the door on the right, since it leads directly to registration. Signs will be posted in the parking garage on the sixth level to direct people towards the conference room, as well as strategically along major access routes on campus.

We recommend scheduling some additional time into your travel to orient on campus and find Butler Pavilion, especially if you are coming from anywhere but Butler Pavilion/Bender Arena parking. Most students/people on campus should be able to point you towards Butler Pavilion, but if accessed from the quad (and not the access road/parking garage) the building can be much more complicated to navigate.

1.4. Parking Passes & Travel Needs

For those arriving by car, the sixth floor of Butler Pavilion/Bender Arena will be reserved for symposium participants. We can provide additional accessible parking passes upon request. If transportation to the conference is an immediate access need, please email Dr. Tanja Aho (aho@american.edu) and we will try to make arrangements.

2. Room Access

2.1. Description of Butler Board Room

Butler Board Room can be accessed from two sides. Each side has elevator access and direct access from the sixth floor of Butler Pavilion/Bender Arena. Both sides have large swing doors that will be open. Volunteers will staff them to secure access at all times.

The room has daylight from a large wall of windows, as well as fluorescent overhead lights. The floor is carpeted. When the room is filled to capacity and people are talking, the noise level can increase quite a bit. Otherwise, there are few distracting sounds.

The room will be furnished with 8-12 round tables and 6-8 chairs per table to hold a maximum of about 100 seated people. There will be a buffet set-up in the back of the room by the windows for breakfast and lunch.

The front will have a podium and several tables for speakers. Microphones will be in use throughout. The morning workshop and keynote will have ASL & CART. Upon request, we can provide ASL/CART for other sessions as well. We do need these requests two weeks before the event, which is March 27, 2019, either through the registration form or by emailing Dr. Tanja Aho (aho@american.edu).

2.2. Access Coordinator at Registration & Volunteers

Registration will provide conference information in both small and large print as well as in Braille upon request. You will be given a name tag with the option of providing pronouns, interaction preferences, and photography preferences (explained more below).

The registration table will have an access coordinator who specifically serves to answer access questions and requests. Other volunteers will be on site to assist the access coordinator as needed.

2.3. Scent/Fragrance-Free & Use of Space

Because many people have chemical/scent sensitivities, allergies, or can find certain smells prohibitive of their access and participation, we ask all participants to come to the symposium as scent-free as possible. This includes but is not limited to fragrances such as perfume and cologne, aftershave, deodorant, scented lotions/hair products, using fabric softener or scented dryer sheets, etc.

If you would like more information on how and why to go scent-free, there are many online resources, including Ace Toronto's "[Scent-Free Guide](#)" and Leah Lakshmi Piepza-Samarasinha's "[Fragrance Free Femme of Colour Genius](#)."

Throughout the day we invite everyone to use the space in whatever way works best for them. This includes getting up and moving about, leaving and re-entering the room, lying down, leaning against a wall, stimming, knitting, deep breathing, closing your eyes, or doing whatever else makes you comfortable in the space.

Even though we have a tight schedule we understand that breaks might need to be longer or at different intervals for some people, and we invite everyone to engage with the conference space and schedule in whatever way best fits their access needs.

3. Restrooms, Lactation Rooms, and Sensory-Friendly Room

3.1. Restrooms

The sixth floor of Butler Pavilion holds the Board Room, two smaller conference rooms, and two multi-stall restrooms that can be accessed by exiting the Butler Board Room on the opposite end from registration. These restrooms are relatively accessible. There are single-stall restrooms on the fifth floor that are accessible by the elevator by registration and stairs. The fifth floor restrooms provide more space for movement/attendant or family care, but they do not have automatic door openers. The fourth floor also has two single-stall restrooms, accessible by the same elevator and stairs.

3.2. Lactation Rooms

The closest lactation rooms can be found in Bender Library or Kay Spiritual Center (see [this website & map](#)). If we are contacted at least two weeks in advance, we can arrange for a closer lactation room adjacent to Butler Pavilion.

The closest changing tables are unfortunately in the adjacent Mary Graydon Center on the first floor in an accessible family restroom. You can use the Butler Conference Room A until 2:00pm as a family room, but please note that it cannot be locked.

Children and family members are expressly welcome at this event.

3.3. Sensory-Friendly Room

Butler Conference Room B is dedicated as a sensory-friendly room for the duration of the conference. Lights will be dimmed and we ask those who use the room to refrain from making phone calls, having conversations, or otherwise adding sensory stimulation to the extent possible that it can be avoided.

The sensory-friendly room is meant to provide a sensory-reduced environment in which people can ground themselves and process the heavy sensory input of the symposium group space, as well as rest and relax. You will find a darkened room with bean bag chairs, lava lamps, and white noise machines as well as a selection of eye masks, ear plugs, and some stim toys for your use. Participants are also encouraged to bring their own soothing/stimming objects.

4. Participation & Communication

4.1. Identification for Pronouns, Interaction Levels, Photography

At the symposium, we ask people to identify the following three communication preferences: pronouns, interaction levels, and photography consent.

Providing pronouns helps people reference one another in ways that are more respectful of peoples' gender identities. Pronouns include choices such as she/her, he/his, they/them, ze/hir, just one's name, or no preference/all pronouns/flexible use. Name tags will include a line in which participants can choose to disclose their pronouns.

At AU we foster a culture of pronoun inclusion where we frequently share our pronouns and know about the importance of respecting each other's identities. When you are in doubt about how to refer to someone, we recommend using the neutral 'they/them' or directly asking the person if you can.

We will also have identification stickers/buttons/lanyards for communication interaction levels. These are used to provide information on whether somebody desires to communicate with others without having to ask that person. Green means "feel free to approach me," yellow means "wait until I approach you" and red means "do not approach me." Please make sure to check someone's indication of their preferred interaction level before approaching them. We encourage everyone to carry all three options with them so that they can change their displayed level of comfort accordingly. Generally, unless needed, please refrain from interaction in the sensory-friendly room.

Everyone will be given a sticker/button to disclose their photography preference. Flash photography is not allowed throughout the symposium, since it can negatively impact a range of people. Please make sure to display your photography preference clearly. If you want to share an image of the symposium on social media or elsewhere, do make sure only people who are displaying consent to be photographed are included.

4.2. Use Name & Microphone When Speaking

We encourage all participants to use a microphone when speaking. Using a microphone ensures that more people can understand what you are saying. If a comment is made

without amplification, we ask that the person with the nearest mic access (or the roundtable/panel leaders) repeat the comment. We also encourage everyone to share their name before making a comment every time they speak. This helps those who are blind or vision-impaired keep track of who is speaking.

4.3. Spell Last Names of References and Unfamiliar Concepts

We encourage participants and especially those on roundtables/giving presentations to spell last names of references they provide and to spell unfamiliar concepts/words. This ensures access for people who might be unfamiliar with certain works/traditions of thought.

4.4. People of All Ages Welcome

We welcome everyone to attend the symposium, including family members and children. The symposium is free and open to the public. For space reasons and because the symposium is focused on teaching at American University, we did not heavily advertise the symposium in our local communities, but we nevertheless welcome everyone into the room. We sincerely regret that we cannot provide free child care for the day, but if this is your major access barrier, we ask that you contact the conference organizers.

4.5. Access Copies

Access copies will be provided both in print (small and large) for each presentation that is longer than a few minutes of opening comments. Access copies will also be accessible online through the conference website. We will email out instructions on how to access the digital versions shortly before the conference. If you need access copies in Braille please contact the conference organizers at least two weeks before the conference.

4.6. Guidelines for Presentation Access

Presenters have been emailed separate access guidelines, but you can expect that in addition to access copies presenters who use power point will describe images, use high color contrast, large text, and no suddenly moving/flashing images. All video material will be captioned.

All presenters have been encouraged to actively think about creating multiple entry points into their comments in order to demonstrate how Universal Design for Learning can be productively used.

4.7. Livestream & Recording

The opening workshop and keynote will be recorded and livestreamed, which will allow for remote, asynchronous, and repeated access. Unfortunately, we were not able to pay for full-day livestream.

In the morning, we will provide communication channels for remote access participants so that your feedback, questions, and comments can enter the discussion equally. A volunteer will be monitoring online feedback and voicing comments both synchronously in the room and providing a summary of it for the closing roundtable. We also welcome comments/thoughts/ideas/questions after the event has ended.

4.8. ASL & CART

ASL & CART will be provided for the opening workshop and keynote and upon request for the rest of the day. Requests have to be submitted by March 27 and we regret that we might not be able to accommodate requests that are made later than that. We will do everything in our power to still realize access requests later on if possible.

4.9. Feedback/Question Notecards

Each table will have a stack of notecards that can be used to ask questions during a specific panel and/or to provide thoughts/feedback/questions for the closing roundtable. A volunteer will be collecting cards throughout the day. Questions for a specific panel/roundtable should be written on the colored notecards, and general thoughts should be written on the white notecards. You can ask any volunteer for help with the notecards. The closing roundtable will use the notecards to guide our discussion and the development of an action plan for American University.

5. Food & Allergies

5.1. Description of Breakfast & Lunch Options

Participants will be asked for food preferences/needs based on registration. We will provide a continental breakfast and a boxed lunch with vegan, vegetarian, lactose-free, gluten-free, and other options upon request.

There will be granola bars, fruit, water, and coffee/tea throughout the day.

5.2. Other Food on Campus

Butler Pavilion/Bender Arena houses a number of other food and drink options, including The Bridge on the second floor and a variety of vendors on the first floor of Mary Graydon Center, which is adjacent to Butler Pavilion. The Bridge does not accept debit or credit cards but most other vendors on campus do.

6. Contact & Questions

We hope that this access guide provides some of the basic information for the symposium and we strongly encourage you to email us with any other questions/concerns/ideas so that we can continue to expand the access guide accordingly.

Please get in touch with Dr Tanja Aho (aho@american.edu) with any access concerns, whether or not they are listed here. We look forward to welcoming everyone to our AU conversation about disability, access, and teaching on April 10!