One of the first student organizations for students with disabilities in the United States—the Disabled American Veterans of the World War—was founded at Mizzou.

Decades before federal law required making facilities accessible, Mizzou became one of the first campuses in the nation to add accessibility features. As one of only three accessible universities in the Midwest at the time, Mizzou was the designated education center for students with disabilities from Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.

Mizzou established its first office to provide accommodations for students with disabilities. This office, now the Disability Center, supports over 1300 students with disabilities each year, facilitating access and equal opportunity, promoting disability inclusion, student self-determination, and principles of universal design in teaching, programs, services, and physical facilities.

Mizzou implemented 10 million dollars' worth of accessibility upgrades on campus following the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Mizzou hired its first ADA Coordinator, Lee Henson. Lee served the University as ADA Coordinator for 20 years, and the Access Mizzou Awards are awarded each year in his memory. The Office of Accessibility and ADA continues his work, providing accommodations for faculty and staff, educating the campus on disability and the ADA, and working to improve accessibility on campus.

Mizzou's first Annual Celebrate Ability Week was held to promote disability awareness and culture and highlight the valuable contributions of persons with disabilities at Mizzou. This celebration continues each October.

Mizzou remains a leader in disability inclusion and research and is a mecca for persons with disabilities from across Missouri and the country.