Commission on Disabilities

Annual Report for 2011-2012

Prepared and submitted on May 15, 2012 by Beth Esselstrom, Chair

The Commission held 7 meetings this year:

October 6, 2011
November 3, 2011
December 1, 2011
February 2, 2012
March 6, 2012
April 5, 2012
May 3, 2012

Major Activities

We co-sponsored the Recognition Reception for the Office of Disability Resources and the Office of Cultural Diversity-- an end of the year event that acknowledges graduates and student leaders, held on April 25.

Our major accomplishment this year was the completion of two Access Walks. These occurred March 28 and April 11 and covered the interior of the campus. We are anticipating a 3-day return visit by Roberta Juarez, Coordinator of Disability Services at UM-TC, and the Commission may amend our recommendations subsequent to her visit and assessment of the same interior spaces covered by the Access Walks. A version of these recommendations citing corresponding ADA code will be made available to the CC T and/or Facilities Management upon request.

Recommendations for Immediate Action (by June 30, 2012):

1) Merchandise displays in the UMD Stores and Tweed Museum stores should be adjusted to allow for wheelchair access throughout. For the most part, this involves moving or removal of carousels, tables, and the like to provide access.

2) The floor seam between the Library Annex and Library buildings (gold metal) is raised. It presents a tripping, wheelchair and walking stick/cane hazard and should be corrected.

3) The door jamb lip below the doors between the School of Med and Chem (nearest School of Med) needs adjustment. It presents a tripping, wheelchair and walking stick/cane hazard and should be corrected.

4) The floor seam between the School of Med and MWAH is uneven and needs adjustment. It presents a tripping, wheelchair and walking stick/cane hazard and should be corrected.

5) The floor seam between the Sophie concourse ramp and LSH should be evaluated. It may present a tripping, wheelchair and cane hazard and, if so, should be corrected.
6) The entrance to the Dining Center should be redesigned to provide unimpeded access for a wheelchair.

7) The chairs in front of the low counter area at TCF bank should be stacked and set aside for wheelchair access.

8) Incorrect signage pertaining to accessible stalls should be replaced outside the following restrooms: MWAH ground level (near Planetarium entrance); Heller Hall second level; Kirby 3rd floor (outside Ballroom); Bohannon Hall 200-level.

**Recommendations for Short-Range Action (by the start of Fall Semester 2012):**

1) Each campus department should check service counter heights, doorway and pathway widths to confirm ADA compliance and budget for necessary changes for FY13. In particular, adjustments to Rec Sports Rec Addition could be made for wheelchair accessibility (e.g., there is a hand bike in the cardio area but it is located in a far corner and is not wheelchair accessible due to space restrictions between equipment pieces).

2) Campus custodians should participate in a briefing/training regarding placement of moveable items (garbage cans, seating, displays, etc) to allow for adequate and barrier-free access for individuals with sight impairments or who utilize assistive equipment. Attention to barriers to fire extinguishers, pull stations, AEDs, message boards and signs.

3) Hooks/shelves should be removed from the walls or redesigned in BohH 90, Mon 70 and 80, LSci 175 and 185.

4) Assess all campus elevators for audible queues. All equipped with audible queue technology should be enabled to an ambient noise level above class-passing times.

5) Tread/striping on stairs lacking any color differentiation should be added (e.g., LSBE, LSci 185, BohH 90, two staircases from LSH lobby down to Sophie concourse, Tweed).

6) Mullion between double doors inside Darland main floor (near 123) should be removed.

7) Faculty/instructors should encourage students to store backpacks along the front and rear walls of large lecture halls during midterm and final exams (storage alongside stairs pose a safety issue for all occupants in the event of an evacuation emergency).

8) Mullion between double doors inside Darland main floor (near 123) should be removed.

**Recommendations for Medium-Range Action (by the start of Fall Semester 2013):**

1) Conduct a survey of all campus restrooms to assess: accessible stall signage, accessible stall availability, height and style of toilet paper and towel dispensers. This might be accomplished via a student employee position or internship in FM. We did not find the current style and usual height of most toilet paper dispensers to be readily accessible. We recommend prioritizing the replacement or alternate placement of dispensers in accessible stalls.

2) Conduct a survey of all campus fire alarms and extinguishers to assess height requirements and clearance. This might be accomplished via a student employee position or internship in FM.

3) Address protruding drinking fountains with installation of curtains or barriers. Protruding fountains present a hazard to walking stick/cane users because the cane cannot identify the fountain at its base.
4) Conduct a survey of all campus elevators to assess visible signage. Signage should be added with priority on those elevators used most frequently by the public (e.g., SCC on first floor Kirby, LSH elevator from Sophie’s concourse should be first). The School of Med may provide the ideal model for good elevator signage. Interior signage should be added for those elevators that open/close on two sides (e.g., SCC and LSBE) and buttons checked for Braille.

5) MPAC ticket windows, Romano ticket windows and concessions, and Cashiers’ windows and nearby counters should be adjusted to meet ADA code height. Northern Shores coffee shop should adjust or replace condiments stands for height to accommodate wheelchair access and renovate to provide wheelchair access throughout.

6) Conduct a survey of all interior ramps and add railings to those lacking them.

7) ADA seating should be added to MPAC and Romano.

8) Tweed, UMD Stores and dining facilities should use larger font for exhibit labels, price tags and signage that would be more welcoming and inclusive. Tweed should consider Braille labels.

Recommendations for Long-Range Action (2-5 years and beyond):

1) Restrooms in large new construction projects should be designed without doors. Restrooms in small and medium-sized new construction or renovation projects should be equipped with power assist doors.

2) Ramps in new construction or renovation projects should be code compliant.

3) Fire doors in new construction or renovation projects should be without mullions wherever possible.

4) Drinking fountains in new construction or renovation projects should be designed to provide both adequate wheelchair access as well as safety feature for sight impairment.

5) Stair material should be chosen with regard to safety for use with canes and for surface slipperiness (e.g., Swenson Science Building and Civil Engineering Building material are not the best choices).

6) Exits/entrances on lecture halls in new construction or renovation projects should be designed to minimize interior hallway chokepoints. Examples of current problem areas are Chem 200, SCC 120, and LSci 175 and 185.

7) Door knobs should be replaced by handles in renovation projects or as individual classroom or office doors are re-keyed.

Other activities and accomplishments

We co-signed with other UMD Commissions a memo in October 2011 to the Campus Change Team co-chairs requesting clarification of CCT expectations in regard to Item 3B in the 2011-2012 Campus Climate Agenda.

Future Activities

1) Complete exterior access walks in both warm weather and snow conditions during the 2012-2013 school year.
2) Consider an elevator walk during the 2012-2013 school year, following numerous elevator upgrades over summer 2012.

3) Plan and implement, along with other groups (Campus Change Team, VCFO, FM, Chancellor's Cabinet), action steps outlined in the “Tool for Achieving Change.”

4) Continue to monitor accessibility on campus, including bathrooms, classrooms, food service, entryways, reception areas, etc.

5) Replace members whose terms have expired or who have resigned; expand the Commission membership to include representation from key campus units.

6) Continue working with UMD Assistive Technology Team to improve learning for students with disabilities. This includes provision and maintenance of adaptive technology in classrooms, labs, and library, as well as faculty support and resources to utilize Universal Design for Learning.

7) Continue to monitor and address the campus climate as it relates to persons with disabilities.

**2011-2012 Membership of the UMD Commission on Disabilities**

Jim Allert - Computer Science  
Judy Bromen - Disability Resources (ex officio)  
Charlene Brown - Library  
Tracey Bolen - School of Business and Economics  
Mary Kaye Caskey - Disability Resources (ex officio)  
Penny Cragun - Disability Resources (ex officio)  
**Beth Esselstrom** - Chair - Student Support Services  
Trudie Hughes - Education  
Mandie Johnson - Information Technology Systems and Services (ITSS)  
Georgia Keeney - Health, Physical Education and Recreation  
Erik Larson - Facilities Management  
Emily Norenberg - Disability Resources (ex officio)  
Mark Paulson - Information Technology Systems and Services (ITSS)  
Deborah Petersen-Perlman - Communication  
Roger Petry - Information Technology Systems and Services (ITSS)  
Deborah Plechner - Women’s Studies  
Paul Ranelli - School of Pharmacy  
Vince Repesh - First Year Experience  
Roland Root - Rehabilitation Services ([Minnesota WorkForce Center](http://www.workforce.state.mn.us), State of Minnesota -- Duluth Office) roland.root@state.mn.us  
John Weiske - Housing Office  
Galen White - Access North ([Center For Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota](http://www.accessnorth.net)) galen@accessnorth.net  
Laura Zimmerman - Mathematics/Statistics  
Judy Breuer - Student, Access for All  
Anna Hewitt - Student, Access for All