Commission on Disabilities
Annual Report for 2012-2013

Prepared and submitted on June 15, 2013 by Beth Esselstrom, Chair, and Penny Cragun, Interim Chair

The Commission held 6 meetings this year:

September 27, 2012
October 25, 2012
December 13, 2012
February 28, 2013
March 28, 2013
May 2, 2013

Major Activities

October 2012 was Disability Awareness month at UMD. The Commission on Disabilities co-sponsored the following events which were organized and presented by Access for All:

October 9       Panel Discussion on Disability 2:30-4:00 pm in Kirby Rafters
October 16      Film: Lives Worth Living (on disability history) 2:30-4:00 pm in Kirby Rafters
October 23      Presentation by Matthew Sanford: Waking Mind and Body 7:00 pm in Kirby Ballroom
October 24      Yoga class and breakout sessions led by Matthew Sanford in Kirby Ballroom

We also 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 scholarship recipients, graduates and student leaders, held on April 24, 2013. Two students with a disability were awarded Harry Oden scholarships and six were awarded Marcia Bevard-Kulick Scholarships for 2013-2014. In addition, the following faculty and staff were nominated by students for “Going the Extra Mile” and were recognized at the reception: Jefferson Campbell, associate professor in Music; Erika Bladholm, instructor in Chemistry and Biochemistry; Jennifer Reierison, assistant professor in Communication; Amy Renne, associate academic advisor in Pharmacy; Barb Titus, instructor in Communication; Laurie Van Brunt, teaching specialist in Music; Robert Lloyd, associate professor in Psychology.
Our major accomplishment this year was the completion of an exterior Access Walk on May 9. The Commission made the following observations on this walk:

1. Concrete under DC walkway next to Street Level Bookstore patio is uneven/crumbling.
2. Walking into LSBE from the Plaza side-- outdoor power operated button questioned (it is a rectangle shape, not a round shape).
3. Decorative concrete outside of Library is crumbling.
4. EduE door (at intersection of Voss Kovach and Library)- does it need power operated door?
5. Entrance to Voss Kovach (near Lib and EduE)- concrete is in rough shape.
6. Cast iron plate is missing on the curb from Maroon Lot to Library.
7. Textured coating on the wood ramp to the Civil Engineering Building is crumbling.
8. The curb from Pay Lot G to the Civil Engineering building needs work.
9. The Civil Engineering entrance near the large garage door needs attention for unevenness.
10. There is concrete erosion on the sidewalk in front of Voss Kovach nearest the RSOP building.
11. There is no access aisle for the handicap parking spaces in front of Romano Gymnasium.
12. There is no access aisle for the handicap parking spaces in Gold Lot C.
13. The Training Room door across Ward Wells Field House and tennis courts is not power operated.
14. The yellow automatic door sticker on SCC exterior door is worn out/disintegrated.
15. The colored curb cuts in front of SCC exterior doors have big gaps.
16. The door threshold entering into Concourse A from SCC parking meters is uneven.
17. The curb cuts crossing Lot A by the Medical School are uneven/have big gaps.
18. The concrete under the Medical School/MWAH walkway is in rough shape.
19. The campus entrance to 2nd floor of MWAH (across from pond) is uneven and the grade seems too steep.
20. The entrance to Life Science/Pharmacy is uneven.
21. The Heller Hall handicap parking spot curb is uneven.
22. The former Kirby bus hub entrance is in rough shape.

Recommendations for action based on these observations will be sent to Facilities Management later this summer and will include references to ADA.
Other activities and accomplishments

Commission members met with the VCFO and Facilities Management leadership in August 2012 to discuss the Commission’s final report of 2011-2012, which included a summary of the interior Access Walks conducted during spring semester 2012. As a result of this meeting, Facilities Management provided a monthly update to the Commission regarding progress made on those recommendations for action to improve campus accessibility and safety.

The Commission helped organize and sponsor-- along with the Commission on Women, the Diversity Commission, and the GLBT Commission-- a forum for the campus community on reporting incidents. This forum, held on April 5, 2013 in the Kirby Ballroom, was well attended by faculty, staff, and students (see brochure developed for this forum).

The Commission discussed and approved funding students to further their leadership development. Emily Norenberg and Deborah Petersen-Perlman agreed to develop a plan for this process.

The Commission identified a representative to the Campus Change Team (Tim Chambers) as well as chair and co-chair for 2013-4014 (Deborah Petersen-Perlman and Gina Pudlick).

Future Activities

1) The Commission discussed a programming initiative and the possibility of using Matthew Sanford as an ongoing resource. The Commission will consider this in 2013-2014.
2) The Commission discussed the possibility of sponsoring students to attend leadership conferences. If Commission funding policies allow, perhaps this could be set up as a Commission-funded award.
3) Complete an exterior access walk in snow conditions during the 2013-2014 school year.
4) Consider an elevator walk during the 2013-2014 school year, following numerous elevator upgrades over summer 2012.
5) Plan and implement, along with other groups (Campus Change Team, VCFO, FM, Chancellor’s Cabinet), action steps outlined in the “Tool for Achieving Change.”
6) Continue to monitor accessibility on campus, including bathrooms, classrooms, food service, entryways, reception areas, etc.
7) Replace members whose terms have expired or who have resigned; expand the Commission membership to include representation from key campus units.
8) 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.
9) Continue to monitor and address the campus climate as it relates to persons with disabilities.