

ADA Committee Meeting  
November 4, 2008

In Attendance: Wonda Berry, Lindsey Smith, Connie Brown, Marilyn Finney, Cori Criger, Rick Gilmore, Craig Darrough, Brian Harrah, Jeff Ellison, David Williams, Don Winkie, Evan Noynaert, Mike Ritter, Judy Grimes, Steve Estes, Tom Wilson,

**Ellen Kisker** welcomed Jeff Ellison and Dave Williams and asked them to give us a report on the renovations for Spratt Stadium under the MAX Experience. They discussed the need to improve accessibility to the visitor side of the stadium. They stated that this will be particularly challenging due to the natural terrain on the Northeast side of the stadium. Jeff also discussed the possibility of renovating the Gold Coat box seats. This would involve a new concession area, new restrooms, and an elevator to the press tower and box seats. Dave mentioned that they create additional, temporary parking spaces for people with disabilities during football games. He also discussed the possibility of adding a parking lot to the west of the stadium if the softball field is ever relocated.

**Wonda Berry** mentioned the need for hand rails along the aisles. Judy mentioned that some stadiums have a handrail running down the center of the aisle. Rick Gilmore commented that the basketball arena in the Looney Complex is also in need of improved seating for people with mobility impairments. Cori asked if they were planning on installing a listening assist system in the stadium. Jeff Ellison state that they would look into it but were not that far along with the plans.

**Mike Ritter** mentioned that he had been in contact with the Missouri Department of Conservation to discuss improving access to the pond behind the Conservation building located on McCarthy Drive. Mike mentioned that this proposal will be taken under consideration as the Conservation Commission plans its 2009 fiscal budget. Mike submitted a proposal on behalf of the committee that would create a paved path to the pond and would also create a paved path from the Commons building to the Conservation Building parking lot. These two improvements would make the pond much more accessible for students and community members with disabilities. ike also gave an update on the ADA website that is currently being created by Michelle Ritter. The website will serve as a one-stop information portal for students, staff, faculty, and community members regarding services and information related to disability issues.

**Don Winkie** discussed the Adaptive Technology area and stated that he was already working on text book conversions for the spring semester. Don also stated that he has a new work study student who is being trained to take over for Connie Brown who will be graduating in December. \* We would like to extend our appreciation to Connie for her dedication to helping students with disabilities. She has been an invaluable asset to the Assistive Technology department and we wish her well in her future endeavors. Don also mentioned the need for more physical space to be able to adequately meet the growing number of students requesting A/T services. Steve Estes asked Don if he was part of the textbook committee. This committee is hoping to move Western away from reliance on

traditional text books and in the direction of electronic texts. Don mentioned that one of the major problems to providing timely services is that many instructors wait until the last minute to place an order for their textbooks for the coming semester. This puts Don in a real bind to provide alternative texts to students prior to the first day of the semester. Don also mentioned that he will be attending the “Accessing Higher Ground” conference at the University of Colorado/Boulder in November.

Ellen asked **Tom Wilson** to provide the prospective of a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor. Tom spoke in general terms about the increased number of students being referred to Missouri Western by VR. He also spoke favorably about the working relationship between VR and the MWSU Office of Disability Services.

**Marilyn Finney** asked the committee to use People First language in our discussions as a committee. This was in response to repeatedly hearing words and phrases such as: “handicapped”, “the handicapped”, “handicapped parking”, “special needs kids”, etc. She also asked us to incorporate People First language into all of our campus signage, publications, and communications. We have attached a pdf of People First language that explains the importance of using the appropriate language when discussing people with disabilities.

**Craig Darrough** asked if Missouri Western has a formal, written policy and procedure for effectively evacuating students with disabilities during emergencies. He stated that one of our students had been left in her dorm room during an emergency drill and that another student with a disability was the one who took the initiative to alert the student and escort her to a safe location. He stated that he has heard over the years that we have a plan but he has never seen a copy of that plan. Judy Grimes stated that she was certain that we have a formal plan and that she would check with someone (likely Michael Speros) to verify.

Craig also mentioned that the Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge near Mound City Missouri has lowered several of their telescopes on the observation platform so that people using wheelchairs and scooters can fully participate in observing the wildlife that the refuge has to offer.

Evan Noynaert mentioned that faculty may be interested in receiving training working with students with mental health issues. Judy mentioned that Dave Brown could provide that training.

**After words:** Invariably, important discussions ensue following the closing of the ADA meeting. We think it is important to include the highlights of those discussions within the context of these minutes.

Ellen, Mike and Brian discussed the installation of the new sign posts for accessible parking. Brian stated that Lonnie Johnson had told Bruce Whitsell to install the posts so that the bottom of the sign is at a height of 48” above the ground. Mike state that the

committee recommended that the signs be at least 72” above the ground to meet the ADA regulation of “...signs shall be located so they cannot be obscured by a vehicle parked in the space”. (**ADAAG 4.6.4**). Signs designating parking places for disabled people can be seen from a driver's seat if the signs are mounted high enough above the ground and located at the front of a parking space. (**Appendix A4.6.4 Signage**)

Brian recommended that we have a conversation with Bob Bidding, Lonnie Johnson, and Dennis Johnson regarding the city codes and ordinances related to the height of signage for accessible parking.