

Committee for Persons with Disabilities

2015-2016 Annual Report

Submitted by: Susan Z. Lever, Chair

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This past year, the charge and membership of the Committee was expanded through approvals obtained through the Faculty Council. The current Charge is to:

“...advise the provost and the Vice Chancellor for Operations on MU programs, services and policies that affect students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. The Committee also reviews applications for funds related to projects designed to improve the campus experience of persons with disabilities and makes recommendations about the disbursement of these funds.”

(<http://committees.missouri.edu/persons-disabilities/index.php>, accessed May 26, 2016).

Typically, faculty, staff and students rotate on and off the Committee. Two new faculty came on to the committee: Drs. Patricia Alafaireet and Philip Wood. To accommodate the expansion in the charge, we added two additional faculty member positions, filled by Drs. John Bowders and Kari Lane. We were successful to add additional undergraduate members and currently have a graduate student member as well. We have our full complement of staff members. In addition, we have many *ex officio* members and past members who continue to attend the meetings. These latter individuals are involved and interested in promoting accessibility across campus and their input is quite valuable. Thus, we have many opportunities for cross-pollination of ideas of ways to improve accessibility on campus for our students, faculty, staff and guests. I have given the Committee meetings a tagline: “the most positive way to spend one and a half hours every second Thursday of the academic months.”

Substantive activities during the 2015-2016 academic year:

- requested nominations for the 2nd Annual Lee Henson Access Mizzou Award. The group reviewed the nominations and made decisions as to the most worthy recipients. The award ceremony was on the first day of campus-wide Celebrate Ability Week. After the ceremony the Committee thoroughly reviewed the process and decided on improvements for the 3rd Annual awards.
- expanded the charge and membership of the Committee so that we could assist Ms. Amber Cheek, Disability Inclusion and ADA Compliance Manager, in evaluation of special projects to improve accessibility and Universal Design projects on campus. These projects are small in nature, funded by Mr. Gary Ward, the Vice Chancellor for

Operations, and fall outside the standard renovation schedule, but address a needed improvement proactively. We reached consensus to commit funds to rebuilding the ramp within the Missouri Theater to provide a wider access to those in wheelchairs. In addition, the new ramp will have a gentler slope and a flat square platform connecting the two portions of the ramp to provide for safe pivoting. This project should commence this summer.

- Many groups and individuals presented at our meetings: Ms. Amber Cheek, presented on the program to provide signage indicating accessible entrances to all buildings on campus; TIPS for kids, an interdisciplinary training program for children with neuromuscular developmental issues; the 3D Printing Club, who is constructing a replica of main campus buildings and topography. The 3D buildings and map will be constructed to scale, so that the finished map can be “felt” by those on campus needing additional guidance. The Mizzou Unity Coalition, a student run group with a goal to improve accessibility on campus, joined us at a meeting. And Best Buddies of Missouri, who wanted to initiate (and were successful) starting an MU Campus organization presented on their program. The goal of this chapter is to “help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) build meaningful relationships with their peers through one-to-one friendships, employment opportunities and leadership development” (Kelly Quinn, Missouri state director). We also were joined by Mr. Chuck Henson, the Interim Director of the new Division of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity, who explained the vision of the Division. Mr. Jason Rollins, the Associate Director of Marketing Communications and Chair of the Web Standards Committee presented planned campus web accessibility standards, Ms. Barb Hammer presented on the search and recruitment of Ms. Ashley Brickley as an Assistant Director for the Disability Center, and Mr. Derrick Doolittle described the plans for the new softball field and included information on fulfilling the concept of Universal Design in the plans.