

GRINNELL COLLEGE CAMPUS ACCESS PLAN

DIVERSITY BY DESIGN



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September 15, 2007

CONTEXT:

The Grinnell culture includes a tradition of social responsibility, diversity and inclusion that, like other issues of environmental responsibility, are reflected in the administration's approach to access. Despite under representation or under reporting (based on national demographics three to six percent of the student body and nine to fifteen percent of the faculty and staff are expected to have a disability) the importance of access to the community has been increasingly recognized in the campus and strategic planning processes. This can be seen at many levels of the institution; the grass roots Ad Hoc Committee for Campus Awareness & Education; Disability Services, the Office of Institutional Planning's recognition that improving the accessibility enhances diversity and improves the sense of well being for students, faculty and staff; in the 4/27/2007 document Planning To Improve Accessibility At Grinnell College; and in the charge for the newly created position of Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Achievement.

The community's commitment is best be summed up by paraphrasing the goals of the Ad Hoc Committee for Campus Awareness & Education; raising awareness of disability-related issues at Grinnell, including challenges related to physical access; with an emphasis on the difference between formal compliance with the law and true openness and accessibility that creates a truly welcoming environment.

THE CAMPUS:

The college was founded in 1846 and is currently home to approximately 1500 students and 600 faculty and staff. The 120 acre campus is situated within the town of Grinnell and is comprised of sixty-three buildings including nineteen residence halls and twelve classroom buildings. The core campus grid forms a traditional quadrangle with generous green space. It is framed by the North, South and East residence complexes and further defined by three primary East-West streets (Sixth, Eighth and Tenth) providing both pedestrian and vehicular flow through campus and bridging the railroad tracks and right of way that separates the South and East residence complexes from the remainder of campus. There are an additional ten pedestrian paths that bridge the tracks..

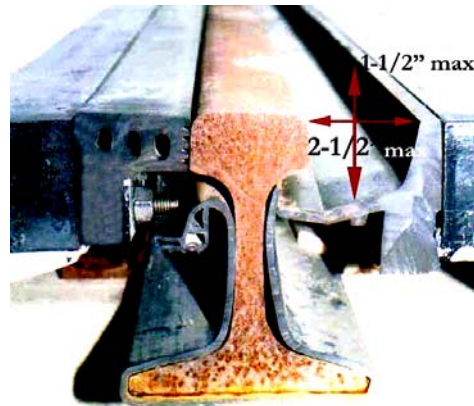
The buildings range in age and size from houses built in the early 1900s to the recently finished Joe Rosenfeld Center and Robert Noyce Science Center. In the last six years there has been considerable renovation and construction that has both dramatically improved access and highlighted remaining barriers.

GENERAL CAMPUS OBSERVATIONS:

In general pedestrian paths are of ample width, are on grades of less than 5% and the surfaces are in good repair. The curb ramps along the three primary streets are generally in good repair (the Northwest corner of Sixth and Park is an exception). The train crossings, particularly on the secondary pedestrian paths, are problematic presenting a potential hazard for the entrapment of shoe's heel; wheels of a chair, scooter or bicycle; or the tips of canes and walkers when being traversed.



The key to safe pedestrian rail crossings is minimizing the area between the inside ball of rail and the crossing surface (the flangeway). The Americans with Disability Act requires that the flangeway widths be a maximum of two and a half inches wide. Best practices dictate that the depth of the flangeway area should be kept to a minimum (approximately one and a half inches). Systems exist that provide protection against the potential entrapment hazards at rail crossings (see <http://www.centurygrp.com> for an example)



A walk through the campus public spaces makes it clear that barrier removal and access improvements have occurred as a corollary to other motivations (construction projects or an individual need) but have not been part of a systematic plan for access. Grinnell's recently developed Planning to Improve Accessibility (PIA) document now serves as a foundation for a cohesive process.

New construction on campus is clearly taking compliance with the ADA Standards for Accessible Design into account. In most instances spaces are designed to meet minimum required clearances or maximum allowable heights and slopes. Without clear guidance to place a premium on access architects and contractors will typically target these minimum and maximum requirements in order to gain space and cost efficiencies.

The PIA document should be reviewed annually and a process to evaluate the feasibility of its specific goals should be established and integrated into Grinnell's planning cycle. I would recommend reinforcing the connections to the Grinnell's core values by developing a design statement that incorporates universal design principles and Grinnell's Environmentally Responsible Building Guidelines into a single document that can guide both campus planning and building design. This type of document could guide early stages of conceptual design and provide an introduction to more detailed

guidance.

An issue not addressed in the PIA document is signage. The statutes assume that few environments are barrier free. This is addressed by requiring signage indicating the accessible paths of travel to accessible entrances, restrooms and other key features from their inaccessible counterparts. On the whole such signage is absent from the campus and this deficit should be addressed. Developing a signage plan requires that you develop an inventory of the campuses accessible features which can be an invaluable planning tool. Additionally it provides a basis for reviewing policies that are used to provide programmatic access for activities in those areas that have not yet been improved.

Comments On Plan To Improve Accessibility:

PLANNING TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AT GRINNELL COLLEGE (APRIL 27, 2007)

I. Facilities Accessibility Efforts to Date

In 1992, President Ferguson convened a task force to identify physical and technological barriers at Grinnell College and to work to ameliorate them. A careful review of existing facilities and learning software took place and a number of barriers were addressed as a consequence of the task force's work. Since that time, the College has addressed accessibility issues in developing and implementing the 1998 campus plan, on a case-by-case basis with respect to grandfathered facilities¹, and most recently in the strategic plan. In addition, since 1998 the College has sought to hire individuals considered disabled as the opportunities arise. The College now implements a number of strategies—including ASL interpreting, real-time captioning, and amplification headsets—to make major events accessible to the hearing impaired, and new technologies such as dictation and screen-reader software to allow students to dictate their writing or 'read' their textbooks on their computer.

II. Grinnell College's Strategic Plan and Accessibility

A new, and more focused, phase of work on accessibility has begun as a result of the College's strategic plan (approved in 2005). The College's goal of improving diversity among its students, staff, and faculty includes the intention to ensure that a range of disabled individuals should find Grinnell College a welcoming place and a good environment to work and study. With additional funding for accessibility projects built into its 5-year budget projections, the College is reviewing and planning future commitments to improving the accessibility of its facilities and learning environments.

¹ Grandfathered does not accurately convey the obligation. Under the ADA there is an ongoing obligation to remove physical barriers to access from existing buildings when it is readily achievable and to meet the Standards for Accessible Design in renovation projects and new construction effective January 25, 1992. As a recipient of federal funds Grinnell has an earlier obligation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation to provide full programmatic access and access in renovations and new construction effective June 3, 1977.

This planning has benefited from the work and commitment of an ad hoc Disability Committee, and from the on-going contributions of the staff in Student Affairs, the Health Center, and Facilities Management.

III. Goals Regarding New Buildings and Grandfathered Buildings

To improve accessibility on campus and to comply with the spirit and the letter of the law of the ADA, Grinnell College works to improve the accessibility of its programs, grounds and facilities in accordance with the following guidelines².

1. Grinnell College seeks to ensure that all new buildings are accessible and in compliance with ADA regulations. This includes new classrooms, new residence halls, and other buildings.
2. Buildings and spaces undergoing extensive renovation that are central to the instructional function of the College should also be accessible. These include teaching buildings (or floors of buildings) and major administrative buildings.³
3. All offices that are public in nature should, within the period of the strategic plan, be moved from buildings not in category 1 or 2 or at least be the subject of firm planning for renovation or new construction.⁴
4. As we turn to our older buildings, we intend to make these spaces more accessible and to reassign low-use and non-public functions to those spaces that cannot be made accessible in a reasonable fashion.

New buildings and major renovations completed within the past decade include: 1) Athletics and Fitness phase one, 2) Bucksbaum Center for the Arts, 3) Joe Rosenfield '25 Center, 4) Chrystal Center, 5) Cowles dining retrofit, 6) Old Glove Factory, 7) Kershaw, Lazier, Rose, and Rathje Residence Halls, 8) new Facilities Management building, 9) Conard Environmental Research Area, and 10) Noyce Science Center phase two and renovation of portions of the older portions of the science building (new construction to be completed in the spring of 2007 and renovation to be completed the spring of 2008).

IV. Strategic Plan Implementation⁵

²These guidelines convey a clear commitment to compliance and hint at a desire to go beyond the minimum and embrace the spirit of the ADA but does not provide planners and designers with a sense of what that entails. The addition of a design statement pointed at universal design approaches and/or local design standards focusing priorities and choice points related to access would be useful.

³Renovations that change occupancy or function trigger the need to upgrade access to the current standards within the scope of the renovation project as well as the path of travel and supporting amenities from the building entrance to the renovation.

⁴Until spaces can be moved a plan for providing services and relocating classes, meetings or events should be developed and publicized. Consider Residence Hall spaces in this section. For new construction the goal would be five percent of each type (configuration, cost, amenities) be accessible. Since housing at Grinnell is more than a place to sleep but an integral part of the learning experience access is also a programmatic issues. Housing programs in the houses surrounding campus pose particular problems as do the older residence halls. Revisiting the options discussed in the 2001 Student Housing Plan study produced by Stegman and Associates.

⁵I would recommend establishing a process that regularly reviews needs generated by newly identified needs of individual student, faculty and staff in the context of scheduled construction and renovation projects to adjust the targeted barrier removal in any given fiscal year.

1. Action by the end of FY2008 (within the next twelve months)
 - a) Appoint a diversity officer reporting directly to the President, whose charge will include furthering the College's goal of improved accessibility – search completed
 - b) Conduct a comprehensive accessibility review- planning underway for a facilities audit⁶
 - c) Improve wheelchair lift and related door at Mears Cottage – completed
 - d) Install mechanized doors at Burling entrance – planning has begun
 - e) Install handicapped restroom capability in Burling – planning has begun
 - f) Improve accessibility to 1205 Park; to the extent that it is safe, prudent, and feasible, make both floors accessible; at the least, make the main level accessible – planning has begun
 - g) Improve accessibility to Forum Creative Computing Lab – in process
 - h) Review book store entrances
 - i) Continue to petition the railroad to improve pedestrian railroad crossings

2. Medium-term plan (2-7 years)
 - a) Complete Athletics and Fitness Center; demolish PEC (a building presenting accessibility challenges)
 - b) Extend sidewalk along east side of Park St. up to 10th Avenue; consider whether to extend it north of 10th Avenue to connect with the sidewalk just north of College Park
 - c) Identify and ameliorate uneven sections of sidewalks along College properties
 - d) Address accessibility issues for Carnegie second and fourth floors⁷
 - e) Improve accessibility to the second floor of Nollen House⁸
 - f) Improve accessibility to Harry Hopkins House (or reassign its function)
 - g) Improve accessibility to Faculty House
 - h) Review Forum South Lounge in terms of either improving accessibility or reassignment of function
 - i) Construct a fully accessible pre-school

3. Long-term plan (7-15 years)
 - a) Replace or renovate Burling library and relocate ITS to this Building
 - b) Revisit the functions assigned to the Forum once the Creative Computing Lab has a new central home

⁶This review should include policy, practice and resources for the provision of auxiliary aids and services in addition to facilities.

⁷ As indicated in building review section of this report in advance of a major renovation that would add direct elevator access to all floors relocating offices to accessible locations and using Carnegie for non-public functions and general classrooms (with a rescheduling plan) would be an effective approach.

⁸To create access to the second floor of Nollen House a significant addition that included an elevator or external elevator tower would have to be added. I am not sure this is feasible or desirable. In the short run a plan for the use of Crystal for meetings by second floor occupants of Nollen that require accessibility. This would include regularly notifying participants of the option.

INDIVIDUAL BUILDING NOTES:

John Chrystal Center



Constructed in 2002 this building serves as the principal gateway to the college and houses Admissions, The Registrar, Financial Aid and Institutional Research. It includes a gallery and meeting space with technological amenities.

The approach from the adjacent parking is accessible with designated spaces and curb ramp. On the pedestrian approach to and from the East the entry walk crosses the sidewalk and ends in an orphan curb ramp (no matching curb ramp on the other side of the street). This is compounded by the fact that the curb ramp at the corner crossing is (Park and Sixth) in disrepair



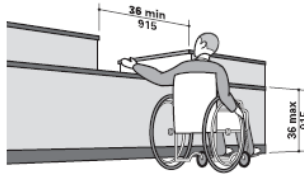
The main entrance is accessible with an automatic door opener. There is an elevator serving the building that meet the accessibility standard.

Bathroom doors throughout the space need the hydraulic closers adjusted to 5 Pounds of force or less (currently they range from 7-16). In the men's rooms the urinal is effectively in an alcove that is too narrow (31 inches). Technically out of compliance but since there are accessible stalls the bathrooms are usable.



There is a break room for staff that is accessible. The sink is accessible by someone in a wheel chair using a side approach I would recommend in future designs removing the storage counter under the sink to provide knee clearance for a front approach.

Service Counter (Financial Aid, Registrar, etc.) There is no section of the counter for wheelchair users to conduct business from a comfortable height (a minimum 36 inch long section at 36 inches in height is required).



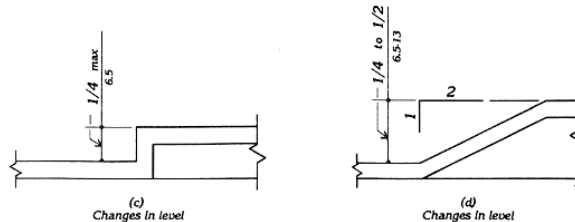
Similarly the Admissions' reception station does not have a lower section however most business is conducted in offices. A clip board for filling out address cards would be useful. There is a clear path to the Admission Counselor's office area and the sample office viewed has ample maneuvering clearances. The waiting area furniture might be adjusted to allow wheelchairs to pull up to a conversational grouping and be out the walking traffic

Burling Library



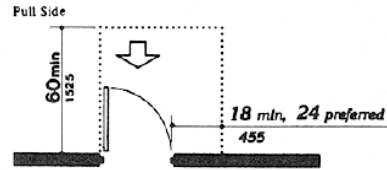
Constructed in 1951 and renovated in 1981. A current barrier removal project (2007) adds an automatic door opener at the main entrance and an accessible unisex restroom on the main level. This building houses our main library collections and provides study space. The main service and circulation desk is accessible and staffed if assistance is needed in retrieving books from the stacks.

The path from parking is unavoidably long the joints at the ramped approach to the entrance have settled and create a vertical rise of over a half inch and should be ground down or patched.



An automatic door opener on the exit (or adjusting the opening force down to below 8 pounds of pressure is recommended.

The new unisex bathroom does not have a full 18 inches on the latch side (opens in). One solution is to reverse the door swing if local code allows. Another solution would be to install an automatic door opener.



The furniture layout in the listening rooms does not provide adequate maneuvering clearances for a wheelchair. The furniture is fixed but if the fixed seats at the end of the room by the door were replaced with movable seats space for maneuvering would be available.

The location of copy machines do not provide for a wheelchair accessible approach.

There are a number of computer workstations (Macintosh and PC) arranged in a rows that do not allow for wheelchair clearances or in raised areas. There are only two computers that are potentially accessible at the end of each row and they are both PCs. At least one of each type of workstation should be located in the accessible locations and signage provided to the computer lab housed within the library.

One scan and read workstation (Kurzweil software recommended) and one CCTV enlargement system are recommended. If purchased they should be installed in a wheelchair accessible location.

Carnegie



A renovation in 1989 to provide a connection to ARH that allows wheelchair access to Carnegie's first and third floor. A 2002 renovation removed offices from the centers of second and third floors creating classrooms. The building houses faculty offices (all floors) Support staff offices (first floor), classrooms and study areas.

Support offices on first floor accessible by connecting ramp. Site conditions did not allow for a gentler slope or a full level landing at the doors connecting the building. If allowable by fire code removing the doors or installing "hold opens" wired to the alarm system would improve usability.

Classrooms on third floor are accessible through connecting building (ARH) elevator. Faculty offices are on second and fourth floors are not accessible. In the short run equipping one or two unassigned offices with a desk, computer and phone on an accessible floor and developing a scheduling system so that they could be used if a faculty member and a student for whom access is an issue need to meet. It is a space that might also be used by a faculty member with a temporary disability.

In the long run you will need a better system to address the above situation as well as the potential faculty member with a disability who should not be segregated from his or

her colleagues. I would suggest moving offices to the accessible locations and replacing them with general classrooms on the inaccessible floors (It is easier to reschedule classrooms than to reassign offices). Accessible locations might include the accessible floors in Carnegie but because of the configuration of the connector moving them to ARH and using Carnegie primarily for general classrooms would be a better long term solution.

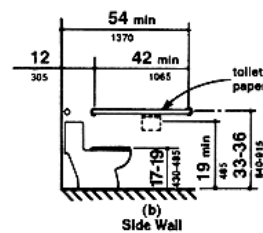
Similarly, I would look to move student lounge and study space to accessible floors/locations. The importance of the learning and social integration takes place in these informal learning environments should not be underestimated.

Joe Rosenfield '25 Center



Constructed in 2006 this building is designed to serve as the hub of campus life Dining, game room, study space, email lounge, student gallery, public events space, meeting rooms, classrooms and student organization space. Offices include the Vice President of Student Life.

Generally the building is accessible. The main entrance is ramped and meets code. The restrooms examined were usable and generally met the standards. One exception noted was the conflict between the Grab bars and toilet paper dispensers. This can be addressed by changing to smaller dispensers. It is safe to assume this is an issue throughout the building and on much of campus.



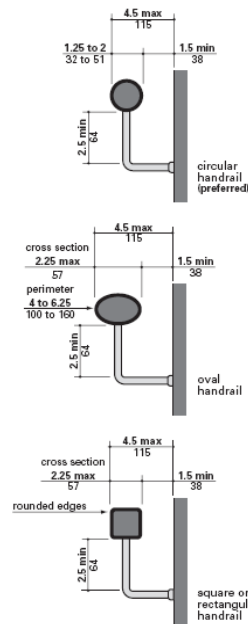
Additionally, when the accessible stall does not use the bathroom wall as one of its walls extra reinforcement may be required.

Nollen House



Renovated in 1997 to locate President's office on the first floor Nolan houses the President on the first floor and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Institutional Planning and a conference room on the second floor. The conference room is frequently used for committee meetings (including Faculty Executive Council and Personnel Committee)

The first floor is accessible by wooden ramp at the rear which is in serviceable condition. The hand rail does not meet standards for grip.



There is no access to the second floor offices or conference room. There is no space to move a meeting room to the first floor. Space in the adjacent John Chrystal Center could be scheduled to provide accessibility for meetings.

The signage at the front entrance directing you to the accessible entrance should be replicated at the intersection of the entry walk and sidewalk.

Cowles Hall

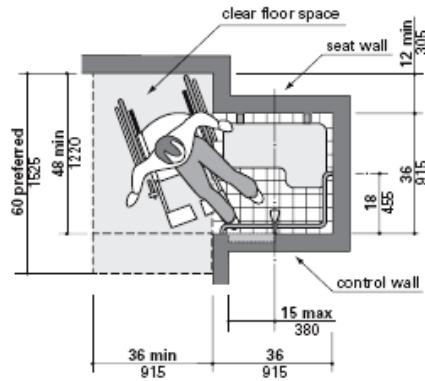


Constructed in: 1943 and currently in the final stages of a renovation converting it to

student housing (apartment style and traditional dorm).

The accessible apartments (2) have first floor bedrooms, accessible kitchens and bathrooms with adequate clearances and reach ranges. A lower rod for the closet should be installed when needed.

The accessible Dorm Rooms themselves should have adequate clearances when furnished. The showers in the bathrooms present very tight clearances for transfer. In future designs reversing the bench and controls would allow for considerably more ease in transfer.

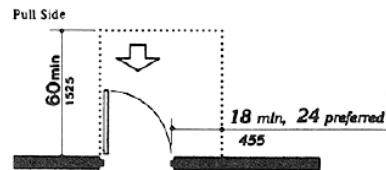


East Campus Dorms



Constructed 2003 the East Campus Dorms provide student housing, lounges, study space, kitchenettes.

The common spaces are accessible with automatic door openers in the proper locations. The sample accessible room (Lazier 1348) lacked clearance on the latch side of the door from the interior of the room. At 16 inches it is usable by most individuals but short of the 18 inch minimum. This could be resolved with an automatic door opener if the individual needed one.

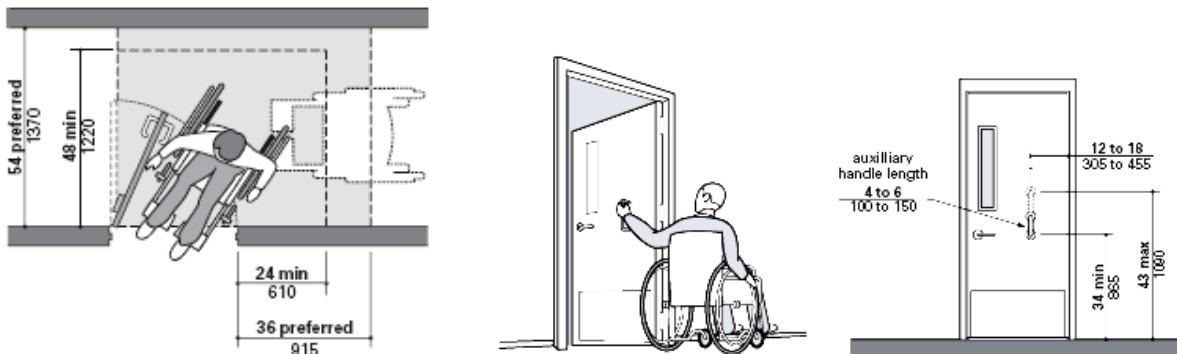


The Forum:



Designed as the colleges “living room” by Walter Netsch this International Style building was completed in 1964 and has some architectural and local significance. Many of the traditional functions have moved to the Joe Rosenfeld Center the Forum still hosts public lectures, Student Health and IT services.

Comprised of seven levels within a two story structure and the use of low contrast finishes combine to pose significant access issues for both visual and mobility impaired users. The ramp providing the accessible approach on the West side is usable but technically out of compliance. It does not have rails or a full level landing at the top where you turn to face the building. The East approach provides parking and direct access to Student Health. The only accessible restroom in the building is located on this level. The narrow hallway allows for minimum maneuvering clearances for a door that does not have a hydraulic closer. The lack of closer means you must manually shut the restroom door behind you which challenges the reach of wheelchair users. Providing an auxiliary handle to allow a chair users to more easily shut the door behind them is recommended.



RESOURCES:

Principles of Universal Design (Separate attachment)

Universal Design and Institutional Planning (Separate Attachment)

Campus Evaluation Check lists (Separate Attachment)