

GRINNELL COLLEGE



Accessibility & Research Services
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To: Angela Voos, Special Assistant to the President

From: The Accessibility Committee

Date: September 29, 2011

RE: Campus Accessibility Status

Since 2005, Grinnell College has made impressive progress with respect to accessibility as a result of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. A summary of this progress is included at the end of this document. In spite of this progress, there are still programs and services on campus that are not available to a number of our current students. The purpose of this letter is to inform the Campus Planning Committee of these challenges, in hopes that solutions to these obstacles can be worked into the next campus master plan.

The Accessibility Committee continually reviews the accessibility status of the campus. While we have made significant progress in terms of physical accessibility, we have in-accessible programs that need:

- Facility renovation for accessibility, or
- To be moved to accessible locations whether existing or new construction.

Current Priorities

The Committee has reviewed a large number of inaccessible features of campus and prioritized programs that need immediate attention because of their primacy of use and location in inaccessible facilities. The immediate priorities in no particular order are:

- Center for Religion, Spirituality, and Social Justice and the 15 programs housed within (1233 Park ST),
- Long standing student programs:
 - The Stonewall Resource Center (Basement of Younker Hall),
 - Bob's Underground (Basement of Main Hall)
 - The Textbook Lending Library (Basement of Reed Hall)
 - Black Cultural Center (corner of Tenth Ave and Park ST)
- Academic programs with offices housed in Carnegie second and fourth floors.
- The Reading Lab (1321 Park ST)

Campus Accessibility Status

As we move into the Strategic Planning and Campus Planning processes, the Accessibility Committee asks that the Campus Planning Committee consider the importance and future role of these programs and support full access to these programs by facility renovation for accessibility, or by moving the programs to accessible locations whether existing or new construction. We are not supportive of committing funds to provide partial accessibility to existing facilities with unknown future plans.

Additional Priorities

Once these programs are made accessible, there are additional projects that still need to be completed. The following programs and/or buildings need to be included in long-range planning.

- Campus Safety and Security Office (corner of East ST and Tenth Ave)
- Accessible guest housing
- Grinnell House
- Faculty rental houses
- Project and language student houses
- Career Development Office
- North and South campus residence halls (Stegman plan of 2001)
- Signage
- Audio Visual Center (Second floor, ARH)
- Alumni Recitation Hall restrooms
- And of course, the Forum

Web and other Technology Access

To date we have focused on the physical footprint of campus—our buildings, parking, and pathways. We need to also turn, in the next phase of work, to look at programmatic access to and through technology. This would include all content on Grinnell.edu, Pioneerweb, classroom and office based technology, and assistive technologies.

Brief background regarding Campus Accessibility beginning in 2005

2005

Disability was written into the College's Strategic Plan as **3.B.5**, "*Strengthen programs to recruit, retain, and provide access and essential services for students with disabilities.*"

2006

The Disability Awareness Committee submitted a "Strategic Plan Budget Projection for Tactic 3.B.5" to then Vice President Marci Sortor which outlined possible implementation strategies for this tactic. One of the recommended approaches was a full review of all campus facilities, programs and services related to serving students with disabilities, including an on-campus site visit by an expert(s) in the field, followed by a barrier removal project.

2007

- The Board of Trustees requested that Facilities Management “grade” campus buildings in terms of their accessibility. The Facilities staff developed criteria for grading the buildings considering various features: entrances, restrooms, handicap parking or drop off, and access to first floors with public functions.
- L. Scott Lissner, ADA Coordinator, The Ohio State University, conducted an accessibility audit of campus facilities.
- A recurring account for accessibility projects was established in the Facilities Management budget.

2008

- Vice President Sortor asked the Disability Awareness Committee to apply the ratings to campus buildings. Buildings were graded as:
 - Green – at least one accessible, operable door, accessible parking or drop off, clearly marked accessible doors, at least one accessible first floor bathroom, and accessible to all floors;
 - Yellow – at least one accessible non-operable door, and one floor accessible for public functions; or
 - Red – met none of the criteria for green or yellow.
- The Office of Diversity and Achievement devoted one staff position as Institutional Accessibility Resources coordinator to coordinate accessibility efforts on campus
- The Accessibility Committee was established in September 2008 to coordinate offices working with accessibility issues.
 - Since its beginning, the Accessibility Committee met 1-2 times per month to identify inaccessible structures, facilities, programs, procedures, and practices that exist at Grinnell College.
 - The Committee works closely with various offices on campus, including Facilities Management, Dining, Information Technology Services, Human Resources, Communication, Conference Operations and Events, to increase accessibility throughout campus.
 - Since its inception, the Accessibility Committee has prioritized projects for Facilities Management that increase the accessibility of campus.

Summary of Progress to date

In addition to the construction of several new buildings on campus (that are largely accessible), major projects over the past three years include:

- Accessible sidewalks throughout campus (removing stairs, grading, ramping)
- Door operators on all academic buildings (with two exceptions: Goodnow and the Reading Lab)
- Door operators on all public buildings
- Door operators and ramps for accessible entrances and spaces within dormitories
- Campus Accessibility Map
- Standardization of timing of operable doors
- Renovation of Mears entry and first floor bathrooms
- Accessible seating in all classrooms
- Cowles accessible laundry facilities and kitchenette
- Burling Library Listening Room
- Door/entrance replacements to accommodate wheel chairs

Campus Accessibility Status

- An accessible van, currently used by Student Health and Counseling Services
- Relocation of emergency phones so they are accessible.

Technically, operable doors are not required by the ADA. Accessible entrances are required and may be achieved by the type of door hardware installed, force required to open the door and configuration of the entryway. While many people on campus can open doors that have the correct hardware and force adjustment, members of the Grinnell College community cannot. Operable doors are a “visible sign” of the College’s commitment to looking beyond ADA for accessibility.

Conclusion

The College has progressed significantly in making the campus accessible. This is most evident in the fact that our first student in a power wheel chair graduates in May 2012 and our second student in a power chair matriculated in Fall 2011. Both of these students chose Grinnell because of the advances we made in making our campus accessible. As we see the new Graduation stage emerging on Central Campus, we know that these two students and two other students with significant mobility impairments will move across the stage under their own power, just as they have moved through their Grinnell experience.

While the College leaps forward in making our campus accessible, we still have work to do. We want to insure that this important work – consistent with the mission and core values of the College – is part of the campus planning and the new strategic plan.

Members of the Accessibility Committee who endorse this statement:

Chris Bair	Jennifer Krohn, Chair
Heather Benning	Kristin Lovig
Rachel Bly	Karen McRitchie
Steve Briscoe	Jeannette Moser
Patrick Comparin`12	Jim Mulholland
Donna Dralus	Joyce Stern
Laura Gogg	Rick Whitney

Members of the Accessibility Committee who do not endorse this statement:

None

Members of the Accessibility Committee who abstain:

None