Faculty Senate Disabilities Advisory Committee

Agenda

Tuesday September 23, 2009
2-3 pm

Wyman Education Building (WEB) Room 209

1) Selection of recording secretary
2) Introduction of members and guests
3) Approval of the minutes

4) Old Business
   a) evacuation chair training-Connie
   b)
5) New Business
   a) renovations to buildings and access issues-please see description of issue below-Mark Johnson
   b)

New Business narrative:

a) In relatively recent years there have been a number of renovations to campus buildings that haven't seen to consider the need for improving access for people who use wheelchairs. Over time our antiquated buildings may become thoroughly modernized without generating improved accessibility. For instance:

Two years ago an incoming student in a wheelchair showed up for the first day of a CHEM lab to find there was no wheelchair accessible lab station. The building, Centennial Science Hall, was constructed in about 1977. While I'm not certain, I'd be surprised to find out there hadn't been any remodeling of that lab for nearly 30 years.

Hathorn Hall is the most campus centralized residential hall. Students in wheelchair prefer to live there. About 6 years ago the wide front steps to Hathorn were torn apart and rebuilt. A wheelchair ramp was not included, though the additional cost would have been minimal and there was plenty of space. Two summers ago the area of Hathorn that had been Career Services/Student Health was remodeled to create additional residential hall rooms for students. Though the hall's kitchen and laundry facilities were in the basement and lacked adequate access for students in wheelchairs, the remodeling plans did not include a way to
create alternative laundry and kitchen facilities. In a meeting to confront the issue, two students in wheelchairs were told they could live in SF Suites, instead, at the very eastern edge of campus. Some of the main representatives of UWRF who were at the meeting seemed to not at all understand that ADA would require adequate access to laundry and kitchen facilities as a result of the remodeling. This occurred soon after a foreign student in a wheelchair had spend many month hauling herself up and down basement steps for kitchen and laundry facilities in another residential hall, during the summer, when all food services in the UC could be closed for certain periods of time.

Currently all four main entries to North Hall are being renovated. The steps leading up to them had been deemed unsafe. Once the safer steps are finished, people in wheelchairs will still need to travel to the back side of the building, by either going through a parking lot or taking sidewalks around the block to reach a "service" like ramp leading into the basement so they can take an elevator up into the building.

Several days ago a male student informed me he can't get his wheelchair into any of NH's men's room stalls and close the stalls' doors.