



COUNCIL OF COMMONWEALTH STUDENT
GOVERNMENTS THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE
UNIVERSITY

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Disability Accessibility

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Whereas, *The Council of Commonwealth Student Governments (CCSG) represents the concerns of the students attending the campus in matters of a University-wide nature, as well as those issues impacting the combined interests of the campuses, and those of all forms of physical ability.*

Whereas, *Commonwealth campuses have expressed an influx of concern over the different circumstances that showcase the universities compliance towards disability policies, though are being performed with a lack of attention to accessibility, equity, and inclusion.*

Whereas, *Compliance by the University to follow legally mandated policies regarding Disability Accessibility is not always reflective of accessibility. Commonwealth campus representatives have volunteered to perform reviews of such instances. The results from these reviews show a mere example of inconsistencies in regard to ADA compliance. While these issues vary, many overlap and coincide with the general argument and understanding that inaccessibility is an overarching issue.*

Be it resolved, *efforts to move forward in advancing and progressing the accessibility, and inclusion for people with disabilities is an issue that requires work within our communities. Commonwealth Student Governments should continue to advocate and pursue efforts in favor of implementing changes that specifically affect our campuses at home. Within the next 10 years commonwealth campuses should be able to accommodate ADA student needs.*

Be it further resolved, *we write this resolution to you today in hopes that this not only opens a conversation on true inclusivity, equity, and accessibility at Penn State but also evokes action and firm implementation from the university. We strongly recommend an audit must be performed within the first year throughout the commonwealth on its ADA accordance and be further performed every 3 years in order to maintain concurrence. Based on those results, we recommend implementation of policies that take into account the reporting of functional ADA services including but not limited to;*

- *Functional ramps, Elevator, and Automatic Door Buttons with equitable consideration in terms of distance to classrooms and building.*
- Disability Parking in every single building/parking spot with functional ramps*
- Buildings must obtain functional elevators that at least fit both a wheelchair and passenger*
- University public transportation must be ADA compliant with ample space*

Physical accessibility should never be a deterrent to attending any of our campuses and we must prioritize education overall along with its advancement.

Respectfully,

Amy Sanchez

University Park, Director of Educational Equity

Council Action

Vote__34__:_0__:_0__ Pass: __X__ Fail: ____ Postponed: ____

Presidential Action

Approved: X Veto: ____ Date: 02/06/2023

Kara Wright

References

Appendix A

Disability Issues within the

Altoona Campus:

1. A distinct lack of handicap-accessible buttons to hold open doors on residential halls on campus. This presents an issue in circumstances where a person with a lack of mobility such as a wheelchair user may struggle obtaining assistance opening the entrance doors in the residential halls. The residential hall doors require a digital keycard to unlock the entrance; without a proper button to immediately assist in opening the doors, an individual will be meant with an alarm due to the delay of opening after the lock is disengaged. Implementation

of a handicap-accessible button to aid those with mobility issues would serve to grant easy access to the residence halls without the stigmatization of facing an alarm because they were unable to independently unlock and open the door in an expedient fashion. Furthermore, the ADA-EZ (also known as a handicapped commercial door opener) at certain buildings across campus does not work correctly and will not sometimes open even after pressing numerous times. This would make it more difficult for people who have impairments that make it necessary to use this device to go through doors and spaces.

2. *A distinct lack of consistent braille on door placards* on the outside of dorm rooms found in the on-campus residence halls. While some of the placards outside the residential halls' dorm rooms are found to have braille, this occurrence is inconsistent as most of the placards do not include any type of signifier for the visually impaired. The placards that do include the occurrence of braille are few and far between, causing an individual with a visual impairment to not be able to reliably find a specific dorm room based on the room number provided by the placard.
3. *An inaccessible mechanism* found in the utilization of the residential hall's laundry machines. The laundry machines found in the on-campus residential halls require an individual to utilize a touch screen operated mechanism to select and pay for a specific laundry machine. This mechanism raises accessibility issues for individuals who are visually impaired or have a motor disability. The mechanism relies on an individual's ability to see and tap on a specific machine available rendering an individual with the previously mentioned disabilities unable to activate the laundry machines independently.
4. *Inaccessible methods of independently ordering in Port Sky Café found on campus.* Within Port Sky, an individual would have to rely on a touch screen terminal to select their order and receive a printed receipt with their order number. For individuals with visual impairments or motor disabilities, this method of ordering is rendered impossible to accomplish

independently. An individual would have to rely on sight to visually select their order and see their order number. Then, the individual would have to tap the screen to select the correct order, select their payment method, and pick up their receipt in a timely manner before the screen would reset to the idle state. A possible solution to this accessibility problem could be the expansion of the mobile online ordering method; whereas an individual could use their own accessible mobile device to select their order and pick it up within the café. While the current mobile ordering method does allow for some accessibility, many meal options that the café offers cannot be found through the mobile ordering app.

5. *A distinct lack of braille in several areas was found in Port Sky Café.* There are several instances where machines such as beverage dispensers, areas in the refrigerators, and shelves of food items had no type of identification in braille for the visually impaired to independently identify what item was present there. A simple braille label present would easily remedy this inaccessibility.

6. *An inaccessible means for an individual with a visual impairment to obtain a mobile order from Port Sky Café independently.* With the current system of mobile ordering, an individual needs to identify their order number on a bag randomly placed on a shelf outside the café. An individual with a visual impairment cannot independently identify the number for their completed order. A possible remedy for this accessibility issue could be to designate shelves with braille labels where the individual would be notified of the shelf that their order would be placed on. This notification system could be used in conjunction with the already established mobile text system that relays a customer's order number to them when the order has been completed and placed.

7. *An inaccessible method for unlocking and opening the mailboxes that on-campus residential students are provided with.* With the current locking mechanism found on the provided mailboxes, a student must complete a complex combination lock to access the mailbox. A person with a visual

impairment or motor disability would be rendered unable to reliably access the mailbox independently. A possible remedy for this accessibility issue would be to perhaps include a few mailboxes that require a lock and key instead of the built-in combination lock.

8. In Cedar Hall, a suite-style residential building that has 4 floors with students living on each one. It is the only residential building that has an elevator, but there was a point of time during the Fall semester which is when it stopped working which led to students being inconvenienced by this malfunction. Students from both the 3rd and 4th floor were having issues, especially with this as it took longer to go up and down to get to their destinations while it also being an inconvenience to others. It is especially difficult for students to carry heavy items like luggage up and down the stairs. There should be renovations done to improve the elevator in Cedar Hall to make sure issues like this do not cause problems for students in the future.

Accessibility Walk Penn State

New Kensington

- *Weather stripping on stairs***

- o Has diminished in all buildings
- o Unsafe due to slipping hazard

- *Art Gallery*

- o Only stair entrance to art gallery
- o No other way to get to classes or advisor's appointments

- *Silver Plating on Floors*

- o In main entrance, going into science building
- o Outside student life office/administrative building

- *Engineering building*

- o On both ends there is no wheel chair accessibility button to open doors o Cannot open both

doors at once to fit wheel chair through

- o Classroom 133 has a twisting door handle

- Arbuckle

- o Only possible entrance into building is through stairs (need a way in)

- o No elevator or ramps available

- o Classes are unreachable

- o All doors on both levels have twisting door handles

- o No weather stripping on stairs to begin with

- IST Building

- o No way to get to classrooms or the differing levels of the junction as there is no elevator

- o Only stairs available

- Conference center

- o No wheelchair accessibility buttons on the doors by the computer lab and into the administrative building side directly opposite

- o Ramp is available, but is extremely narrow and has tight bends

- o Weather stripping also diminished here

- o Elevator in this building, but only possible entrance is outside of the computer center

- o Outside of lounge, on the athletic center side, would be perfect to put in an accessibility button for the door

Disability Audit for

Penn State Abington

Overall layout of the campus

- The terrain of the campus can be defined as a valley, where the outskirts and higher sections of land are towards the higher areas. To get across to each building you have to either go across the steep hill that is the “center” of campus or hike the side hills/ steep steps in order to enter the building throughout the day.

Sutherland

-one of our older buildings has a complex layout of entrance if one were to use it for regular classroom use.



-the first picture is what faces the inner part of campus (what will lead you to the other buildings), and the second picture is where the only student parking is available on this side of campus. The

parking lot is down a very steep hill with stairs, but the disability parking section is on a slightly higher level of the hill.

From Sutherland to Woodland (one of our newest and largest buildings)



- If one were to then leave Sutherland to try to go to the woodland building (as seen directly in front of Sutherland, the view is the first picture) one would have to either go down these steep steps or (unpictured) head towards the right and down a steep decline onto a progressively steep incline on a “ramp” or trail. Although unfortunately at the end of this trail, you will end up being stuck as the only entrances from here are through a choice between three large staircases leading into the building, no elevator or ramp entrances from here. If you are to turn around down the “ramp or trail” you will do so going downhill at the edge of the campus pond.

Further Issues:

-While elevators, handicap door buttons, parking spots are in all campus buildings and designated areas, the overall layout and design of the campus and buildings makes it overtly difficult for

people with disabilities to move from class to class efficiently. It is difficult enough for able bodied students to get around the terrain, this same environment should not deter anyone of different physical ability to pursue an education here.