

Notes from The President's Commission on People with Disabilities

March 2, 2015

Accessibility, Priorities, and Recommendations

Agenda: Meeting with President Dooley

The University of Rhode Island community, also a public entity, is more than the students faculty and staff who come here; we are also the alumni, supporters, and visitors who we invite to campus for open campus programs and use of facilities (such as the Library). A welcoming climate for all of us is important. Members of the President's Commission on People with Disabilities have discussed three concerns as priorities to consider for the URI Community. We are looking to discuss these topics with the President and relevant members of the University's administration:

- Transportation and Parking, presenters: Laura Kenerson and Steve Baker
- Safety and Evacuation: presenters Mary Jane Klinkhammer and Paul DePace
- Curriculum_Online Accessibility: presenters Nancy Doyle-Moss and Meada Daly-Cano

The URI President's Commission on People with Disabilities recognizes that we are a state university with competing interests for limited resources. Therefore within the goals, priorities, and recommendations that we bring forward, we understand that some concerns can be addressed inexpensively or case-by-case, while other concerns will require consideration and planning over time. We bring these concerns forward in the spirit of communication, advisory and awareness for the University of Rhode Island with the note that some items are being addressed by URI's dedicated faculty and staff; other items may be added for future consideration.

Co-Chairs: Anita Jackson and Pamela Rohland

A. Transportation and Parking

- a. Definition: Physical accessibility of parking and Campus transportation are resources that accommodate students, faculty, and staff, including those with disabilities in moving around our hillside campus, accessing academic buildings, and administrative buildings.
- b. Nature of concerns or problem
- c. Recommendations for solution(s)
- d. Priority or timelines to be addressed
- e. Recommendation for who might be involved:
 - i. Parking and Transportation Services
 - ii. Department of Campus Planning and Design
 - iii. Representation from Commission on People with Disabilities and/or Disability Services for Students
 - iv. Human Resources
 - v. Parking and Transportation Committee (to be reestablished).
 - vi. Department of Public Safety

B. Safety and Evacuation

- a. Definition: URI has begun a planning process to keep URI community members safe in the face of gun violence, fire, bomb threats, etc. including the instructional film, “Run, Hide, Fight.”
- b. Nature of concerns or problem
- c. Recommendations for solution(s)
- d. Priority or timelines to be addressed
- e. Recommendation for who might be involved:
 - i. Department of Public Safety, Divisions of Emergency Management and Fire/Life Safety
 - ii. Capital Projects

C. Curriculum and Online Accessibility:

- a. Definition: Public Websites and course materials must be accessible to people with disabilities. Not only students with disabilities, but also students with English as a Second Language, student veterans, non-traditional age students, etc. need participation in courses equal to their peers. Given recent lawsuits by the National Association for the Deaf, the most vulnerable part of any course or the public website is non-captioned auditory material (e.g. DVDs, short films, lecture capture online, etc).
- b. Nature of concerns or problem
- c. Recommendations for solution(s)
- d. Priority or timelines to be addressed
- e. Recommendation for who might be involved:
 - i. Budget and Planning
 - ii. Academic Diversity Task Force for enforcement and assistance.
 - iii. Provost and Vice Provosts
 - iv. Purchasing
 - v. Classroom Media Assistance
 - vi. Faculty Senate
 - vii. Voluntary UDL Faculty Mentors (from groups such as Online Teaching Fellows, Disability Resource Mentors).
 - viii. Office of Online Education
 - ix. Disability Services for Students

Key comments during meeting:

Transportation and Parking:

- Increased temporary pass parking needed
- Events attract older persons or those with disabilities and parking not available through visitor’s center near Union and other event locations
- Need for increased vans with point to point transportation;

- Consider other vendors in addition to RIPTA for future transportation contracts;
- Need increased interior of campus disability parking spaces
- Parking consultant needed, last completed in 2000, need 10 year plan
- Subcommittee of Master Plan Review Team to be created charged with parking/transportation – Steve Baker willing to serve as Chair

Safety and Evacuation

- Need plan of evacuation for every academic, office, residential and other building on campus, with building and/or floor managers identified
- Need for clear concise communications about safety and evacuation plans
- Need repeated messages about evacuation plans
- Run through of plans needed
- Surveillance technology to assist evacuation
- Buddy system, ensuring no one is left behind

Curriculum and Online Accessibility:

- CC when activated through Google or You Tube accurate only up to 70%
- Requires faculty editing to ensure accuracy
- Can obtain services for \$2.50/min with 99% accuracy
- Important to recognize that CC benefits all, not only individuals with disability
- Consider policies and awareness to only purchase quality captioned videos
- Need changes in pedagogy as well to enhance universal design and student learning (versus recording lectures and placing online)

President Dooley's comments:

- Need comparison of percent of SwD to regional land grant peer institutions: UMass, UVT, UNH, UConn
- Commission should develop prioritization and stepwise fashion of implementation for recommendations
- What would make the biggest impact to the largest number of people?

- Where is progress most critical and timely?
- Flexible approach to parking and transportation needed due to plans for increased construction over next 10 years (all buildings on quad, Engineering, etc)
- Will have new visitor center that will have parking and serve as epicenter for events
- Parking fees for faculty and staff will likely need to occur to have centralized parking/parking garage
- PCOPWD may serve to advise architects/contractors on creating better environments beyond meeting the legal requirements
- PCOPWD may serve to advise faculty/others about quality technology going forward that is inclusive (with respect to universal design, CC, etc)
- Serve to raise faculty awareness of need to look for quality videos and lectures that are already available with CC and that would free up faculty time for other teaching modalities and interactions with students
- Train faculty on CC, advocacy on the part of the PCOPWD will be key to convey importance
- Opportunity for URI to be a leader in these areas
- Seek funding for innovations in these 3 key areas identified, possible opportunities: Homeland Security, NSF, Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation, NIDRR