

## Memorandum for Record

**To:** Faculty Senators, Matt Schroeder, Scott Molitor, Malaika Bell, Angela Paprocki, Jerry Van Hoy, Tomer Avidor Reiss, Linda Rouillad, Sammy Spann, Lucas Will, Ashley Westgate, Lisa Yost, Kurt Soltman, Quinetta Hubbard

**From:** Deborah M. Coulter-Harris, Chair, Karen Green, Katherine O’Connell, Sarah Aldrich Renner (FSCSA Subcommittee)

**Date:** 19 November, 2024

**Subject:** Report on Student Government Issue #2: Accessibility Issues

---

### 1. Introduction: Original Communication from SG and Planned Response from FSCSA

#### Issue 2. Fall: Accessibility

**FSCSA Subcommittee:** Sarah Aldrich Renner, Katherine O’Connell, Karen Green, Samir Hefzy (Report on 19 November, 2024)

**SG Issue #2: (Accessibility)** “Many prospective students this summer were posting how they ultimately decided not to go to UT since it is not a disability-friendly campus. This is incredibly worrying as we need to ensure that we can pull as many students as possible. We typically carry out a couple of ADA walks to target some specific buildings and see how they can improve, but it is evident that we need to do more for our campus.”

**Proposed Solution:** Email or call the contacts to gather a report on all buildings, restrooms, and athletic venues that assesses ADA compliancy for locations. Where and how can some locations be improved? Have there been complaints?

**Contacts:** Office of Disability, Lisa Yost, Kurt Soltman, Jason Toth, Michael Haar,

---

### 2. First Meeting and Discussion Between FSCSA and Office of Accessibility and Disability Services

- **Date:** 10/24/2024
  - **Attendees:** Lisa Yost, Kurt Soltman, Karen Green, Ashley Westgate, Lucas Will, Kate O’Connell, Sarah Aldrich Renner, Deborah Coulter-Harris
-

### 3. Origin of Concern

- Students saw videos/posts online that prospective students loved the university, but felt they couldn't get around – “I love UT but can't come here”
- One video from a student that came for 1 year and left due to difficulty navigating campus
- No mention of specific buildings or concerns with faculty

### 4. Requirements for Restrooms

- Certain restrooms only have automatic door openers on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor (example Field House and Student Union)
- Each building has to have a “reasonable bathroom nearby” with an automatic opener or have the door <3lbs to pull open
- Balance between spirit of the law, the law and reasonability of finances for all concerns

### 5. What are the requirements for entryways?

- At least one accessible entrance required
- All buildings in compliance since the start of Spring ADA walks

### 6. How is compliance with ADA evaluated?

- ADA compliance physical and electronic report created annually by Kurt and sent to Auditor/University leadership
  - Dave Cutrie auditor
- AHEAD<sup>1</sup> completes an external audit
- ADA walks with Student Government: Kurt Soltman walks with SG representatives through 1 building each month to assess accessibility
  - Goal to get to every building over 2 years
- Kurt will follow-up on the following:
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathrooms in Field House
  - Discuss concerns/online comments in more detail with Student Government
  - Reach out to marketing to discuss opportunities to collaborate and share office success stories

### 7. Could we survey students who would benefit from/require increased accessibility to determine needs/perceptions?

- Survey could be created for campus in general

---

<sup>1</sup> AHEAD: Association on Higher Education and Disability. [Home - AHEAD - Association on Higher Education And Disability](#)

- Currently, the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services sends out a yearly student survey to assess the satisfaction of students currently engaged with this office
  - How satisfied are students with the services they receive?
  - What can the office do to improve?
  - General questions with Likert scale and places for comments included
  - Limitation: only goes to students currently engaged with the office

#### **8. How do we get pertinent information to the students in a meaningful way?**

- Goal of the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services, would like to work with SG to create content that would be received more broadly

#### **9. Future Plans**

- Deborah will add Kurt/Lisa to Faculty Senate schedule to present (done)
- Continue to improve perception and awareness of the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services
  - Consider increasing advertising or email each quarter
  - UT news article on the office, could include student success story if student willing
  - Social media campaign with student success stories (if willing)
  - Consider adding question to office survey “are you willing to provide a quote about the office or share a success story? If so, email us.”
- Office of Accessibility and Disability Services to come to certain classes to discuss their role and benefits
  - Ex. Undergraduate writing courses
- ADA walks to continue with Kurt and Student Government
- Monitor new buildings – works with office as well as facilities to ensure compliance
  - Jason Toth (facilities) and Nichole Baden (chief architect)
- Please see Appendix 1 for Updates from Office of Accessibility and Disability Services

## Appendix 1: Updates from the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services:

<p><b>Increase Access for all students/faculty/community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Goal: engage students with the office if any concern</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are paired with specialist based on their degree.</li> <li>• Team of 4 serving all of students broken down by degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education/law/HHS (social work, criminal justice, paralegal): Lisa</li> <li>○ HHS (other), College credit plus, T2, arts and letters, business: Sarah</li> <li>○ MSC: Kurt</li> <li>○ Other degrees: Evan</li> </ul> </li> <li>• No timeline for getting involved with this office or limitations based on class number, degree, etc.</li> <li>• Working to add a liaison at each college that filters information to office of accessibility and disability</li> <li>• Goal to add office hours at each major college</li> <li>• Social media accounts created and active</li> <li>• Office works with student organizations</li> <li>• Notice about office included in every syllabus</li> <li>• Office attends all Rocket Launch, orientation activities, campus events and local high schools</li> <li>• Can address accommodations for classrooms, residence halls, dining and campus access</li> <li>• Barriers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Illegal to ask during application process if students have a disability. Plan to add question at orientation “do you identify as having a disability and do you want additional information?”</li> <li>○ Students may have physical disabilities but choose not to affiliate with the office due to lack of academic needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Changes over time in student number and concerns</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office working with ~1400 students</li> <li>• Currently, 95% have invisible disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase in learning disabilities, mental health concerns and chronic health conditions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All meetings are private and confidential, can meet only virtually if prefer</li> </ul>