

**DISABILITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
2003 – 2004 ANNUAL REPORT**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Deborah C. Haynes, Chair, Student Disability Services
Olga Agafonoova, Student Member
Jeff Cargile, Human Resources
Donna Collins, Facility Services
Jim Demarest, Facility Services
Dr. Amy Donnelly, College of Education
Joe Fortune, University Housing
Bobby Gist, Equal Opportunity Programs
Brian Hann, Risk Management
Derrick Huggins, Parking
Prof. Judy Kaye, College of Nursing
Ella Marshall, Employment Office
Jacob Rivers, Veterans Affairs
Daphne Sipes, General Counsel
Tom Syfert, Risk Management

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Disability Affairs Committee met four times during the 2003 – 2004 academic year. The committee addressed the following issues: 1) accessibility problems in specific buildings and areas around campus; 2) documentation required for students with disabilities to be eligible for services; 3) new scholarship for students with disabilities; and 4) the Accommodating Students with Disabilities Project.

Because of the age of some of the buildings at USC, accessibility will continue to be a problem for some of our students with disabilities. Buildings constructed before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 meet the accessibility regulations that were in effect at that time. However, students with more severe disabilities still have problems accessing some of the buildings and some of the facilities in the buildings. The committee addressed bathroom accessibility issues in Gambrell, Business Administration, Coker and Physical Sciences buildings. Although the stalls met the codes in effect at the time of construction, they were not large enough for students with wheelchairs to enter and close the door for privacy. Facility Services surveyed the buildings and made the necessary changes to allow students with wheelchairs to enter the stalls and be able to turn their chairs and close the doors.

Other accessibility issues discussed were the problems with adjustable desks being removed from classrooms. Some students who use wheelchairs need desks that can be adjusted up or down depending on the height of their chair. The Office of Student Disability Services takes requests from students for these desks and then sends a request

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to have the desks placed in specific classrooms to Facility Services. There have been problems with the desks being moved either by other students or by faculty. The Director of Student Disability Services worked with Facility Services to devise a plan for placing the desks in the appropriate classrooms and for identifying the desks as reserved for students with disabilities.

The committee also reviewed the documentation the Office of Student Disability Services requires students with disabilities to submit to substantiate requests for accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services has adopted the documentation guidelines recommended by the Association on Higher Education and Disability, the international organization for college personnel who work with students with disabilities. These documentation guidelines were also adopted by the South Carolina Council of Educators Enabling Disabled Students, the state organization of college personnel working with students with disabilities. The documentation requirements and the steps for registering with the Office of Student Disability Services are available on the office's website.

A scholarship for undergraduate students with special needs or disabilities has been established to honor the memory and celebrate the life of Chris Myers, a student with a disability who graduated from USC. The scholarship is being endowed by Donald Myers, Chris' father, and South Carolina Solicitors and other friends of Chris. The scholarship, which will be awarded by the Office of Student Disability Services, is the first scholarship at USC specifically for students with disabilities.

The Office of Student Disability Services has agreed to be a partner in the Accommodating Students with Disabilities Project sponsored by Utah State University. As a partner, the staff of Student Disability Services will conduct training sessions either through live workshops or via a web-based program. All of the materials used in the training programs are provided at no charge by Utah State University. There are approximately 40 post-secondary institutions in the United States participating in this project, including such institutions as Louisiana State University, University of Pennsylvania, Clemson University, and Vanderbilt University.