2006-2007
Affirmative Action and Disability Affairs Committee
Minutes
Meeting #5

4:00-5:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 1, 2007
Brink Hall – Faculty Lounge

Present: Linnea Marshall, Chair (Faculty/Library); Marlene Peterson (Facilities); Gloria Jensen (Crd. Disability Support Services); Andy Neukranz-Butler (Human Rights Compliance Officer); Rochelle Smith (Faculty/Library); Trish Hartzell (Academic Administrator/MMBB); Tom English, in place of Harvey Hughett (ITS)

Absent: Ernest Biller (Faculty/Teacher Ed.-Special Ed.); Francisco Salinas (Multicultural Affairs); Kenneth Hart (Faculty/Ag. Ext.); Steve Beyerlein (Faculty/Mechanical Engr); Meredyth Goodwin (Dir. of Tutoring and Academic Assistance Programs); Jeannie Harvey (Dir. Women’s Ctr); Susan Childers, Debbie Buchanan, Doug Vandenboom, Chase Carter, Charles Chambers.

Call to Order: Linnea Marshall called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in the Faculty Lounge of Brink Hall.

Business:

1) As there were only five voting members present, which did not constitute a quorum, we did not vote to accept the minutes for the December 7, 2006 and the February 1, 2007 meetings. Our members have busy schedules and conflicts are inevitable. Several of our members could not come to today’s meeting because of other responsibilities. Considering the difficulty our committee has had in reaching a quorum, we agreed that it would be more efficient if we voted to accept the minutes by e-mail.

2) Transport van. Gloria Jensen and Andy Neukranz-Butler updated us on the status of the Access and Safe Ride at Night van. Disability Support Services and Tutoring and Academic Assistance Programs have several funding projects in motion and there is more reason to feel hopeful now than a month ago.

DSS and TAAP made a proposal to ASUI for some funding to come from student fees. If the Associated Students accept this proposal, they will bring it forward to the SBOE for approval.

On February 28, Gloria and Debbie Hornbuckle represented Disability Support Services at a public forum at the Moscow City Hall. This forum was an opportunity for the public to give input on grant requests that have been made to the Idaho Dept. of Transportation for 2007. DSS has already begun the application process for this IDOT grant for 2008 as well.

DSS was successful in securing a DIGG grant (Diversity Initiatives Growth Grant
Debbie Hornbuckle, from TAAP, will be coordinating these efforts. This grant funding is for programs and projects that advance the goals and objectives of the University’s Comprehensive Plan for Diversity and Human Rights, and disability awareness is an aspect of diversity.

DSS has other tasks regarding the transportation project to complete in the month ahead as well. The collaboration agreement is due in mid March (sent in) and Lloyd Mues would like to see a business plan.

3) **Assistive Technology on Campus.** Harvey Hughett was not able to attend today’s meeting so instead Tom English came from Information Technology Services to talk with us about assistive technology on campus. ITS is responsible for providing and maintaining assistive technology for disabled students on campus. This involves purchasing, installing, maintaining and updating a variety of software on computers set up especially for our students with needs, as well as purchasing and servicing the necessary equipment. As needed, ITS personnel work with individuals to train them on the assistive software programs they need to use.

There are three assistive technology labs on campus; they are in the main library, the Commons, and the Law Library. There is a need for more sites but the difficulty of establishing more assistive technology labs lies in the cost in equipment (software, computers, and peripheral scanners, printers, etc.) and in ITS staff time. These stations cannot be set up in a wide-open computer lab as the computer settings will get altered and have to be continually returned to the correct settings. Also, non-disabled students will not like being bumped off when a student with a disability needs the computer. The assistive technology station, with its equipment, needs to be set up in a card-accessed room, this creates another difficulty in creating more labs: finding a suitable secure room. An AT computer lab is needed at the east side of campus, but currently there is no place in the S.U.B. that can provide the necessary security. IT needs help getting a place in the S.U.B. for an assistive technology room.

We discussed the issue of UI web sites meeting ADA compliance requirements. Tom described the subscription service LIFT Text Transcoder, which can provide a dynamic text-only view of Web page content. This service would save the University from having to create and maintain text-only versions of all our Web pages. However, the service is not inexpensive and a subscription to it would use up much of the funding for assistive technology. Free programs that purport to do the same thing do not have tech support to back up the product and help our ITS staff keep them working in all situations.

Tom described some of the difficulties with making certain software programs and interfaces used for coursework accessible to students with disabilities. In regard to these software programs, IT needs help in increasing the teaching faculty’s awareness of the needs of their students with disabilities.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linnea Marshall