Affirmative Action and Disability Affairs Committee Meeting
Minutes
2009-2010 Meeting #2
October 8, 1:00-2:30

In attendance
Marlene Peterson, Facilities
Yvonne Wright, CDHD
Laura Ann Clark, ASUI
Fouad Bayomy, Civil Engineering
Gloria Jensen, DSS
Brenda Kotewa, graduate student
Laura Putsche
David Schlater, CTI/ITS
Jenine Cordon, CTI/ITS

Business
1. David Schlater and Jenine Cordon discussed resources available on the ITS website to assist with web accessibility, including dos and don’ts, tips, and accessibility checkers. David pointed out that the accessibility checkers check for errors but do not necessarily ensure accessibility. They also do not necessarily find the same errors and pass does not necessarily mean usable.
2. Jennine mentioned that the university's web sites must be accessible according to section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act. Someone asked about how accessibility is defined, and David said that it is complex and depends on the disability. When asked where we should go if we don’t know what to do, David answered that we should go to CTI.
3. One person asked about web sites that can be used by only students in a class in which there are no students with disabilities. Jenine said that an instructor may not necessarily know whether some students have disabilities, and Brenda added that not all students with disabilities register with DSS. Yvonne suggested that sites should not be constructed only with current users in mind, but also for future users.
4. Jenine mentioned that people who design web sites should be made aware of accessibility issues. Another person said that at the UI the job of fixing sites is spread out, and each unit has responsibility for this as it would cost more and take an extraordinary time to hire one person or expect DSS to do this. Someone suggested that sites include an email link to allow users who find problems to provide feedback. David pointed out that we need someone who uses Jaws regularly to point out problems, as it is difficult for those without disabilities to determine usability. Someone asked if there are templates for constructing accessible web sites. Janine said there are, but once sites are constructed they may lose accessibility.
5. David asked what this committee would like to do about the lack of coordination in web accessibility. This initiated a discussion about education. Some suggested periodic workshops. Gloria suggested that DSS and CTI team up to organize workshops. David said that CTI would be interested in hosting some, but he also suggested that video tutorials available on the web might be more practical and more widely used. He added that faculty members produce relatively few web pages, suggesting that it is staff who should be more heavily targeted for education. One possibility is to determine which pages receive the greatest amount of traffic so that they could be prioritized. Someone suggested that faculty and staff orientations should include discussions of the necessity for web accessibility.
6. Committee members agreed that we should talk to Chris Cooney to learn more about accessibility and determine who might have authority with regard to monitoring web accessibility.