

ADA/Section 504 Committee Minutes from Meeting held on March 8, 2012 at 2pm in Union, Room A

Members in Attendance: Neal Mead (Athletics), Jennifer Hatten for Lucy Bowens (Parking Management); Dr. Stephanie Messer, Vice-Chair (Residence Life); Rodger Jackson (Safety); Josh McAlpin (Physical Plant Project Manager); JoAnn Johnson (Research, Centers & Institutes) Karen Reidenbach for Jeff May (I-Tech); Robin Johnson (Coast); Michelle C. Rose (College of Science & Technology); Jameela Lares (College of Arts & Letters); Suzy Hebert (ODA); Scott Dossett (ODA); and Russell Pierce (Student Representative)

Items Distributed: Agenda; Nomination Forms for ODA Outstanding Instructor, Staff and Student Awards

- I. **Mission of the Committee:** Meeting called to order by the ADA Committee Vice-Chair, Dr. Stephanie Messer. She reviewed the mission which is to increase disability awareness in an outreach, grass-roots manner, provide feedback to ODA, offer ideas on ways to increase disability training opportunities and disseminate information about ODA and disabilities.
- II. **Minutes from Fall 2011 meeting and Introduction of new member:** Minutes from the Fall 2011 meeting were emailed to the members in the Fall and, recently they were sent out as an attachment with the emailed meeting reminder. It was noted that all should have had an opportunity to review them. When the committee was asked if any changes are needed, there was a comment about an inserting an accent marker over an "e" in Rene Fleishbein's first name. Josh McAlpin, who is a Physical Plant Project Manager, was introduced as a new member and it was mentioned that we also have a new student representative, Ray Turner.
- III. **Business items:** In the Fall meeting, the committee determined the rotation schedule to decide when members will be replaced by a new representative from their area. Six members who will have the option of rotating off at the end of June 2012 are Lucy Bowens, Aaron Green, Megan Mulloy, Robin Johnson, Dr. Aimee Thomas and Dr. John Beedle. The Bylaws state that members serve a three year term and may be reappointed for another three years for a total of six consecutive years. The members whose first term expires at end of this June were asked to contact Suzy Hebert soon about whether they want to stay on or be replaced. Also, it was noted that difference between voting and ex officio is that ex officio members do not vote and they do not rotate off the committee or have term limits
- IV. **Updates:**
 - a. *Announce Spring Access Meetings open to campus community:* The Physical Access Meeting will be on Tuesday, March 20, at 12:15p.m.–1:00 p.m. in OMH, Room 109. And the Web Access meeting will be Tuesday, March 27 at 12:15pm-1pm in OMH, Room 109. ODA takes to steps to advertise the meetings by having announcements included in Southern Miss's weekly email mailouts, by sending letters to ODA students, and by posting signs at ODA.
 - b. *Disability Awards:* ODA has already mailed nomination forms for their annual awards for the outstanding student, instructor and staff. Nomination forms for each award were also distributed in the meeting. ODA shared that these awards provide an opportunity to remind everyone about the importance of disability access on our campus.
 - c. *Campus Construction and Physical Access:* Work on the North 31st Pedestrian Plaza is expected to begin in August 2012 and will take 120 days to complete. To prepare for this project, sidewalks will soon be added to facilitate access during the construction. Renovation of College Hall began a few

months ago. In this project, disability access will be enhanced by replacing old bathrooms and the elevator with accessible units. Recent alterations to Marsh Hall included the addition of a wheelchair ramp to get on the stage and plans have begun to add an accessible restroom to its reception area. The demolition of Scott Hall is expected to begin this summer and the rerouting of the pedestrian traffic caused by this project will be determined. The Pete Taylor Baseball Park renovations are complete with notable disability access improvements: addition of about 26 wheelchair spaces with adjacent companion seating in the grandstands and improved access signage.

d. *Web Access* - There were no reports.

V. **Other:**

A question was asked about what instructors should do if they suspect that a student has a learning disability but they are advised not to say "I think you have a learning disability". Suzy suggests that if an instructor meets with a student in private to discuss academic problems and the student shares that maybe he/she has a learning problem, they can be referred to ODA who can direct them to be an appropriate testing center. ODA explained that there are a number of professionals around Hattiesburg who can evaluate students for learning problems and the cost of a learning disability assessment can be difficult for students with limited resources. However, there are a few clinics that charge on a sliding-fee scale and, in the past, they have worked well with ODA students.

ODA reminded the members to inform them or the appropriate office if they notice obstacles blocking disability access on campus. For example, if a car or golf cart is misusing the blue access aisle adjacent to a Handicap parking space or blocking a curb cut, they should call Parking Management during the day or the University Police Department after 5pm. If someone sees an obstacle but is not sure about who to call, then they can contact ODA. It was suggested that ODA could get other offices or departments have someone on their staff assist students with disabilities, similar to what is done by the Eagle Landing stations on campus.

VI. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held in Fall 2012. The members will be sent information on the meeting's date, time, and location via email.

Minutes recorded by Suzy Hebert.