

Institutional Disability Access Management Strategic Plan for Cornell University July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

Executive Summary

Since 2004, Cornell University has holistically addressed the needs and interests of its students, faculty, and administration/staff with disabilities in three ways, by: 1) incorporating disability matters into the university's institutional diversity planning; 2) implementing a long-term disability access management strategic plan to increase accessibility of the university's Ithaca campus and programs; and 3) including the needs of individuals with disabilities in the university's overall work/life strategy.

The university designated an ADA Coordinator Team (see appendix A) that is responsible for identifying challenges to the university's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), overseeing the implementation of the institutional disability strategic planning process, and providing leadership in incorporating disability into the diversity initiatives.

The university established an Executive Disability Access Steering Committee (see appendix A) with responsibility for overseeing that the university complies with disability laws and regulations and carries out its commitment to addressing the needs of students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities.

The university created a six member team to establish and accomplish goals in key areas of the Ithaca campus's disability strategic plan: employment, educational programs, campus physical access, emergency planning and preparedness, technology, and communications.

In March 2012, the university implemented its Toward New Destinations diversity initiative—a college/administrative unit-based system for addressing diversity and inclusion throughout the Ithaca and Weill campuses. Through this program, colleges and administrative units are encouraged to address disability access through their annual diversity initiatives.

Cornell University's disability compliance efforts and commitment to addressing disability as an aspect of diversity are carried out through four offices and departments at Cornell University: Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity (addressing disability as an aspect of

diversity), Medical Leaves Administration and Workforce Policy and Labor Relations (providing and enforcing rights to disability accommodations for faculty and staff), in the Division of Human Resources and Safety Services; Student Disability Services in the Division of Student and Academic Services (providing disability accommodations for students); and the ADA Coordinator in the Division Infrastructure, Properties and Planning (addressing physical access issues).

The disability access management strategic plan is the university's roadmap for disability access that will enhance the university's compliance with disability laws and regulations, and support the university's efforts toward creating a climate that embraces individuals with disabilities. The plan is designed to:

- Encourage colleges and administrative units to include disability access initiatives as a component of their diversity plan under Toward New Destinations.
- Educate the university community about the responsibility of affording services and benefits for individuals with disabilities.
- Provide educational opportunities to improve the university community's understanding of disabilities and their impact on members of our community.
- Expand the university's commitment to community relations with organizations that advocate for individuals with disabilities.

The disability access management strategic plan is not intended to encompass all of the efforts related to disability access that occur on campus. For example, not all of the elements designed to remove physical barriers are highlighted in this plan, but the end results of the removal of these barriers are reported in our accomplishments. The same is true for our employee and student accommodations and services. To the greatest extent possible, the implementation of the 2015–2016 disability access management strategic plan will take place within existing university administrative departments as part of their ongoing work. Disability accommodations will continue to be carried out through the colleges and administrative units as part of their general operations.

The university is fully committed to meeting the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), Section 504, and NYS regulatory compliance obligations. In accordance with our ADA obligations, all new construction and renovations will be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. At the same time, we agree to remove existing accessibility barriers to current programs, services, and activities, as required by the ADA, to allow equal opportunity in the most integrated setting.

2014-2015 Accomplishments

In the seventh year of the strategic planning process, Cornell University has continued to focus on meeting the compliance requirements of various disability laws and regulations while incorporating disability within the diversity efforts of the university's Toward New Destinations plan. Despite continued budget constraints, the university worked to provide greater disability accessibility by incorporating these efforts into its diversity and inclusion initiatives; establishing greater shared accountability for disability access; increasing awareness of disability issues and challenges on the campus; working with community groups committed to addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities; and making incremental, but significant, progress in addressing disability access in the six priority areas identified in the Executive Summary.

1. Physical Access

- Continued collaboration with the Dean of Students office with the review of relevant Event Registration Forms to assure that disability accessibility is considered planning stage of programs held on campus.
 - All Event Registration Forms (ERF) for indoor events are now being reviewed for accessibility information. We are asking that all public and private events on campus have plans for making their programs accessible for people with a variety of disabilities. There has been a significant learning curve for event planners to look beyond physical accessibility and make considerations for people with different types of disabilities, including visual, hearing and chronic medical conditions. At minimum, event planners must include an accommodation statement on their promotional materials. An example of this statement is: "If you need an accommodation to participate in this program please contact (net ID) as soon as possible". Hundreds of ERFs have been reviewed and information conveyed to participants and event planners to increase accessibility. Our next step is to have all ERF's reviewed for accessibility, including outdoor events. ERF review was limited to events held inside this year so that the process could be tested for reviewing the forms which can be very extensive during both the fall and spring semesters.
- Initiated steps to collaborate with Accessibility and Cornell's Sustainability efforts. This is to include at a minimum accessibility of recycling efforts and other similar programs but also making connections with disability inclusion and sustainability. Preliminary discussions occurred with the Campus Sustainability Office and R5 Operations (Respect, Rethink, Reuse, Reduce, Recycle). Staff changes this year limited the programming and projects planned. This initiative will carry forward to next year.

- Updated survey sidewalk and building entrance survey data gathered in 2007 and 2005. This information will be used for maintaining walkways and indicating accessible paths of travel on our maps. This data is vital to understand the conditions of doors, sidewalks and crosswalks on campus and has informed our sidewalk repair plan for 2015. We are looking at staffing options to finish up the data set so there is consistency with data across all of campus.

Several physical accessibility accomplishments should be noted in addition to those listed related to goals in the 14-15 plan. They are:

- Accessibility blitz at Bartels Hall---automatic door operators, interior path of travel and restroom upgrades brought the facility to a much higher level of accessibility.
- Accessible ramp and restroom at 391 Pine Tree Road---important programs within that facility are now accessible with CISER and Employment Policy and Labor Relations.
- Central Avenue accessible parking---The accessible parking in front of Morrill Hall on Central Avenue is pivotal for access to Olin and Uris Libraries as well as Morrill Hall. This parking area was not compliant with current code regarding access aisles and accessible routing. A new sidewalk with direct access to the parking spots was created and grading and signage was significantly improved.
- Feasibility Studies were undertaken at Plant Sciences building to improve exterior access, at Teagle Hall to improve overall access within that facility, at Sage Chapel to create a gender neutral restroom and at Wilson Lab to create a safe, new accessible approach to that building.
- A feasibility study is currently underway to create an accessible route into Risley Hall to for the dining area.
- The Cornell Design Standards were updated in the Accessibility for People with Disabilities section.
- Several exterior path of travel projects have improved access on campus: curb ramps at Campus Road and College Ave; Bartels Hall and the Arts Quad.

2. Educational Programs and Services

- Created a “Best Practices for Providing Testing Accommodations” article to be included in the Fall 2015 Bulletin on Student Disability Issues for Cornell Faculty. The Bulletin was published in the fall 2014 and spring 2015. Articles included accommodating students with episodic conditions, creating accessible course packets, service dogs in the classroom and accommodating students with concussions.

- Created a “Best Practices for Using Testing Accommodations” document for students which will be disseminated to students at the beginning of the fall semester via the SDS newsletter and intake meetings with new students.
- Presented four workshops on Universal Design for Learning as part of the Center for Teaching Excellence’s Faculty Diversity Institute in December 2014, March and June 2015.
- Created a Twitter feed on the SDS website to offer an opportunity on social media to share ideas and tips on useful IT for persons with disabilities. The twitter feed can be found at <https://twitter.com/cornellamrc>
- Programmatic accomplishments in addition to those related to goals in the 14-15 plan are:
 - SDS served 1,210 registered students with disabilities. Of this number, approximately 40% of the students were approved for the use of academic accommodations. Academic accommodations are administered by course instructors and include additional test-taking time, computer use, reduced distraction testing environments, enlarged course materials. Examples of accommodations provided by Student Disability Services include; course materials in alternate formats, assistive technology, notetaking and captioning services.
There continues to be a rising number of students with multiple conditions.
 - The CULift Shuttle Service administered by SDS and operated in IP&P provided 6,657 rides for students with temporary and permanent disabilities as they traveled around campus to attend classes. This transportation assistance is designed to assist students with temporary and permanent disabilities with travel between classes.
 - Numerous educational programs were offered on campus to educate about disability issues. Topics included; Supporting Students with Concussions and Mono, Implications for Teaching; Building Inclusive Classrooms, Neurodiversity, Disability Awareness, Career Development Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities.
 - Developed and implemented the use of the Assistance Animal Agreement Form with students living in residence halls who have been approved for the use of an assistance animal.

3. Employment

- In FY15, Cornell received 54 requests for a formal ADA review. Thirty-three of these completed the process and were considered protected individuals. Nine entered the

process late in the year (May or later) and are still in process (awaiting additional medical information, etc.), and an additional 6 were resolved without formal accommodations. Six were deemed not eligible for ADA.

- Monitored development and implementation of job group analysis of the workforce by disability status (Inclusion and Workforce Diversity):
 - Self-identification process established and self-identification request sent to all faculty, staff, and academic professionals in September 2014. As of May, 2015, nearly 3% of Cornell’s employees indicated “yes” they have a disability, 6.5% indicated “no”, and 90.5% elected not to respond to the self-identification request. Cornell’s staff (non-union) had the highest overall response rate with 3.94% indicating “yes”, 8.39% indicating “no”, and 87.67% electing not to respond to the self-identification request.
 - Full implementation of a detailed job group analysis for faculty, staff and academic professionals in compliance with Section 503 will be complete in early July 2015, as part of the university’s FY16 affirmative action plan.
- Tracked development strategies for “best practice” in the recruitment and selection of staff and faculty with disabilities (completed by the Recruitment and Employment Center/Inclusion and Workforce Diversity): Compiled chart that detailed best practices for inclusive business culture, personnel processes, reasonable accommodation procedures, outreach and recruitment, external and internal communication of policies and practices – along with the availability of each of these at Cornell. Identified areas in which to continue to develop and launch new programs/strategies.
- Promoted disability awareness training as a goal under Toward New Destinations:
 - *Just in Time Toolkit* was offered by Division of Facilities Services, College of Human Ecology, College of Veterinary Medicine, Organizational Effectiveness’ Supervisory Development training classes (2 groups of 24 managers).
 - “Snippet” training to promote disability awareness as an aspect of inclusion was offered by the Colleges of Human Ecology, Veterinary Medicine, and Division of Planning and Budget. Over 100 staff members participated in the Snippet program. Measurable gains in knowledge of the ADA, as well as changes in understanding of and attitudes about persons with disabilities were documented through the use of pre- and post-assessments at all sessions of the program.
- Held the Fourth Annual Disability Service Providers/Staffing Roundtable event on April 16, 2015. The goals of the program were:

- *To maintain or surpass this year's participation rates.* While we did not achieve this goal, enough interest in the program was generated to prompt a "part two" follow up program on May 27 that produced action goals for continuing partnerships during the upcoming year.
- *To enable us to track the yield of applicants, interviewees and hires originating from this program.* This is still a work in progress.
- Continued to support the newly established Disability Colleague Network Group the Employment and Disability Institute, the CNYUSBLN, and other groups on campus with a focus on disability as a part of the broader initiatives around diversity and inclusion.

4. Communications:

- Established on budget line for captioning of Cornell Cast videos.
- Collaborated with the Admissions office on the provision of communication access (sign language interpreting, FM systems, and captioning services) for visitors and families of prospective students.
- Responded to accommodation requests by visitors to campus.
- Included a field for accessibility on the web-based Event Planning Tool on cornell.edu.
- Provided coverage of disability-related stories in the Chronicle and Pawprint, including "Learning Through Listening", "Red Runner Pilot" "ILR helps local small businesses with ADA best practices."

5. Emergency Planning

- Used a variety of methods to encourage the use of self-reporting form the need for assistance during an emergency, <https://disability.cornell.edu/emergency-planning-request/> including collaborating with HRSS and Medical Leaves Administration to inform new employees of the form during the onboarding process.
- Developed and placed signs near elevators with information about the procedure to use if the elevator is out of service.
- Installed emergency evacuation chairs in Willard Straight Hall and Physical Sciences Building.

6. Technology

- Incorporate accessible IT information on the Disability Information web site.
 - Not completed for 2014-15. Will incorporate as part of the web accessibility guidelines goal for 2015-16.

- Raise awareness: Continue outreach & training on video captioning, instructional content, online courses and accessible web practices.
 - May 9, 2015 – “Video Captioning Workshop: why and how?” The recording is at <https://cornell.webex.com/cornell/lsr.php?RCID=150303b7767c254982ddb5c0aab526dd>
- Continue & Expand in FY15: Develop and provide information to faculty who are developing online courses on the responsibility to design accessible courses and best practices for doing so.
 - Academic Technologies has a for-fee service to caption videos for faculty, as well as a web page describing how to do it (<http://videohelp.cit.cornell.edu/captioning-videos/>).
 - Within Academic Technologies, we consult with faculty on accessibility during course design of all new online courses.
- Select and introduce to the campus new technologies that meet accessibility standards.
 - Explore the development and implementation of a Voluntary Product Accessibility Tool as a standard procedure in the procurement process of IT, including exploring the need to identify trainers from peer institutions on the implementation of a procurement policy regarding accessibility.
 - Where CIT has been engaged, we have included an accessibility review as part of the pre-purchase evaluation. CIT's recommendation is that a formal university-wide practice should be developed by Procurement.

Other Progress

- As part of the University Learning Space Enhancement project and Warren Hall Phase 2 completion, ALS (Assisted Listening System) devices are being installed in classrooms. A total of 35 ALS systems were installed this year.
- The videos produced in the 8 MOOCs (soon to be 12) have been captioned. This is the majority of the video in them.
- The CIT Custom Development team is including web accessibility testing/verification time in all new project plans for new / redesigned websites/web applications.

Progress on Joint Initiatives:

Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation and Physical Access:

- Incorporated concerns for individuals with accessibility needs within all emergency management drills/tabletops and exercises, including creating and practicing scenarios for each exercise component, and using the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HAEPP) database. Worked with building coordinators to facilitate discussions prior to the drills.

Employment and Physical Access:

- Developed a pilot project that will operate from June 8 to December 11, 2015 that provides accessible on-campus transportation service for faculty and staff with disabilities or chronic medical conditions. This service provides free door-to door rides via Red Runner for staff and faculty with disabilities who are participating in university-related activities or taking advantage of the benefits of employment at Cornell. Examples of eligible rides include: meetings, seminars, trainings and wellness programs. The service is eligible to faculty and staff with AP/PO parking permits. Medical Leaves Administration will review applications for those without an accessible parking permit issued by Cornell.

Physical Access and Education Programs:

- Compiled a partial inventory of lecture spaces that have fixed seating to gather information about the availability of accessible seating and wheelchair access to the front of the lecture space. This was accomplished with the Classroom IT Upgrades project.

Employment and Educational Programs:

- The Education and Employment teams reviewed relevant laws regarding the rights of persons training service animals and recommended no changes to our current policies and practices in this area.
- University Policy 6.13, Disability Accommodation, was revised and submitted to the University Policy Office for review.

2015-16 ADA Access Plan Goals:

Physical Access:

- Expand Event Registration Form review to all events on campus, including both exterior and interior events planned across campus. The review includes hundreds of events on campus annually.
- Continuing accessibility and sustainability collaborative projects in the coming year related to recycling and sustainability initiatives.
- Continue review of classroom accessibility initiatives related to technology and physical accessibility.
- Review all Cornell Design Standards to determine if accessibility upgrades are needed.

Educational Programs:

- Implementation of new database management system in Student Disability Services, Accessible Information Management. This system will allow for paperless case management, streamlined services and office efficiencies with scheduling appointments, data collections, distributing notes and alternate text materials, and accommodation letters.
- Develop additional disability resources for use by students and faculty to support engaged learning experiences away from the Cornell campus.
- Purchase and provide training on the use of Sensus Access. Sensus Access is a software program that converts documents into a range of alternate media including audio books (MP3 and DAISY), e-books (EPUB, EPUB3 and Mobi) and digital Braille. Having this program available to the campus community via the web will enable anyone to convert documents to accessible formats at any time. This should encourage faculty to create accessible course documents. It will also offer a self-service document conversion option to students who are doing research in the library and need quick document conversion or studying off-campus.

Employment:

- Implement staff/faculty disability affirmative action plan that includes ADA section 503 requirements, highlights disability inclusive programs at Cornell, provides disability resources, and includes recommended disability best practices for college and unit TND initiatives (DIWD).
- In conjunction with campus partners (including disability Colleague Network Group), implement strategy to increase understanding of what constitutes a disability, rights of individuals with disabilities, and to encourage staff/faculty to self-identify as an individual with a disability; re-launch self-identification survey, with a goal of doubling September 2014 survey response rate (DIWD).

- Promote the “Disability Inclusiveness” Snippets professional development program as a TND opportunity for colleges and administrative units, with the goal of two or more colleges or units incorporating the training during 2015-16. (DIWD/Employment and Disability Institute).
- Create better awareness of the range and scope of services that MLA offers (MLA):
 - Review MLA website with an eye toward the language used and the inclusivity/clarity of it.
 - Provide MLA trainings to targeted groups on campus to raise awareness.
 - Partner with the UAW to train their new benefits liaison on the variety of MLA services.
 - Enhance new supervisor training with more information about the non-leave components of MLA services.
 - Partner with constituent groups on campus (DCNG, HR partners, etc.) to explore whether a name change for the office might be beneficial.

Communications:

- Continue to develop articles for Cornell media networks that highlight disability awareness and progress in the inclusion of disability in diversity efforts.
- Continue efforts to caption the most frequently viewed Cornell Cast videos.
- Continue to support the upgrades and revised information on disability.cornell.edu. This website continues to be an important means for sharing disability information to the campus community.

Emergency Preparedness:

- Complete the elevator labeling project notifying people what number to call if they require assistance and the elevator is down.
- First Responders Disability Awareness Training for all our Emergency Response groups including: Cornell EMS, Ithaca Fire and Bangs Ambulance personnel.

Technology:

- With university stakeholders, make the decision about whether to continue working toward promulgation of Policy 5.11 (Web Accessibility) or to instead focus on education and awareness.

Rethink and revise the web accessibility guidelines (the “primer”):

- Outline Cornell expectations and identify the Cornell departments that can advise or consult on accessibility-related matters.
- Point to external expert accessibility sources (for example, WebAIM) for detailed how-to information.
- Include information (or links to other sources) about assistive IT resources at

- Cornell (for example, the campus map overlay, Classroom Technologies documentation, video captioning services).
 - Coordinate with Academic Technologies, Student and Disability Services, HR, and others to position these guidelines as the definitive information source and link to them from the appropriate web pages throughout the university.
- Upon the completion of the accessibility guidelines, plan and implement awareness and education programs in partnership with Academic Technologies, Student and Disability Services, HR, and others.
- Follow up on the Assistive Listening Systems (ALS) project from 2014 to ensure that the systems are working as intended.

Joint Goals:

Physical Access, Educational Programs and Communications:

- Plan and execute 25th anniversary conference for the fall that will highlight ADA implementation strategies and accommodation successes that we and other organizations face.

Employment and Physical Access:

- Continue the exploration of improving transportation options for staff and faculty with disabilities by monitoring and assessing the implementation of the accessible transportation (Accessible Red Runner) pilot project underway June 2015 through December 2015.

Technology and Physical Access:

- Working with CIT personnel, establish Cornell Design Standard for Accessible Lecterns.

Physical Access and Communication:

- Work with communication to expand the verbiage in our ADA communications to include people living with chronic health conditions. Many people do not identify with disability solely and a lot of our programs, services and initiatives can be more inclusive in our language beyond disability.

CONCLUSION

Cornell University has been recognized on a number of fronts in its efforts to be a “best” employer and educational institution. As with other aspects of diversity, the university will strive to achieve this same status for its efforts with disability access. The university’s ongoing effort of creating a yearly disability strategic plan will assist in accomplishing the goals outlined above, and will present a way to communicate its progress in developing an accessible and welcoming environment for all staff, faculty, students and visitors.

APPENDIX A

ADA Coordination Team: (also part of the Steering Committee):

Kappy Fahey — Director of the Office of Student Disability Services

Andrea Haenlin-Mott — ADA Coordinator for Facilities Services

Ruth Katz -- Diversity & Inclusion Analytics Lead

Executive Disability Access Steering Committee:

Paul Streeter— Vice President Budget and Planning

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Laura Brown — Senior Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

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Janet Corson-Rikert -- Executive Director of Gannett Health Services/Associate Vice President for Campus Health

Lynette Chappell-Williams — Associate Vice President Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity