

DEPAUW STUDENT GOVERNMENT

A White Paper Concerning Campus Accessibility

White Paper No. 2

- I. Members of the DePauw community strive to create a welcoming campus where students feel comfortable and accommodated regardless of class, gender, or ability. The DePauw website states that “DePauw University is pleased to provide accessible seating, parking and wheelchair accessibility for family members and guests” and “DePauw University strives to maximize student potential by providing reasonable accommodations that ensure equal access to both the campus living and academic environments.” Despite DePauw's desire to be a diverse and inclusive community, many academic buildings and campus dorms are not easily accessible to students with disabilities or injuries.
- II. Additionally, potential DePauw students with disabilities may feel unwelcome due to the lack of ramps and general inaccessibility. Many students have similarly recognized this lack of accommodation after they have become injured. The Greek system and the university as a whole provide support that would fall under 'best practices', but students are unaware of these accommodations that other students or even they themselves may need. (<http://www.depauw.edu/academics/academic-resources/students-with-disabilities/>)
- III. Currently, many buildings on campus only have stairs as an entry point or do not have an elevator despite the fact that students will have classes on higher floors. Academic buildings such as Asbury Hall and campus housing such as Lucy Rowland Hall present challenges to students with physical disabilities. To this date, there is also not a source for students who wish to learn about the accessible and accommodating areas of campus.
- IV. While the University should strive to make campus universally accessible, DePauw is in compliance with United States law and the American Disability Act. According to the ADA, all new structures must be in compliance with the law, and any buildings that will be remodeled also must be remodeled in compliance with the law. However, many buildings on campus are historic and as long as there is no remodeling done, the university is not legally obligated to make them ADA Compliant. Students who need accommodations can speak to Pamela Roberts, Student Disability Services and ADA Compliance, who will accommodate the students' needs. While these resources are in place at the University, many students who need access to the knowledge of accessible places on campus do not have a resource that can provide such information. Other campus organizations may unknowingly deny access to persons with disability due to lack of knowledge about the resources that they can provide for campus events.

V. Ideally, DePauw University can become a universally accessible campus for students, staff, faculty and guests. However, we understand that immediate accessibility would be expensive and unreasonable. DePauw University needs to take measures to educate students on campus accessibility. First, the University can create a Campus Accessibility Map that will inform the DePauw community and DePauw guests which buildings are accessible and inaccessible, and where handicap parking, handicap restrooms, and drop off/pick up points for people with disabilities are located. Signs at the entrances of buildings reading, "Elevator Access," or "Wheelchair Friendly" will also raise awareness for incoming students that buildings can accommodate them as well. Second, the University can educate the community by advertising how student organizations and campus groups can make meetings and events more accessible. Advertising DePauw's resources regarding disabilities will make the campus feel more welcoming.

<http://ada-one.com/wp-content/uploads/PSE-Phys-access-resources-June2013.pdf>

Motioned by:
Senator Signature:

Seconded by:
Representative Signature:

Aye _____

Aye _____

Nay _____

Nay _____

Abstain _____

Abstain _____

Attested by:

(Secretary)

Approved by:

(President)

(Executive Vice President)

Date of White Paper Final Draft: 2/14/16

Addendum: At a meeting with Juliann Smith and Pamela Roberts, Senators Halffield '17, Killion '18, and Adams '19, discussed additional measures that the administration can take to promote campus accessibility. Some of these measures include:

- An accessibility checklist for student organizations when they plan events
- The possibility of event reservation page when reserving rooms
- Braille signs on doorways
- Handicap friendly list for dietary needs
- Improved sidewalks for visitors who might need a wheelchair
- available wheelchairs for people who need them (more, let people know where they are)
- Map available online and in physical form for visitors and students marking ramps, elevators, and other available accessibility features--would be expensive to have done, but could potentially be created by students as part of a class/ITAP