The UMC Committee on Access for Persons with Disabilities met November 29th, 2004. Present were O. Williams, L. Johnson, J. Magnuson, S. Grunewald, H. Maiga, K. Myers, M. McCluskey, T. Feiro, L. Wilson. No student reps attended the meeting.

No additions to the proposed agenda were added prior to the meeting.

Myers reported on the change to the U Senate Committee on Disability Issues. UMC no longer has a rep for two reasons: Myers has exhausted his eligibility on the committee, and UMC did not have a rep on the U Committee on Committees at the time of submission of candidates for open positions. We may still access minutes of the group on the U Senate Committee website, but minutes are generally posted quite late. Thanks to Ken for his many years of excellent representation on behalf of UMC to this group. Discussion ensued on the benefits of seeking representation from all coordinate campuses on this group since its impact is system wide, and without coordinate campus input the group tends to be very TC focused.

Wilson reviewed some of the info and recommendations shared with and from the October 20th PIAC. Work on those recommendations continues.

J. Magnuson reported on the Student Center progress. The facility is scheduled for completion in June. Wilson thanked Facilities for the advance notice of the elevator repair and noted that the opportunity to prepare for such things as elevator down time has been appreciated by the students who are affected. Faculty have also assisted with room rescheduling and other accommodations. With the onset of winter, students with mobility concerns will be contacted about the parking and walking routes that they tend to use so that early morning snow removal can be planned around these needs where possible.

From the on-line evaluation of the OSD program last spring, one item remains for attention and that is the heavy door into the second floor of Owen 270. Once the Student Center construction is completed, that area can be evaluated for access improvement. It is hoped that the on-line evaluation can be repeated this fall prior to final exam week. Wilson hopes to collect data each semester since students seem willing to respond to this format. Responses are anonymous.

TTY Training was held on November 18th. We presently are using the MN Relay System for access for persons with speech and hearing disabilities, but eventually should re-install a TTY and publish that number on a dedicated phone line. Wilson indicated that a new phone with auto answer capability is desirable. Placement of the TTY needs to be worked out. Possible locations include Admissions or the switchboard. There are advantages and disadvantages to both sites.

Grunewald and Wilson spoke about the increasing serious mental health needs being presented by students. This reality reflects trends nationally and will require our attention. Presently Dr. Kanten usually assists with reviewing students for mental health referral off campus. We need to develop recommendations for families and students with these concerns so that they are appropriately handled as early as possible as often as possible. The Counseling Center does not presently include a clinical psychologist or
an LICSW, so referrals will continue to be necessary in some cases. The question arose about the feasibility of contracting with a clinical psychologist as we do for a physician for several hours month to serve students on campus with these needs. Discussion continued about using staff with that or similar backgrounds whose present job assignments do not include individual therapy. These and other possibilities should be considered for the future as the campus continues to work to improve services.

Significant budget fluctuations due to varying service demands were reviewed. Wilson is working with Tricia Sanders on this matter. This situation is likely to continue since accommodation needs vary substantially across disability issues and student numbers.

Wilson shared an article about employment barriers to persons with disabilities. Law and economics professors at MIT and Harvard have conducted research that concludes that the #1 barrier is an employer’s fear of accommodation costs associated with hiring a person with a disability. This means that we need to send students with disabilities into interview situations with that issue clearly and concisely addressed. Whenever possible candidates for positions should have their accommodation solutions worked out and available for demonstration if needed. Employment studies indicate that a very significant % of employment accommodations cost less than $50.00, and almost all are less than $500.00.

Programming and new resources this fall:

- OSD collaborated with Diversity Services in the Diversity Workshop on October 26. Disability Services hosted Bobbi Cordano, Director of TC Disability Services Program. Bobbi presented on creating universally designed instructional materials. This is a condensed version of the Curriculum Transformation and Disability training that 22 of our faculty participated in 2001-2002.

- OSD sponsored an ADA Compliance Interactive audio conference on September 30 with Jane Jarrow as lead presenter.

- We used the “Working with Ability” video in several classes this month to promote Disability Employment Awareness Month, and have also made one presentation off campus.

- We have continued with distribution of materials and planning for programming related to previous “Depression Awareness/ Suicide Prevention” efforts from previous years. We gave greater emphasis to first year students this fall than we have in the past and programming will continue through the year and is interfaced with the campus wellness programming.

- OSD did a presentation on ADD/ ADHD to Academic Assistance Center and Student Support Services staff in October. This group of students is most at risk academically year after year.

- OSD arranged for a training update on Telecommunications for the Deaf and HOH (TTY) on November 18th. This was provided by the Regional Service Center for Deaf and HOH out of Bemidji. Discussion ensued regarding future
placement of a TTY. A new TTY will need to be purchased. Wilson has vendor information.

- Student Health and OSD co-sponsored a program on Seasonal Affective Disorder on November 29th. The presenter was Cheryl Forfang.

- UMC will host (not arranged or presented by us) a training for the region on Emergency Mental Health Services which related to crisis intervention and suicide prevention. This will take place in Hill 4 on December 16th from 1:00 to 3:00. Pre-registration is required due to space limitations and the regional nature of the training. Presenters are Don Christie and Michael Anderson, LICSW's from NWMHC.

- Kiehle Library purchased the video “Accommodations for Students with Psychiatric Disabilities in Higher Education”. It is worth viewing and thinking about for future planning needs. Contact Wilson to set up viewing time.

Fall semester student numbers: ADD/ADHD – 12, Deaf / HOH – 2, specific learning disability- 15, low vision – 2, mobility impairment -3, mental health related- 9 (does not include 10 of the 14 new or transfer students who reported depression / anxiety but did not document), dismissed due to resolution of disability – 2, students who have graduated but are still using services- 2, chronic health / epilepsy – 1. Total 44 = active students as 6/14/2005.

Recorder, L. Wilson