Committee on Access for Persons with Disabilities

UMC Committee on Access for Persons with Disabilities met March 21, 2012 with the following members present or offering a report via email: Ken Myers, Les Johnson, Rich Connell, Rand Rasmussen, Owen Williams, Amber Bailey (guest), Steve Hannah, Mike Vivion (email), Gary Willhite (email), Laurie Wilson. Owen chaired the meeting.

Amber Bailey reviewed the website work that has been initiated with the OSD website. Basically the entire old site has been taken down and over the next few weeks, information will selectively be posted or developed. Amber will work with the TC campus DS to ensure accessibility.

Rand Rasmussen reported on the status of the online tutoring coordinator position. Rand and staff in consultation with appropriate offices will develop a position description for a full time, 12 month coordinator. A significant influx of online students occurs during summer and fall.

Rand also reported on the funds allocated for the AAC to purchase a Kurzweil Text to Speech Scanning / Reading Technology device. Due to unexpected software and licensing changes, Kurzweil encouraged us to wait to purchase until Fall 2012. Ken Myers’ offer to demo his home version was accepted. Once purchased, this will be a new resource for students with a variety of reading or low vision disability issues.

Rich Connell reported on the classroom renovation project currently underway. Initially Dowell 106, 200, 206, 225, and Owen 205 are under review. Rich indicated that field of view issues in the larger rooms are being closely attended to as well as audio needs with added speakers. Mike Vivion, who was unable to attend, sent comments forward documenting the difficulty hearing and being heard in the larger classrooms. Wilson indicated that Roberta Juarez of the TC campus has affirmed her availability to the UMC classroom renovation committee as an accessibility specialist for all building projects. Flexibility with furnishings and adjustable height workstations or tables and chairs will improve comfort for all users. Retaining space for wheelchairs and scooters and all other access features will be addressed. OSD encourages contact with Roberta before finalizing plans.
Gary Willhite reported (via email) that all accessibility issues are being attended to with the new residence hall. Groundbreaking is scheduled for Spring 2012 with move in for Spring 2013.

Coordinator’s report:

• A system wide ITV meeting was held January 13th with all member campuses participating. Main discussion centered on system-wide online course accessibility.
• Linnea Barton is on maternity leave. AAC colleagues are assisting OSD in her absence with some addition of hours by Eryn Killough. Thanks to all for supporting development of accommodations.
• Many positive comments about ‘The Bus’ have been offered. Students were encouraged to respond to the survey. Safety and accessibility of many kinds are addressed by this transportation option.
• Thank you to CAL for ongoing discussion of how to improve timely contact with distance learners with disabilities.
• Thank you to Facilities staff for prompt winter attention to campus doors, parking, sidewalks.
• Questions about ‘marketing’ of services were raised. Wilson advises not marketing unless an array of services is well established. OSD is still nine months and lightly staffed.

At this meeting, no student comments / concerns were forwarded. Meeting adjourned.

L. Wilson, recorder