

# **Institutional Disability Access Management Strategic Plan for Cornell University**

**July 1, 2012–June 30, 2013**

## **Executive Summary**

Since 2004, Cornell University has holistically addressed the needs and interests of its students and workforce with disabilities by incorporating disability issues into the university's institutional diversity planning initiative, including the needs of individuals with disabilities into the university's overall work/life strategy, and developing a long term disability access management strategic plan to increase accessibility of the university's campus and programs.

Cornell University has provided an overall institutional commitment to accessibility in the adoption of the Commitment to Disability Access for Ithaca Campus Faculty, Staff and Students (<http://www.cornell.edu/disability/docs/disability-commitment-report.pdf>), which is updated with the university's accomplishments in addressing accessibility.

Disability compliance and a commitment to incorporating disability access into an overall diversity and inclusion initiative are addressed through four offices and departments at Cornell University: the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity and the Office of Medical Leaves Administration in the Division of Human Resources and Safety Services, the Office of Student Disability Services in the Division of Student and Academic Services, and the Department of Maintenance Management in the Division of Facilities Services.

The university has designated an ADA Coordination Team consisting of the Associate Vice President of the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity, the Director of the Office of Student Disability Services and the Division of Facilities Services ADA Coordinator. This team is responsible for the implementation of the institutional disability strategic planning process.

The university has also established an Executive Disability Access Steering Committee consisting of the Vice President for Student and Academic Services, the Vice President for Budget and Planning, the Vice President for Facilities Services, the Vice President for Human Resources and Safety Services, the Vice

Provost for Undergraduate Education, the Vice President for University Communications, Director for Information Technologies, and the Director of Maintenance Management. This executive committee ensures 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 institutional disability strategic planning initiative is designed to:

- encourage colleges and administrative units to include disability access initiatives as a component of their diversity plan under *Toward New Destinations*;
- establish shared accountability and responsibility for addressing program and physical accessibility for individuals with disabilities;
- provide educational opportunities to improve the university community's understanding of disability issues and the university's obligations in disability compliance;
- expand the university's commitment to community relations with organizations that advocate for individuals with disabilities.

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 for creating a climate that embraces individuals with disabilities. The plan focuses on six priority areas: physical accessibility of the campus, educational programs, employment, communications, emergency preparedness/ evacuation and technology.

In 2012, the university initiated a new institutional diversity planning initiative, *Toward New Destinations* that is designed to establish accountability for addressing diversity and inclusion at the college and administrative unit level. In addition, because *Toward New Destinations* is carried out through the colleges and administrative departments, this strategic plan includes suggested initiatives that address disability diversity.

The disability access management strategic plan is not intended to encompass all of the efforts related to disability access that occurs on campus. For example, not all of the physical barrier removal elements are highlighted on this plan, but the end results of the removal of barriers are reported in our accomplishments. The

same is true for our employee accommodations and accommodations that are made for students registered with Student Disability Services.

To the greatest extent possible, the implementation of the 2012–2013 Strategic Plan will take place within existing university administrative departments as part of their ongoing work and 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 barriers to accessibility of current programs, services and activities, as required by the ADA, to allow equal opportunity in the most integrated setting.

### **2011–2012 Accomplishments**

In its third year of the strategic planning process, Cornell University continues to focus on meeting the compliance requirements of various disability laws and regulations while addressing disability access from an inclusiveness perspective in light of the focus on diversity in the university's strategic plan. Despite continued budget constraints, the university worked to provide greater disability accessibility by incorporating the following factors into the university's 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.

Highlights of the year's accomplishments in the priority areas:

#### **1. Physical Accessibility**

The university is working toward a fully accessible campus using a multifaceted approach, including an ongoing self-evaluation of the university's physical space. There were many accomplishments related to this area.

- An ADA Construction Accommodation Plan document was created, implemented and used by the Division of Facilities Services, colleges and units to plan for construction projects that may have a direct or indirect impact on accessibility.
- Permanent accessible seating for Schoellkopf Stadium was established in the Schoellkopf Memorial Terrace. This is proximate to accessible parking, restrooms and a newly installed automatic door onto the terrace. Tickets will be sold to individuals and companions for this accessible seating area for athletic events and other events held in the Stadium. This is a stop gap measure until funds are available to install permanent accessible seating in the Schoellkopf Crescent.
- Gender neutral accessible restrooms were established in Biotech and Uris Hall, an accessible restroom was established in Space Sciences Building and automatic doors and benches were installed in Biotech.
- Design work was completed for accessible restrooms for Barton Hall and Morrill Hall.
- Feasibility studies are being finalized for accessible paths of travel on the Arts Quad and within Uris Library.
- All curb ramps at crosswalks on campus were inventoried and placed in a priority system to address access deficiencies.
- Paths of travel were made more accessible on the Arts Quad, at McGraw Hall, in the crosswalks on the corner of Campus Road and College Avenue, from B-Lot to the Vet Medical Center, and on Tower Road.
- Accessibility was improved at the crosswalks located at Tower Road/Garden Avenue and Campus Road/East Avenue.
- Accessible parking spaces were created at Garden Avenue at Barton Hall east entrance.
- A curb cut was created at Duffield Hall parking lot.
- Monthly meetings were established between the ADA Coordinator for Facilities Services and the Zone Facilities Managers to ensure that accessibility is incorporated into all upcoming construction projects.
- The Cornell Design and Construction Standards were updated to reflect the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.
- New pavement and accessible parking spaces were established proximate to Morrison Hall, allowing for better access to both Morrison Hall and CALS Surge Facility.

- A new accessible bus stop, parking space and access route was established in front of Boyce Thompson Institute.
- Parking Services established a review committee for requests for a waiver for purchasing an accessible parking permit.

## 2. Educational Programs

- An accessibility checklist and information about creating accessible web content were added to the university's Guide to Planning Accessible Events.
- Cornell's Faculty Institute for Diversity, coordinated through the Center for Teaching Excellence, included a module on addressing universal design for instruction.
- All faculty members were sent a link to the *Bulletin on Student Disability Issues for Cornell Faculty*, [http://sds.cornell.edu/Faculty/FACULTY\\_BULLETIN\\_JAN2012.pdf](http://sds.cornell.edu/Faculty/FACULTY_BULLETIN_JAN2012.pdf) that contains information about compliance responsibilities for students with disabilities.
- Student Disability Services updated the Resource Guide for Teaching Students with Disabilities, [http://sds.cornell.edu/Faculty/SDS\\_Handbook.pdf](http://sds.cornell.edu/Faculty/SDS_Handbook.pdf). This document is a tool with information about a broad range of disabilities and effective strategies for teaching students with disabilities.
- Training of the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) on the university's disability obligations under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act resulted in the appointment of a disability liaison to the ADA Coordinator team and the development of resources for grant writers regarding disability compliance.
- Training was developed and workshops provided for 40 student and staff event planners on planning accessible events.
- A self-evaluation tool was developed for departments to review their level of disability accessibility.
- Four new disability focused student organizations (Delta Alpha Pi, Cornell University Deaf Awareness Project, Cornell Crohn's and Colitis Foundation Affiliated Forum, Autism Speaks-Cornell U) were formed this year, joining the four existing student organizations: Cornell Union for Disabilities Awareness, Disability Services Troop, Facts, Advocacy, and Control of Epileptic Seizures, and Cornell Minds Matter that educate about disability

awareness and contribute to building a supportive disability community at Cornell.

### 3. Employment

- A number of steps were taken to increase the understanding of the changes and impact of changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act and the recent U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regulations. A summary of the changes and implications for staff was presented at the May 9, 2011 HR Community Meeting attended by all HR staff. In addition, two articles were completed to make members of the university community aware of progress related to disability access.
- Wendy Strobel Gower with the ILR Employment and Disability Institute completed the Just In Time Toolkit for Managers for front-line managers and supervisors. The toolkit was linked to the “Tools for Managers” page in May 2012 and announced on July 3, 2012 to the HR community. Going forward, it will be distributed through college and department human resources staff, Medical Leaves Administration, the Disability Colleague Network, and Supervisory Development courses in Organizational Effectiveness. <http://disabilitytoolkit.edi.cornell.edu/> .
- A meeting was held for the disability service providers in the local community and Cornell University recruitment managers. The second annual meeting was held May 23, 2012 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Tompkins County Library downtown. Mary DeSouza presented on talent sourcing at Cornell; Jeff Herman presented on the current hiring climate at Cornell; and Laurel Parker presented on the process and resources available to potential and current employees with disabilities at Cornell for workplace accommodation.
- The forms to request disability accommodations for employment were revised to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act regulations.
- The office of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion organized a Disability Colleague Network Group which is developing its mission statement.
- The Central Western New York Business Leadership Network, coordinated by Cornell’s Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity and the DBTAC, hosted six workshops on disability awareness.

#### 4. Communication

- The Disability Information website continued to be hosted on the university's homepage in order to increase visibility of disability access resources and developments as well as provide information to campus visitors. The site had more than 10,000 page views in 2011-2012.
- CornellCast posted a video of ILR Associate Dean of Outreach Susanne Bruyere, discussing new initiatives that expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities. <http://www.cornell.edu/video/?videoID=1733>
- University Communications' Web Technologies office began designing a tool that will allow event planners to add information on disability access to the University Events Calendar.
- University Communications continued to use closed captioning to live stream high-profile university events, such as presidential speeches.
- The university's disability efforts and related activities continued to be covered in campus publications, including the Cornell Chronicle and Pawprint.
  - November 2011—The Chronicle reported on the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Cornell University Diversity Update at the Statler Hotel, which included disability access among its topics of discussion. <http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/Nov11/DivConf.html>
  - December 2011—The Chronicle reported on a joint project between Cornell, RIT and Camden County College in New Jersey to create an online support community for deaf and hard-of-hearing students majoring in science, technology, engineering, and math. <http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/Dec11/DHH.html>
  - December 2011—A Pawprint article on advance planning for inclement weather included information and a link for mobility impaired individuals concerned about being able to reach their work site. <http://pawprint-test.univcomm.cornell.edu/pawprint/?q=articles/2011/12/leaders-encourage-advance-planning-for-inclement-weather>
  - January 2012—The Chronicle reported on new Transportation Services rules for accessible parking. <http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/Jan12/accessibleParking.html>

- April 2012—Pawprint reported on the newly created Facilities Services Diversity Advisory Group and its commitment to disability access. <http://pawprint-test.univcomm.cornell.edu/pawprint/?q=articles/2012/04/facilities-services-recommits-to-diversity-and-inclusion>
- May 2012—The Chronicle reported on Jaime Frielich '13, an accessibility advocate and human development major, who was named a campus representative to the Clinton Global Initiative. <http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/May12/FrielichClinton.html>

## 5. Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation

- A complete hazard and vulnerability risk assessment was completed to cover the entire Campus and departments as part of the Emergency Management grant that was received. The Emergency Management group is still analyzing this data and preparing goals and objectives moving forward.
- A form was developed that will allow people with disabilities to self-identify that assistance is needed in the event of an emergency. This form is available on the Disability Information website.
- The Spillman Computer-Aided Dispatch software, currently used by CU Police, is implemented in a new way and will allow Environmental Health and Safety to know of the people who used the self-reporting form described above.

## 6. Technology

- A new lead was appointed to lead the Technology priority area
- The Cornell E-Text Pilot Project has been working with project developers on ensuring accessibility for students who have disabilities.
- Information Technologies service center directors were educated about ADA requirements for accessibility.

In addition to these specific accomplishments, Cornell University made progress in addressing challenges to creating a fully inclusive community for individuals with disabilities.

For the 13th year, Cornell University chaired the Central/Western New York Industry Liaison Group, an organization that focuses on affirmative action

compliance, including compliance with disability affirmative action laws. One of the quarterly meetings featured a presentation on disability access. For the 5th year, Cornell University chaired the Central/Western New York Business Leadership Network (CWNYBLN), an organization of employers committed to hiring individuals with disabilities. The CWNYBLN, with approximately 45 members, hosted a disability webinar series that featured a DiversityInc presentation on lessons learned from their top employers for individuals with disabilities, global disability issues and issues facing minority employees with disabilities.

### **2012–2013 Goals and Objectives**

For this plan year, goals have been established for all of the six priority areas.

#### **PHYSICAL ACCESS**

- Data will be collected and disseminated regarding access elements for lecture spaces across campus. Access elements include assistive listening systems, access to the front of the lecture space and wheelchair accessible seating.
- All aspects of the new tech campus in New York City will be reviewed for physical accessibility compliance under the ADA and other laws and codes. Discussions about access will be incorporated in all phases of the design process.
- The campus accessibility map will be updated to reflect our path improvements, especially with data from the Arts Quad Accessible Path of Travel Project.
- A new system will be established and implemented to plan for ADA elevator upgrades in buildings across campus.
- Access deficiencies will be addressed in Willard Straight Hall.
- Our Facilities Physical Needs Management System (FPNMS) is continually updated to reflect our access deficiencies. This year, work will continue on a separate ADA module of FPNMS titled FACT--Facilities Accessibility Compliance Tracking, which will capture more in depth data regarding accessibility on campus.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

- Identify units and college departments to pilot the self-evaluation tool to measure accessibility of their program.
- Continue to offer training for event planners on planning accessible events.
- Create educational materials for faculty on disability compliance and best practices for teaching students with disabilities.
- Collaborate with campus partners to promote understanding of Asperger's Syndrome.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

- Organize the third Annual Disability Service Providers event in May 2013 under Mary DeSouza's leadership.
- The Employment Team will work with Kappy Fahey and the staff in Student Disabilities Services to learn more about linking college students with disabilities and career services and educating persons with IEPs on the employment disability accommodation process.
- Work with the Onboarding Center at REC, to support a holistic approach if/when a new employee presents with a disability to the Onboarding staff.
- Train the Discrimination and Harassment Advisors on the Just In Time Toolkit, <https://www.hr.cornell.edu/managers/>, at the Discrimination and Harassment Advisor Update on October 17.
- Support the newly established Colleague Networking Group on Disability, 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 on campus.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

- Continue efforts to develop a communication strategy to inform the Cornell community of our commitment to disability access.
- The Cornell Chronicle and Pawprint will continue to provide coverage of news about disability access and the efforts of the Disability Access Committee.

- Pawprint will invite Lynette Chappell-Williams and/or other disability access spokespersons to contribute semi-annual columns updating the campus on disability access efforts.
- University Communications will produce a short (60 seconds) video on the university's commitment to disability access that can be shown on appropriate "CU View" monitors around campus.
- University Communications will continue to feature staff from Cornell's disability services offices in the Staff Notes series, or its successor, on CornellCast.
- University Communications' Web Technologies group will complete the project to allow event planners to add disability access information to the Events Calendar.
- University Communications will continue to pursue the creation of a multi-source budget line to support closed captioning for live web streams and CornellCast productions.
- Strategies will be developed to inform the campus community, particularly academic department chairs and administrative managers, of the university's disability compliance obligations.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND EVACUATION**

- Review and update emergency planning efforts to incorporate needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Review fire safety plans to ensure that they are in languages that reflect those of the Cornell community.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

- Educate Qualtrics web survey creators about how to use the option to check surveys for accessibility.
- Provide guidelines and resources to faculty about video captions for teaching and learning and incorporate these into service pages.
- Provide guidelines to faculty about adding captions to course video, as part of the updated documentation for new instructional video services.
- Provide guidelines to faculty about how to use Blackboard and utilize Blackboard's accessibility options.

- Update the web accessibility primer page to reflect updated software.
- Academic Technologies 2012-13 pilots will include accessibility as product review criteria.
- Lecture Capture review - as part of the overall service review and recommendations report to the Learning Technologies governance committee, information about accessibility and video captions will be included in the report.
- Collaborate with campus partners to identify campus captioning needs, develop a centralized captioning solution and consider writing a RFP to find a contract supplier to be used for all campus captioning services.
- Include disability access in the CIT strategic planning initiative

## **CONCLUSION**

The disability access management strategic plan is the university's roadmap for disability access initiatives for the year. In addition to the established goals in the six priority areas, many other enhancements to accessibility will be undertaken and reported on in the 2013-14 plan.

As with all aspects of diversity, the university will strive to achieve a high level of excellence with disability access. The university's on-going creation of yearly disability strategic plans will result in continued work to accomplish the goals outlined above and will present a way to communicate its progress.

The implementation and success of this disability strategic plan will be enhanced by the support of the senior leadership. The Executive Disability Access Steering Committee will work with other members of senior management to disseminate the university's commitment to disability access, provide updates on increasing disability access on the campus, and garner support for the continued progress in addressing disability access through the strategic plan.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Proposed Disability Initiatives for *Toward New Destinations* Institutional Planning**

In 2012, Cornell University implemented *Toward New Destinations*, an institutional diversity planning initiative. *Toward New Destinations* calls for each college and administrative unit to identify five annual initiatives in the areas of composition, engagement, inclusion, and/or achievement for any of seven constituent groups: undergraduate students, graduate and professional students, postdocs and academic professionals, staff, faculty, community partners, or the extended Cornell community (parents of our students, alumni, donors and friends).

The following are sample initiative plans that were submitted to the Diversity Committee's as example initiatives to address disability diversity and inclusion.

#### **Composition**

- Develop recruitment pipelines for students, staff and faculty with disabilities, with the goal of increasing the representation of these populations in our student body and workforce.

#### **Engagement**

- Include disability as an identifier in surveys that are conducted by the college or administrative unit in order to measure the experience of persons with disabilities to that of non-disabled peers.
- To support the engagement of individuals with disabilities, provide opportunities for those who self-identify to participate in career development opportunities and in community activities that benefit individuals with disabilities

#### **Inclusion**

- Establish and publicize procedures throughout the college or administrative unit for providing disability accommodations to students, faculty, staff and visitors. The procedure should include an accommodation contact statement for all programs to be used by participants with disabilities to request disability accommodations.

- To increase multicultural competency, provide training to college or unit members on planning accessible events, disability rights and awareness, disability resources available on campus, and employee accommodations.
- To increase the effectiveness of communication around diversity, include language and images of persons with disabilities in college and unit publications.
- Review the college or administrative unit website and IT use for accessibility and remediate activities of inaccessibility.
- Commit to having all new web content and emerging learning technologies compliant with W3C standards.
- Provide training to staff in administrative units or faculty and staff in colleges on accessible web design and IT.
- Publicize the college's or unit's procedure for emergency evacuation for persons with disabilities.

#### Achievement

- Encourage faculty members to mentor students with disabilities and include disability as an aspect of the college student mentoring initiatives

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Executive Disability Access Steering Committee:**

Susan Murphy — Vice President for Student and Academic Services

Elmira Mangum — Vice President for Budget and Planning

Kyu Whang — Vice President for Facilities Services

Mary Opperman — Vice President for Human Resources and Safety Services

Laura Brown — Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

Tommy Bruce — Vice President for University Communications

Steve Schuster — Associate CIO

Jim Gibbs — Director of Maintenance Management

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

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

Kappy Fahey — Director of the Office of Student Disability Services

Andrea Haenlin-Mott — ADA Coordinator for Facilities Services