



# SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

## REPORT OF THE CHANCELLOR'S TASK FORCE ON DISABILITY: REALIZING THE VISION OF INCLUSION, ACCESS, AND FULL PARTICIPATION

September, 2007

# Report of the Chancellor’s Task Force on Disability: Realizing the Vision of Inclusion, Access, and Full Participation

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## MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

### Co-Chairs

Arlene Kanter, Professor of Law, Meredith Professor of Teaching Excellence, Director, Disability Law and Policy Program, Co-Director, Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies

Horace H. Smith, Associate Vice President, Division of Student Support and Retention

### Members

Curlene Autrey, Director of Diversity & Equal Employment Relations, Office of Human Resources

Liat Ben-Moshe, Ph.D. candidate, Sociology and Disability Studies, Maxwell School

Douglas Biklen, Dean, School of Education

Sheila DeRose, Assistant to the Associate Vice President, Division of Student Support and Retention

Jane Gershaw, Clinical Psychologist, Community Representative

Lisa Honan, Senior Director, Donor Relations

Brian McLane, Executive Director, Burton Blatt Institute

Steven Schroeder, Assistant Director, Campus Planning, Design & Construction

Michael Schwartz, Assistant Professor, College of Law, Director, Disability Rights Clinic

Stephen Simon, Director, Office of Disability Services

Steven Taylor, Professor, Cultural Foundations of Education, School of Education, Co-Director, Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies

## INTRODUCTION

In May 2005, the Chancellor established the Task Force on Disability. The Chancellor asked the Task Force to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the University with respect to disability issues; to develop proposals for fund raising; to identify priorities for the development of future programs and services; and to discuss SU's potential for innovative leadership on disability issues at the local, regional, national and international levels. Although the work of the Task Force is ongoing, and will continue following the submission of this Report, this Report represents the Task Force's initial response to the Chancellor's requests based on its work over the past two years.

The Task Force currently consists of 13 members. Since its creation, this Task Force has met in working groups and with a variety of disability stakeholders on more than 40 occasions. During the 2005-06 academic year, the Task Force finalized its membership and identified its goals and work plan. In 2006-07, the Task Force organized into working groups to collect information and prepare recommendations.

Throughout the 2006-2007 academic year, the Task Force's working groups identified relevant offices and personnel to provide information and various perspectives on the state of disability inclusion and access at Syracuse University. After identifying key stakeholders, Task Force members contacted principal stakeholders and gathered information from them

through written reports, face to face meetings, and written correspondence. (A list of the individuals who provided information to the Task Force for this Report is included as Appendix A). This information provides the basis for this Report. As discussed more fully below, this Report is a blueprint for change at Syracuse University that is based on the potential for collaboration on disability issues that now exists on campus.

Through the course of our research and data collection, the Task Force discovered a University with many strengths and even greater potential in the area of disability access and inclusion. However, the Task Force also identified significant gaps. On the one hand, Syracuse University offers a unique interdisciplinary graduate program in Disability Studies, which has attracted highly qualified students from around the world. Syracuse University also houses leading research and training centers and institutes on disability, and an outstanding Office of Disability Services. In addition, colleges, schools, and programs such as the School of Education, the College of Law, the Maxwell School of Public Administration, Newhouse School of Public Communications, the College of Human Services and Health Professions, the School of Information Studies, the Whitman School of Management, the School of Architecture, the College of Engineering, Women's Studies, the Writing Program, Industrial Design, and the Community Geographer all have initiated or collaborated on disability-related research, programs, and events.

On the other hand, significant gaps exist in programming and services. Science students with mobility impairments cannot fully use the resources of Carnegie Library due to the inaccessibility of the materials. While the SU Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies conducts and publishes internationally recognized research on the imperative of inclusion of children with disabilities into the mainstream of public education, SU students who are Deaf cannot obtain captioned DVDs of their graduation ceremonies. Students from other countries come to SU's Disability Studies program to learn skills needed to change their respective culture's view of people with disabilities as unfit and less than human; yet, within our own SU culture, students, faculty, and staff report feeling discriminated against and deprived of human dignity.

The information contained in this Report details challenges and proposed solutions necessary to dramatically change the culture of Syracuse University. The Report is divided into four parts: Part I: Vision statement; Part II: The Strengths of the University in Disability Policy, Programming, Technology, and Services; Part III: Challenges in Creating an Inclusive and Accessible University Community, with Specific Recommendations; and Part IV: Major Recommendations for an Inclusive and Accessible University.

As a preliminary but necessary prerequisite, the Task Force recognizes that the University community must accept the premise that disability is a vital component of diversity. Once that happens, the University may assume a mandate for inclusion and access for all members of the University

community, disabled and non-disabled alike. This approach requires a vision for going “beyond compliance”: a commitment to the idea that compliance with the law is essential, but that mere compliance is only the starting point of discussion and action. This vision calls for a commitment to go beyond the level of architectural access required by law, to the promise and utility of universal design. This vision also calls for a culture change within the University that includes active recruitment, retention, and valuing of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors with disabilities.

This Report provides a blue print for change that will position Syracuse University as a model of inclusion and access. The first step is for Syracuse University to establish written policies that evince its ongoing commitment to the core value of disability as an integral aspect of diversity. No such policies currently exist. Second, Syracuse University should make a substantial, long-term, and centralized financial commitment to enable the University to become fully physically and programmatically accessible and inclusive. Third, the current system of funding for disability accommodations should be changed; funding for accommodations for faculty, staff, as well as students and visitors to campus should be increased as needed, and funding for accommodations for new and current faculty and staff should be centralized. Fourth, an aggressive and comprehensive program of recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty, staff, and students with disabilities should be established. Fifth, all colleges, schools, departments, service components, and administrative branches of SU should be required to develop a

comprehensive plan regarding disability issues in the services and policies they administer and provide. Sixth, a Cultural Center on Disability, similar to the LGBT Resource Center and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, should be established and supported by the University. These six recommendations outlined above, and discussed more fully below, should be incorporated immediately into the University's capital campaign efforts. Finally, the Task Force proposes a system of oversight through the Faculty Senate by continuing the Task Force as an ad hoc committee of the Senate in order to ensure the ongoing implementation and monitoring of the vision and recommendations of the Task Force.

Facing the challenges presented and implementing the Task Force's recommendations will create a synergy between what we teach and research in our classrooms, laboratories and in the field, and what we do in our academic and recreational facilities, our admissions office, our parking lots, on our website, and with our administrative and human resource policies. The Task Force envisions an undertaking with great potential for a great institution. We can afford to do no less, achieving the ultimate objective of a world-class program of inclusion and access which supports students, faculty, staff, alumni, visitors, and families with disabilities.

## Part I: The Vision Statement

Syracuse University is committed to embracing disability as part of diversity, and to the inclusion, equal opportunity, access, and full participation of all students, faculty, and staff, including those with disabilities. Syracuse University realizes this vision by providing universal access and opportunity that extends beyond mere compliance with legal requirements and in a manner which fosters dignity and self-determination of all persons with disabilities. The University's commitment to *Scholarship in Action* presumes the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in the academic, social, cultural, political, and economic life of the University. Syracuse University strives to be a model of an inclusive and accessible campus, and to serve as a leader on disability issues at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

## Part II: The Strengths of the University in Disability Policy, Programming, Technology, and Services

Syracuse University is already nationally and internationally recognized in the area of disability policy and programs, and has many ties to disability advocacy and services that can be utilized by the greater University community. Syracuse University offers Central New York a broad knowledge base that can bridge existing gaps in services and programs. In the true spirit of *Scholarship in Action*, the University is well on the road to become

the premier model of an inclusive campus for all students, faculty, staff, alumni and visitors.

The University's historic role in championing public school inclusion for children with disabilities, the pioneering research of the late Dean Burton Blatt of the School of Education, which heralded the end of institutional warehousing of persons with disabilities, as well as the path-breaking advocacy work of the Syracuse University Center on Human Policy all serve as an inspiration and impetus for current initiatives.

The current work of the Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies, the Disability Law and Policy Program, the Disability Rights Clinic, the Burton Blatt Institute, and the Beyond Compliance Coordinating Committee (BCCC) have brought together groups and individuals in collaboration to improve the quality of life for people with and without disabilities. Such colleges and programs as the School of Education, the College of Law, Maxwell, Newhouse, Information Studies, Human Services and Health Professions, Management, Engineering, Architecture, Women's Studies, the Writing Program, Industrial Design, and the Community Geographer have developed disability-related courses, programs, or sponsorship of events in collaboration with our disability programs.

This vision also has created educational opportunities for college-age students with developmental disabilities at SU, as exemplified in programs such as OnCampus and Access. The soon-to-be-announced Lawrence B. Taishoff Center on Higher Education endows the cutting-edge OnCampus

program model, opening up higher education to non-matriculated students with developmental disabilities who would otherwise not have an opportunity to experience campus life. SU also leads by pioneering the use of technology to foster communication systems to support people with disabilities, through the internationally renowned Facilitated Communication Institute. SU law students acquire valuable hands-on experience in representing clients with disabilities when they serve as student attorneys in the College of Law's Disability Rights Clinic, after they graduate with a dual degree in law and disability studies, or during the summer when they gain public policy experience in Washington, D.C. through the Burton Blatt Institute's Summer Leadership Program.

Much literature on inclusion celebrates the work of innovative faculty in the School of Education. It is central to the University's Partnership for Better Education, such as the whole-school reform movement embodied by the Schools for Promise initiative that defines inclusion as encompassing all aspects and constituencies of elementary and K-8 schools in the Syracuse City School District. The Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies, in conjunction with the Disability Law and Policy Program, and the BCCC have organized speaker series, film series, community projects, and national conferences. BCCC also has instituted the Beyond Compliance Award, which celebrates the work of staff, faculty, and students on the SU campus that advances the vision of creating a culture of inclusion which is welcoming to people with disabilities on all levels.

Syracuse University offers students studying the social and cultural aspects of disability numerous advanced degree opportunities, including graduate certificates in Disability Studies through Cultural Foundations of Education, a Certificate in Disability Law and Policy in the College of Law, and a joint degree in Law and Education, with a concentration in Disability Studies. These opportunities, paired with a strong University commitment to provide and expand support services for students with disabilities under the outstanding Office of Disability Services, all position SU as a prime and unique site for disability *Scholarship in Action*.

Syracuse University's commitment to inclusion and change in the area of disability rights goes well beyond the walls of the University. This expanding role is manifested by development of public policy to promote access and opportunity for people with disabilities by the Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies, the Center's long standing Advocacy Board, and the Burton Blatt Institute. These advocacy and policy efforts to create meaningful change outside of SU, can be seen further in the collaboration with advocates, academics, and governments of other countries, and with international organizations such as the United Nations, national organizations including the National Council on Disability, and local community initiatives such as:

- Project Accessible Syracuse, published the first of its kind survey of accessible restaurants in Syracuse with a grant from the Community Foundation of Central New York;

- Programs with Onondaga County government and economic development agencies for business startup by people with disabilities;
- Programs for veterans with disabilities offered by the Whitman School;
- Cases brought by the College of Law clinics, including most recently by the Disability Rights Clinic; and
- Advocacy for and by students with disabilities by members of the Beyond Compliance Coordinating Committee.

These programs and groups position Syracuse University as a powerful change agent in the pursuit of inclusion and integration of people with disabilities in educational, economic, political, and social life.

### Part III: Challenges in Creating an Inclusive and Accessible University Community, with Specific Recommendations

In setting out to fulfill its charge, the Chancellor's Task Force on Disability undertook a comprehensive examination of all aspects of the Syracuse University community and environment. The goal of this examination was to assess the extent to which Syracuse University provides universal access and opportunity to all members of the University community, with and without disabilities. We discovered that the issue of access affects not only students, faculty, and staff, but also people who are often overlooked, including alumni, parents of prospective and current

students, members of the local community, as well as current and potential donors. We analyzed a range of access issues (broadly defined), and have included specific recommendations that apply to each. Adoption of the following specific recommendations will enable SU to become the premier educational institution in the country for students, faculty, and staff with disabilities.

## **A. PHYSICAL ACCESS**

While much progress has been made, physical navigation (vehicular and pedestrian) around the campus and at entrances to buildings poses significant safety and access difficulties for persons with various disabilities.

### **(1) Roads and Sidewalks**

Adequate paving, repair, and maintenance of sidewalks, roads and parking lots are problematic throughout the campus. This situation poses a danger not only to members of the disability community, but to all members of the SU community. Funding for repairs and updating of the infrastructure (as opposed to addressing needs on an emergency basis) is in competition with other capital projects on an annual basis.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Develop and prioritize a comprehensive list of issues and needed changes to ensure physical accessibility.
- Funding for this work should be guaranteed year-to-year. The lack of guaranteed funding impedes long-term planning for maintenance and new construction.

## **(2) Signage and Maps**

Signage and maps designating accessible entrances to buildings as well as building names are either absent, difficult to find, or difficult to understand.

### **Recommendations:**

- Overhaul the signage system throughout campus, ensuring that visitors to campus and students can find their way on campus with relative ease. All maps distributed on campus should be accessible (available in alternate formats) and updated on an annual basis.
- In order to help students and visitors navigate the campus better, the University should provide campus mobility orientation for all new students, staff, faculty and others (on a voluntary basis). This orientation, done annually as well as on an as-needed basis, will help familiarize all members of our community with the layout of the campus and orient them to accessible entrances, accessible restrooms, parking options, and other pertinent information.

## **(3) Parking**

The number of accessible parking spaces close to high-use buildings (i.e., classrooms and libraries) is woefully inadequate and not in compliance with legal requirements, especially on the main quad (see Chart of Parking Spaces, Attachment 3). The University has not recently conducted a comprehensive assessment of parking needs for persons with disabilities, and the current parking plan is at least a decade old. The system for

allocating accessible parking permits is outdated and cumbersome.

Individuals with accessible parking permits provided by the city are given no priority with respect to accessible parking spaces.

**Recommendation:**

- Create a new parking permit system based on accessibility needs in addition to seniority or rank. Discussions about the new parking permit system should include all relevant stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, design and construction staff, and people with disabilities who drive regularly to campus.

**(4) Campus Transportation**

The campus transit service (known as the Quad Shuttle) runs only during part of the school day and the school year, and has an insufficient number of shelters. Many classes are still in session past the time the Quad Shuttle stops running in the evening. Information on Shuttle availability is not readily available and is not accessible in alternative formats. There is no clear or uniform method for informing transit services in an emergency.

There is no accessible shuttle to transport guest speakers and visitors to and from the airport, and to and from the Sheraton, the campus, and within the campus.

**Recommendations:**

- Increase shuttle availability, with expanded hours, and throughout the calendar year.

- Improve dissemination of information regarding navigating the campus via the Quad Shuttle and other options to all incoming students and visitors to campus.
- Provide covered shuttle stops with two-way communication and an emergency pick-up line to transit services and security.
- Provide an accessible transit option for transporting people to and from the Sheraton, the airport, and around the SU campus.

### **(5) Snow Removal**

Snow is a major barrier for people on campus with mobility and vision impairments. Snow removal and salting of roads and pedestrian surfaces, especially after daytime hours, is inadequate and impedes disabled students, faculty, and visitors to campus from full participation in academic and co-curricular activities during the winter months.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Increase the priority given to snow removal, including training of physical plant staff regarding accessibility and its importance.
- Improve clearing of curb cuts, both in terms of frequency as well as immediately after plows clear the snow onto the curbs.
- Plow priority routes, as established by a subcommittee headed by the Office of Disability Services and Physical Plant in 2005, at all times, especially when the snow is continuous. Provide adequate signage for priority routes.

- Research creative solutions to snow and ice-free pathways. Explore opportunities to create covered walkways or tunnels where appropriate. Consult with campuses that have such systems in place.

## **(6) On-Campus University Buildings**

Not all University buildings are currently accessible, despite decades-long legal mandates. Particularly problematic are buildings on Ostrom Avenue, which are completely inaccessible to people with mobility impairments. Additionally, buildings which are accessible to people with mobility impairments may not be accessible, and could be unsafe, for people with low vision, hearing impairments, or other impairments.

### **Recommendation:**

- Develop a plan for full accessibility of all campus buildings, beginning with new buildings, to ensure that all buildings currently under construction or soon to be built will be fully accessible, since incorporating accessibility prior to completion of building is easier and more economical than retrofitting them after they are built.
- All existing buildings must also be made accessible, including installation of operating automatic entrance doors in every building; accessible restrooms (also with automatic doors) in every building; and Braille signs in all building entrances and in all elevators.

## **(7) Off-Campus Access**

The requirements of accessibility do not stop at the campus boundaries. University-owned properties, including the Sheraton (Syracuse), Lubin House (NYC) and Greenberg House (D.C.) do not comply with the University accessibility requirements described above, even if they may meet current legal requirements. Further, SU buildings and programs off-campus, including those that are part of DIPA and Study Abroad, do not conform to University accessibility requirements.

### **Recommendations:**

- Conduct an accessibility study of the programs, layout, and services at Lubin House, Greenberg House, and the Sheraton, as well as other facilities as needed, including facilities and programs outside of the United States. Devise an access plan for each facility, including accessible technology and communication access.
- Adopt a policy that Syracuse University will not contract with any facility or conduct any program which is not made physically and programmatically accessible for people with disabilities.

## **B. COMMUNICATION ACCESS**

### **(1) General communication access for all**

Not all University functions and programs are accessible to people who are Deaf or hearing impaired. Making programs and material accessible to all ensures that it is useful to the greatest number of potential users. For instance, Computer Assisted Realtime Translation (CART) and captions used

by people who are Deaf and hearing impaired is also useful for people whose first language is not English, people with certain learning or cognitive disabilities, and others who may benefit from the presentation of information in more than one communication modality.

### **Recommendations:**

- Adopt and implement a policy that all University-produced videos for events and classroom instruction will be captioned.
- Ensure that CART (Computer Assisted Realtime Translation) is used as a universal measure in all University lectures, functions, events, programs, and other activities open to the University community and/or the public. The transcripts generated by CART can form the basis of an archive for the SU community of these events, and be available as an accommodation for those with disabilities who can benefit from availability of a transcript after the event.
- Provide interpreter services, as a universal measure for all University lectures, functions, events, programs, and other activities, which are open to the University community and/or the public.
- Make available throughout campus, as part of universally designed technology, TTY video units capable of handling video relay services over the Internet.

## **(2) Sign Language Interpreters**

There is a critical shortage of qualified sign language interpreters in the Central New York region. Exacerbating the shortage is the explosive growth of video relay interpreting services which eliminates the availability for in-person interpreting services by offering incentives such as steady income, health, and other fringe benefits which are often not available to freelance interpreters. This situation has had a deleterious impact on Syracuse University's ability to attract and retain interpreters for its students, staff, and faculty employees. For instance, a Deaf faculty member, who requires high quality sign language interpreters in his field, has had great difficulty in finding qualified interpreters to work for him on an hourly basis. The pool of qualified interpreters in Syracuse is very small, and once someone is located and retained, the lack of benefits available to full-time employees, but not to hourly interpreters, impairs the University's ability to retain these interpreters.

### **Recommendation:**

- Establish a campus staff interpreter's position to cover the communication needs of faculty and staff, supported by the University's budget.

## **C. TECHNOLOGY AND VIRTUAL ACCESS**

Technological access for persons with disabilities at Syracuse University includes an ever-expanding number of accessibility dimensions, including classroom and presentation services, media production, computer

laboratory services, library services, University website policy, design, and standards. Technology is in rapid flux, and Syracuse University must work to ensure not only that it keeps abreast of the latest technologies, but also that the latest technologies are accessible to people with disabilities.

Technological access as a critical component of universal design is a major factor in leveling the curricular and extracurricular playing field for all members of the University community. This section includes challenges in providing information on technology access as well as availability of accessible and adaptive technologies.

### **Recommendations:**

- Create a University-wide policy on technology access.
- Dedicate resources to assist with the necessary training, and subsequent implementation and updating of technological accessibility.

### **(1) Web Access**

Technological and virtual (web-based) access is not yet perceived as part and parcel of mandated access features (such as physical access) which the University should be providing, despite legal mandates.

### **Recommendations:**

- Adopt and enforce guidelines for web access of all University-related websites to ensure that they are usable for people with visual, hearing, fine motor, cognitive, and other impairments.

See e.g., Web Content Accessibility Guidelines at

<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>

- Examine the accessibility of the formats used by virtual environments, including the many possibilities it will create for inclusive distance learning.
- Request assistance from SU's School of Information Studies faculty and staff in conjunction with IT staff from SU's central IT Department and other relevant campus experts to evaluate accessibility of technological solutions and make recommendations on accessibility.

## **(2) Classroom Technology**

In many new buildings, the technology is unusable by people with physical and sensory impairments in their capacities as students and instructors. For example, the media stations are too high for people who use wheelchairs and not usable by people who have limited fine motor dexterity.

Classrooms, including the technology in them, should be constructed with the goal of meeting the needs of all potential users. When assistive technologies are included in the initial design and construction, they cost very little and add great value to a wide variety of users with and without disabilities. Retrofitting buildings and technologies after the fact using a need-based system is much more costly and less effective than incorporating accessible features and technologies into buildings and classrooms before they are built or renovated.

### **Recommendation:**

- Consider technological access in the design and renovation of University buildings and classrooms, before any equipment is purchased and installed in order to ensure that all equipment is accessible to a variety of potential users, including people with physical and sensory impairments.
- Equip all classrooms and libraries with adaptive technology, including CART, JAWS software split screen option, screen magnification options and other technology. (See attached glossary for definitions of these terms).
- Train all technology help staff (not only one or two designated specialists) in the use of adaptive technology and be available to provide campus-wide assistance when needed.

### (3) SU Homepage

Information on disability issues on the University website is nearly impossible to find by members of the SU community or by other visitors to the site.

### **Recommendation:**

- Include links to disability information under "disability" as a category on the main SU homepage's main menu. The linked page should include, at a minimum, sub-links to:
  - (1) a map indicating accessible routes, entrances, and parking on campus;

- (2) The Office of Disability Services;
- (3) The Compliance Office;
- (4) The Center of Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies;
- (5) The Burton Blatt Institute;
- (6) The College of Law's Disability Law and Policy Program, including the Disability Rights Clinic, and the Disability Law Society;
- (7) The Facilitated Communication Institute;
- (8) The Beyond Compliance Coordinating Committee; and
- (9) The OnCampus and Access programs.

#### **D. ACADEMIC AND PROGRAM ACCESS**

Not only does access to the SU classrooms pose difficulties for students, faculty, staff, and visitors to campus, but curricula across campus ignore disability as an integral aspect of the subject under study. Further, Syracuse University does not have an overall plan for universal design in academic assessment, teaching, and learning.

##### **(1) Universal Design**

SU should highlight the value of teaching to a multitude of learning styles and abilities, and develop a much-needed overall plan for universal design in academic assessment, teaching, and learning. It has been demonstrated that people possess multiple intelligences and that learners benefit from instruction which incorporates multiple modalities. Learning

how to teach to a variety of learners from the outset makes everyone in the classroom feel they are valued and have the potential to succeed.

### **Recommendations:**

- Adopt a commitment to the philosophy and practice of “beyond compliance” in all aspects of University life by use of universal design principles in the development of architectural, programmatic, instructional and technological access.
- Implement regular mandatory instructor education for new and current full time, part time, adjunct and visiting faculty, teaching assistants, and graduate assistants. Such education should include pedagogy and curriculum (how to incorporate disability as a subject in courses) as well as instruction on meeting the needs of students with disabilities and providing an inclusive educational environment.
- Establish an overall plan for universal design in academic assessment, teaching, and learning.

## **(2) Disability in the Curriculum**

Despite SU's internationally renowned disability studies program and the significant progress that has been made in infusing disability into issues and programs across campus, disability has not been incorporated into the curriculum in most disciplines. A more expansive and better funded Disability Studies program can assist other disciplines on campus and elsewhere become more inclusive and multidisciplinary in their approaches to intellectual inquiry and debate. Expansion and strengthening of the

program will firmly establish SU as the premier academic program worldwide in the field of Disability Studies.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish, encourage, and financially support the multidisciplinary study of disability across campus from a variety of perspectives and within many fields of study.
- Provide funding to support the creation of Disability Studies as an undergraduate minor with the potential to become a major.
- Increase funding to support additional courses, research, and multi- and cross-disciplinary Disability Studies initiatives on the graduate and undergraduate levels.

**(3) Assessment Tools**

Standardized tests and other conventional tools of assessing performance have been proven detrimental to the academic progress and success of culturally marginalized populations. SU can take a national leadership role in research and change of knowledge evaluation and the exclusion that follows from limitations in this domain.

**Recommendation:**

- Re-evaluate the culture of assessment across departments to ensure inclusion of students with disabilities. Based on this evaluation, develop, and encourage alternative means of assessment and grading.

#### **(4) University Compliance with Disability Discrimination Laws**

As required by law, Syracuse University has a 504 Compliance Officer who has the responsibility of monitoring campus compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and coordinating the 504 complaint process. However, the University is bound also by additional disability discrimination laws, such as other sections of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the New York Human Rights Laws, which address the rights of students as well as faculty and University employees with disabilities.

Under the current system, the 504 Compliance Officer is charged with monitoring only compliance with the Section 504. Mere compliance, however, reflects adherence to minimum standards for access and accommodation; it fails to reflect an institutional commitment to provide the greatest degree of accessibility and accommodation possible—in other words, the philosophy of “beyond compliance” described in the Vision Statement of this Report. The success of implementing this philosophy depends upon University leadership and a re-envisioning of the role of the 504 Compliance Officer to promote an interpretation of Section 504 as well as the other relevant laws that goes beyond mere compliance.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Adopt a University-wide commitment to the philosophy and practice of “beyond compliance” in all aspects of University life.

- Change the role and responsibilities of the 504 Compliance Officer to provide a full-time position charged with monitoring adherence to all disability-related laws and regulations, and to provide proactive leadership in promoting the "beyond compliance" philosophy by achieving the greatest degree of inclusion, accessibility, and accommodation possible.

## **E. STAFF AND FACULTY WITH DISABILITIES**

### **(1) Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention**

Syracuse University has few statistics regarding the number of faculty and other employees with disabilities. Every two years Syracuse University asks employees to complete a self-identification survey. The last survey should have been completed in October, 2006. In addition, the online job application process that is used to apply to positions at SU does not have a place where one can request or specify accommodations. Nor does the University have any specific plan or policies for the recruitment and retention of faculty or staff with disabilities. Consequently, there is no data on the number of job applicants with disabilities, the types and cost of accommodations provided to employees with disabilities, nor the number of employees who may have left the University due to unmet accommodation needs. Publicity and dissemination of information about availability of services and accommodations for employees with disabilities is a key aspect of retention that needs to be addressed if the University is to fulfill its commitment of a diverse work force.

## **Recommendations:**

- Conduct regular surveys to collect statistics on the number of faculty and staff with disabilities in order to measure progress in recruitment and retention.
- Ensure that search committees develop specific recruitment plans to identify and attract potential faculty and staff applicants with disabilities.
- Establish specific goals based on a percentage increase over the current University representation. These goals should be shared with Cabinet members, Deans, and other administrators who are responsible for hiring faculty and staff.
- Create, disseminate, and enforce disability hiring policies, procedures, and practices, including written guidelines on interviewing applicants with disabilities; and provide training on these disability hiring policies, procedures, and practices to University personnel involved in hiring, including members of faculty search committees.
- Create benchmarks, funding levels, and incentives for diversity hires within schools and departments. Disability is a form of diversity that should be included in incentive programs.
- Develop multiple venues for dissemination of information on workplace accommodations and procedures for requesting them.

- Consider innovative accommodations such as extending the “clock” to allow additional time for persons who, due to the nature of their impairments, may require more time to complete requirements for tenure and promotion.

## **(2) Workplace Accommodations**

The Task Force heard poignant and disturbing examples of employees with disabilities who were encouraged to retire rather than continue employment with necessary workplace accommodations. Currently, the obligation to provide workplace accessibility accommodations rests with each individual department or school. Departments and University offices may be hesitant about hiring a person with disability over another qualified candidate who is non-disabled because of concerns about the cost of accommodations. Similar concerns may arise regarding retaining faculty and staff with disabilities. Such attitudes are counter-productive to the implementation of the goal of an inclusive University community.

### **Recommendations:**

- Immediately change the current system which requires individual schools and departments to provide funding for their faculty and staff’s accommodations, and instead provide centralized funding for accommodations provided to faculty and staff.
- Maintain centralized information regarding accommodations for faculty and staff with disabilities.

- Conduct exit interviews to assess a faculty or staff member's satisfaction with the culture of the campus regarding disability, and whether or not the employee's accommodation needs were met.

### **(3) Disability Awareness**

Staff and faculty need to be alert and responsive to issues related to disability in the workplace.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Provide a regular program of disability training (including information on the law) for all University employees, including faculty, administrators, and staff.
- Include in the evaluation for tenure and promotion an assessment that examines the faculty member's efforts to include and accommodate students with disabilities. Introduce a similar assessment for staff performance.
- Adopt a policy against harassment or mistreatment of students, faculty and staff with disabilities, and make explicit the complaint process. The policy should be enforced by the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Integrity and by the Human Resources Office.
- On the University's main homepage, include a link to disability information under "disability" as a category that will link faculty and staff to information on SU's policies and procedures on accommodations.

## **F. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **(1) Basic Information and Dissemination**

Students with disabilities constitute an invisible minority on campus. Although some students with disabilities prefer to keep the nature of their particular impairment private, many students do not. The University may strive to encourage students to self-identify as the culture changes to become more welcoming and supportive of difference based on disability.

While information as to the numbers of students with disabilities who receive services through Office of Disability Services is readily available, the University does not have a complete picture of the entire population of students with disabilities on the SU campus. There is no University-wide information as to the total number of students with disabilities and the needs of these students. From other sources we know, for example, that students of color tend not to disclose their disability. Furthermore, there is no overall plan at SU to develop a culture of inclusion, integrating academic, social, emotional and environmental components geared to enhance the college experience of these students. Students may not always know where to go for disability-related services. Sadly, some students also fall behind in their studies if issues of accommodation are not addressed fully by the first day of classes each semester.

### **Recommendations:**

- Conduct a survey of students with regard to disability, to determine whether students' needs are being met in terms of services, culture of inclusion, attitudes, curriculum, and environment. Within such a survey, attention should be paid to under-represented populations, particularly students of color. Remediation of problem areas would flow from such a survey.
- In the annual communication from the Vice-Chancellor to faculty and department heads, include a directive to the faculty to include a statement on accommodations in all syllabi. This directive fulfills the cultural expectation of non-discrimination and inclusion within the institution.

### **(2) Funding for Students**

SU has no specific financial assistance for students with disabilities, or for students with disabilities of color or from low income families.

### **Recommendations:**

- Establish a fund specifically dedicated to scholarships for students with disabilities.
- Inform students that their disability-related expenses (such as equipment and assistive technology) should be part of their financial need statement, not only part of the parental income statement.

- Create a centralized database of funding opportunities for all undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities.

### **(3) Outreach and Diversity**

Disability should be seen as a strength of SU, and a draw for potential students. Disability-related academic programs as well as available accommodations and support services are of enormous interest to applicants, students, family members, faculty, staff, and visitors, focusing attention on SU's commitment and efforts to promote inclusion.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Review every campus publication for students, faculty, staff, and visitors, including admissions brochures and other materials representing student and campus life, from a disability perspective to ensure that they emphasize inclusion and disability as part of diversity. This recommendation is particularly important with respect to the inclusion of photos that depict the broad diversity of the University community.
- Once funding and basic access is established, the University should actively recruit students with disabilities, through publications, Listservs, and appropriate networks.

## **G. UNIVERSITY LIFE**

### **(1) Athletics and Recreation**

Intercollegiate and intramural athletics, both highlights of University life, exclude students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors with disabilities. Currently, the University has no plan for adaptive athletics that would offer competitive sports opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Recreation Services has made efforts to include individuals with disabilities in leisure and recreational programming but greater opportunities should be made available. With the notable exception of the new Marshall Square Mall Fitness Center, SU Fitness Centers have limited accessibility in terms of accessible equipment and staff knowledgeable about disability issues.

**Recommendations:**

- Conduct a review of all athletic facilities (including the Dome) for accessibility, and adopt of a plan to improve accessibility as necessary.
- Ensure that renovations to existing facilities and the development of new fitness centers incorporate not only overall accessibility to the facilities, but also include equipment that is useable by everyone, including individuals with disabilities, and provide trained staff who can assist individuals with disabilities as needed.
- Consider hiring a director of adaptive athletics to develop and promote competitive sports for athletes with disabilities.

**(2) Schine Student Center**

Schine Student Center, a hub of recreational and extracurricular activity, is notoriously inaccessible, with no signage in elevators, confusing

entrances, heavy restroom doors, and no nearby parking, not to mention no accessible parking. Since the Schine Center hosts many campus-wide programs and houses many student activity offices, this facility should be modified to become a model of accessibility.

**Recommendation:**

- Prepare and implement a detailed accessibility survey to determine the specific modifications and renovations that need to be made. Necessary renovations should be made a priority of the University.

**(3) Student Health Services**

Student Health Services provides an array of health care services but students with more complex needs must access nearby hospitals and physicians. Student Health Services also operates an emergency transport service and limited CENTRO door-to-door service on a temporary basis. Further, a growing number of students are seeking on-going counseling and psychotherapy. While several campus facilities (Counseling Services, Psychological Services, Goldberg Couple and Family Therapy Center) provide varying levels of services, all are limited in scope and generally are not set up to address long-term needs. Moreover, students who seek psychiatric services must seek such services in the community. Yet community resources are limited, and locating and making a timely appointment with a psychiatrist, for example, can be very difficult.

## **Recommendations:**

- Explore a more comprehensive long-term service that supplements Centro's door-to-door service.
- Provide a clear statement of physical and mental health services that are available on campus (and those that are not available) to all students, including students with disabilities.
- Review the health needs of students and available physical and mental health services on campus in order to fill necessary gaps, providing easier access of students to community providers, and facilitating student access and use of available resources both on and off campus.

### **(4) Campus-Wide Services for Students with Disabilities**

Campus-wide support services vary for students who have specific, disability-related needs. The Office of Disability Services provides a wide array of services and serves students who may require support and accommodations that are particularly tailored to their individualized needs. However, there are student needs that fall outside of the parameters of the Office of Disability Services and these needs must be addressed in order for students to succeed at SU, and in order for SU to succeed at attracting and retaining qualified students with disabilities.

## **Recommendations:**

- Expand staff and funding given to the Office of Disability Services to meet the increased demands for services as the population of students with disabilities is expected to increase.
- The needs of students with disabilities should be determined through the implementation of a survey of the students and other relevant stakeholders.

## **Part IV: MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CREATION OF AN INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE UNIVERSITY**

Although a culture of inclusion is the subject of much teaching and path-breaking research and academic programming here at SU, the gaps in providing an accessible and accommodating environment are substantial and widespread.

Much could be subsumed under the University's lack of formal, centralized, University-wide policies, practices, or funding. Schools and departments are expected to provide (within their ever-tightening budgets) their own signage, automatic doors, website design, and academic accommodations, not to mention accommodations for new or current faculty. Funding guarantees from year to year do not exist, thereby precluding long-term planning for issues as basic as accessible parking and sidewalk repair.

Closing the gaps between what we teach and what we do has the potential to usher in an exciting period of growth at Syracuse University, creating a University environment and culture that will foster our role as a national and international model of universal design, inclusion, and access. For this effort, we can draw on our own resources: the vast knowledge and research base we have created right here in our classrooms, offices, laboratories, and in the field. Taking on this challenge brings the possibility of dramatic change and development for Syracuse University.

Eight major recommendations can be distilled from the preceding pages of this Report:

1. Syracuse University should develop and publicize a comprehensive set of policies to promote its commitment to the core value of disability as an integral aspect of diversity. These policies must be based on the University's acceptance and validation of going "beyond compliance" as the governing principle in its everyday affairs relative to disability.
2. The University should make a substantial, long-term, and centralized financial commitment to make Syracuse University fully accessible and inclusive. From elevators to scholarships, from curricula innovations to the full array of accommodations, the current inconsistent and incomplete system of fulfilling the legal requirements for an accessible campus can no longer serve the needs of the University as a diverse community.

3. Syracuse University should provide centralized funding for disability accommodations for faculty, staff, and visitors to campus, and increased funding, as needed, for disability accommodations for students as a centerpiece for any programmatic and academic change at the University level.
4. To achieve full inclusion, Syracuse University should develop and implement an aggressive and comprehensive program of recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty, administrators, staff, and students with disabilities. Only by attracting and retaining faculty, staff, administrators, and students with disabilities will a culture of inclusion develop and thrive. At a minimum, and as soon as possible, the University's commitment to increasing diversity based on disability should be included in all University admission materials and hiring protocols.
5. All colleges, schools, departments, service components, and administrative branches of Syracuse University should be required to develop a comprehensive plan regarding disability inclusion and access in the services, employment, and policies they administer and provide, as part of their planning and reporting requirements. Only then can a University-wide commitment to inclusion and access be fully implemented.
6. A Cultural Center on Disability should be established and supported by the University. (A proposal for the establishment of the Cultural

Center is attached as Attachment 4). Fulfilling a purpose similar to that of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the LGBT Resource Center, the Cultural Center will function as an umbrella entity under which social, cultural, and educational programming related to disability will take place. Housed in an accessible and visibly central location on campus, with full-time staffing, this Center will become the centerpiece for the fulfillment of the Vision described in this Task Force Report. We recommend that the attached proposal for the Cultural Center of Disability (Attachment 4) be brought before the Senate for approval as soon as possible.

7. Recommendations 1-6 above should be incorporated into the University's current capital campaign efforts. Fundraising is a crucial aspect in any serious attempt to change campus culture and physical facilities and to ensure full inclusion and access to all. The Task Force further suggests that all relevant colleges, schools, department, office, and programs be involved in the process of creating a comprehensive document of funding needs and requirements to be used in the capital campaign.
8. The Task Force should continue as an Ad Hoc Committee of the Faculty Senate. To facilitate this Recommendation, the Task Force proposes that this Report be referred to the Faculty Senate Agenda Committee with the request that the Task Force be established as an ad hoc Committee of the Senate for a minimum of three years in

order to set benchmarks and timetables to implement and monitor the Vision and Recommendations of the Task Force. The Task Force will report back to the Senate Agenda Committee twice annually with recommendations regarding implementation strategies.

## Conclusion

In this Report, the Chancellor's The Task Force on Disability sets forth its vision for Syracuse University as a model of accessibility, inclusion, equal opportunity, and full participation for all students, faculty, and staff with disabilities. The Task Force looks forward to continuing its work together to implement its Recommendations that seek to reflect the theme of the current capital campaign, "Insights-Incites-Change," and the values the Chancellor has set for Syracuse University in terms of scholarship in action; engagement with the local community; and an unwavering commitment to social justice and equality. Finally, It is expected that the appropriate authorities will develop a strategy and budget request to enable the campaign to realize its charge.

## Glossary of Terms

**Accommodation** in educational settings: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act require that universities provide reasonable accommodations that afford equal opportunity for students with disabilities. However, faculty and administration sometimes perceive accommodations for students with disabilities as costly modifications that have the potential to disrupt the classroom environment. Although accommodations provide disabled students the equal opportunity to fully participate in a course, accommodations also have the potential to provide for all students the opportunity for both richer modes of instruction and the benefit of important and diverse perspectives from the experiences of disabled students in the classroom. (Source: *Beyond Compliance: An Information Package on the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education*: [http://thechp.syr.edu/BCCC\\_PACKAGE.HTML](http://thechp.syr.edu/BCCC_PACKAGE.HTML).)

**Alternative/electronic format:** Students might require course material in a variety of formats at different times (e.g., course readers in electronic format, but class handouts in Braille). Print material is usually provided in three formats: Braille, on tape, and electronically. The electronic format materials can be accessed through a computer monitor, either in the original font or in large print through a screen magnifier or through a screen reader program such as JAWS. Electronic formats can benefit many students who do not wish to waste paper to print material, as well as those with visual,

sensory and learning disabilities. (Source: *Beyond Compliance: An Information Package on the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education*: [http://thechp.syr.edu/BCCC\\_PACKAGE.HTML](http://thechp.syr.edu/BCCC_PACKAGE.HTML).)

**Facilitated communication:** FC is one form of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) that has been an effective means of expression for some individuals with labels of autism and other developmental disabilities. It entails learning to communicate by typing on a keyboard or pointing at letters, images, or other symbols to represent messages. Facilitated communication involves a combination of physical and emotional support to an individual who has difficulties with speech and with intentional pointing (i.e., unassisted typing). (Source: The Facilitated Communication Institute: <http://suedweb.syr.edu/thefci/>)

**Captions (open/closed):** Captions allow the content of web audio and video to be accessible to those who do not have access to audio. Though captioning is primarily intended for those who cannot hear the audio, it has also been found to help those who can hear audio content and those who may not be fluent in the language in which the audio is presented. Most people are familiar with *closed captioning*, a technique of displaying the captioned text only when it is desired. Television closed captioning is used by millions of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; millions more use it in the classroom or in noisy environments—like bars, restaurants, and airports. *Open captions* include the same text as closed captions, but the

captions are a permanent part of the picture, and cannot typically be turned off. Open captions are not decoded by the television set, but are a part of the video information.

**CART:** Communication Access Real-Time Transcription (CART) is a communication system in which a stenographer produces real time text on a computer, which either is projected onto a screen, or is read from the computer monitor. This technology benefits not only the student for whom this accommodation is being provided, but also the other students in the class, as they are able to use the transcript for their notes, as well as the professor, as he or she is able to evaluate his or her teaching and save the transcript for future use. (Source: *Beyond Compliance: An Information Package on the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education*: [http://thechp.syr.edu/BCCC\\_PACKAGE.HTML](http://thechp.syr.edu/BCCC_PACKAGE.HTML).)

**Disability Studies:** Disability sits at the center of many overlapping disciplines in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Disability Studies allows students, activists, teachers, artists, practitioners, and researchers, much of whom identify as disabled, to engage the subject matter from various disciplinary perspectives. It challenges the view of disability as an individual deficit or defect that can be remedied solely through medical intervention or rehabilitation by "experts" and other service providers.

Rather, Disability Studies explores models and theories that examine social,

political, cultural, and economic factors that define disability and help determine personal and collective responses to difference. Finally, while acknowledging that medical research and intervention can be useful, Disability Studies interrogates the connections between medical practice and stigmatizing disability. (Source: Society for Disability Studies: <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/sds/>)

**Inclusion:** Inclusion is not a place, but a frame of mind. It is a philosophy which sees all students, regardless of their dis/abilities, as a part of a learning community. They are equal members of the community and are equally valued.

**JAWS:** a screen reading computer based software used by many people with visual and learning impairments. With its internal software speech synthesizer and the computer's sound card, information from the screen is read aloud, providing technology to access a wide variety of information, education and job related applications.

**Universal Design:** Typically, products and environments are designed for the average user, and are exclusionary to many. In contrast, universal design (UD) is an approach to the design of all products and environments to be as usable as possible by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or situation. In terms of learning, universal design means the design

of instructional materials and activities that make the learning goals achievable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand English, attend, organize, engage, and remember. Universal design for learning is achieved by means of flexible curricular materials and activities that provide alternatives for students with differing abilities. These alternatives are built into the instructional design and operating systems of educational materials-they are not added on after-the-fact. (Source: Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT): <http://www.washington.edu/doi/>)

## Appendix

- Appendix A:** Contributors to the Task Force
- Appendix B:** The Task Forces' Recommendations
- Appendix C:** Chart of Parking Spaces
- Appendix D:** Proposal for the Establishment of a Cultural Center on Disability

## APPENDIX A CONTRIBUTORS TO THE TASK FORCE

*The Task Force wishes to thank the following individuals who assisted the Task Force with their information gathering. Individuals who requested anonymity are not included here.*

Kal Alston, Associate Provost, and Professor, School of Education

Christine Ashby, Doctoral Student, School of Education

Deborah Palazzo, Communication Assistant, Office of Disability Services

Eric Persons, Director, Chancellors Initiatives, Principal Gifts

Al Sauer, Director, Parking and Transit Services

Sharon Scheibel, Assistant, Office of Disability Services

James Schmeling, Chief Operating Officer, Burton Blatt Institute

Richard Stach, Maintenance/Construction Manager, Physical Plant

Zosha Stuckey, Member, Beyond Compliance Coordinating Committee

Lisa Stubing, Member, Beyond Compliance Coordinating Committee

David Tiedemann, Director, Information Technology and Services, Faculty Computing Media Services

Scot Vanderpool, Manager, Parking Services, Parking and Transit Services

Amanda Wagner, Manager, Web Development, Electronic Media

Barbara Yonai, Director, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Rachel Zubal, Communications Coordinator, Center on Human Policy

## Appendix B The Task Forces' Recommendations

### **Major Recommendations**

1. Syracuse University should develop and publicize a comprehensive set of policies to promote its commitment to the core value of disability as an integral aspect of diversity.
2. Syracuse University should make a substantial, long-term, and centralized financial commitment to make the University fully accessible and inclusive for all.
3. Syracuse University should provide centralized funding for disability accommodations for faculty and staff, and visitors to campus, and increased funding, as needed, for disability accommodations for students as a centerpiece for any programmatic and academic change at the University level.
4. To achieve full inclusion, Syracuse University should develop and implement an aggressive and comprehensive program of recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty, administrators, staff, and students with disabilities.
5. All colleges, schools, departments, service components, and administrative branches of Syracuse University should be required to develop a comprehensive plan regarding disability inclusion and access in the services, employment, and policies they administer and provide, as part of their planning and reporting requirements.
6. A Cultural Center on Disability should be established and supported by the University.
7. Recommendations 1-6 above should be incorporated into the University's current capital campaign efforts.
8. The Task Force should continue as an Ad Hoc Committee of the Faculty Senate in order to implement and monitor the Vision and Recommendations of the Task Force Report.

### **Specific Recommendations**

#### **A. PHYSICAL ACCESS**

##### (1) Roads and Sidewalks

- Develop and prioritize a comprehensive list of issues and needed changes to ensure physical accessibility.
- Funding for this work should be guaranteed year-to-year.

##### (2) Signage and Maps

- Overhaul the signage system throughout campus, ensuring that visitors to campus and students can find their way on campus with

relative ease. All maps distributed on campus should be accessible (available in alternate formats) and updated on an annual basis.

- In order to help students and visitors navigate the campus better, the University should provide campus mobility orientation for all new students, staff, faculty, and others (on a voluntary basis).

### (3) Parking

- Create a new parking permit system based on accessibility needs in addition to seniority or rank.

### (4) Campus Transportation

- Increase shuttle availability, with expanded hours.
- Improve dissemination of information regarding navigating the campus the Quad Shuttle and other options to all incoming students and visitors to campus.
- Provide covered shuttle stops with two-way communication and an emergency pick-up line to transit services and security.
- Provide an accessible transit option for transporting people to/from the airport and the Sheraton and within SU for guests.

### (5) Snow Removal

- Increase the priority given to snow removal, including training of physical plant staff regarding accessibility and its importance
- Improve clearing of curb cuts, both in terms of frequency as well as immediately after plows clear the snow onto the curbs.
- Plow priority routes, as established by a subcommittee headed by the Office of Disability Services and Physical Plant in 2005, at all times, especially when the snow is continuous. Provide adequate signage for priority routes.
- Research creative solutions to snow and ice-free pathways, such as tunnels and covered walk-ways

### (6) On-Campus University Buildings

- Develop a plan for full accessibility of all campus buildings, beginning with new buildings, to ensure that all buildings currently under construction or soon to be built will be fully accessible, since incorporating accessibility prior to completion of buildings is easier and more economical than retrofitting them after they are built.
- All existing buildings must also be made accessible, including installation of operating automatic entrance doors in every building; accessible restrooms (also with automatic doors) in every building; and Braille signs in all building entrances and in all elevators.

### (7) Off-Campus Access

- Conduct an accessibility study of the layout and services at Lubin House, Greenberg House and the Sheraton, as well as other facilities, including SU facilities outside of the US. Devise an access plan for each facility, including accessible technology and communication access.

- Adopt a policy that Syracuse University will not contract with any facility or conduct any program, which is not made physically and programmatically accessible for people with disabilities.

## **B. COMMUNICATION ACCESS**

### (1) General communication access for all

- Adopt and implement a policy that all University-produced videos for events and classroom instruction will be captioned.
- Ensure that CART (Computer Assisted Realtime Translation) is used as a universal measure in all University lectures, functions, events, programs, and other activities open to the University community and/or the public.
- Provide interpreter services, as a universal measure for all University lectures, functions, events, programs, and other activities, which are open to the University community and/or the public.
- Make available throughout campus, as part of universally designed technology, TTY video units capable of handling video relay services over the Internet.

### (2) Sign Language Interpreters

- Establish a campus staff interpreter's position to cover the communication needs of faculty and staff on a full time basis, supported by the University's budget.

## **C. TECHNOLOGY AND VIRTUAL ACCESS**

- Create a University-wide policy on technology access.
- Dedicate resources to assist with the necessary training, and subsequent implementation and updating of technological accessibility.

### (1) Web Access

- Adopt and enforce guidelines for web access of all University-related websites to ensure that they are usable for people with visual, hearing, fine motor, cognitive, and other impairments.
- Examine the accessibility of the formats used by virtual environments, including the many possibilities it will create for inclusive distance learning.
- Request assistance from SU's School of Information Studies faculty and staff in conjunction with IT staff from SU's central IT Department and other relevant campus experts to evaluate accessibility of technological solutions and make recommendations on accessibility.

### (2) Classroom Technology

- Consider technological access in the design and renovation of University buildings and classrooms, before any equipment is



achieving the greatest degree of inclusion, accessibility, and accommodation possible.

## **E. STAFF AND FACULTY WITH DISABILITIES**

### **(1) Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention**

- Conduct regular surveys to collect statistics on the number of faculty and staff with disabilities in order to measure progress in recruitment and retention.
- Ensure that search committees develop specific recruitment plans to identify and attract potential faculty and staff applicants with disabilities.
- Establish specific goals based on a percentage increase over the current University representation. These goals should be shared with Cabinet members, Deans, and other administrators who are responsible for hiring faculty and staff.
- Create, disseminate, and enforce disability hiring policies, procedures, and practices, including written guidelines on interviewing applicants with disabilities; and provide training on these disability hiring policies, procedures, and practices to University personnel involved in hiring, including members of faculty search committees.
- Create benchmarks, funding levels, and incentives for diversity hires within schools and departments. Develop multiple venues for dissemination of information on workplace accommodations and procedures for requesting them.
- Consider innovative accommodations such as extending the “clock” to allow additional time for persons who, due to the nature of their impairments, may require more time to complete requirements for tenure and promotion.

### **(2) Workplace Accommodations**

- Immediately change the current system which requires individual schools and departments to provide funding for their faculty and staff’s accommodations, and instead provide centralized funding for accommodations provided to faculty and staff.
- Maintain centralized information regarding accommodations for faculty and staff with disabilities.
- Conduct exit interviews to assess a faculty or staff member's satisfaction with the culture of the campus regarding disability, and whether or not the employee's accommodation needs were met.

### **(3) Disability Awareness**

- Provide a regular program of disability training (including information on the law) to all University employees, including faculty, administrators, and staff.

- Include in the evaluation for tenure and promotion an assessment that examines the faculty member's efforts to include and accommodate students with disabilities. Introduce a similar assessment for staff performance.
- Adopt a policy against harassment or mistreatment of students, faculty, and staff with disabilities, and make explicit the complaint process, as part of the University's current harassment policy. The policy should be enforced by the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Integrity and by the Human Resources Office.
- On the University's main homepage, include a link to disability information under "disability" as a category that will link faculty and staff to information on SU's policies and procedures on accommodations.

## **F. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

### (1) Basic Information and Dissemination

- Conduct a survey of students with regard to disability, to determine whether students' needs are being met in terms of services, culture of inclusion, attitudes, curriculum, and environment. Within such a survey, we recommend paying attention to under-represented populations, particularly students of color. Remediation of problem areas would flow from such a survey.
- In the annual communication from the Vice-Chancellor to faculty and department heads, include a directive to the faculty to include a statement on accommodations in all syllabi.

### (2) Funding for Students

- Establish a dedicated fund for scholarships for students with disabilities.
- Inform students that their disability-related expenses (such as equipment and assistive technology) should be part of their financial need statement, not only part of the parental income statement.
- Create a centralized database of funding opportunities for all undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities.

### (3) Outreach and Diversity

- Review every campus publication for students, faculty, staff and visitors, including admissions brochures and other materials representing student and campus life, from a disability perspective to ensure that they emphasize inclusion and disability as part of diversity.
- Once funding and basic access is established, the University should actively recruit students with disabilities, through publications, Listservs, and appropriate networks.

## **G. UNIVERSITY LIFE**

### **(1) Athletics and Recreation**

- Conduct a review of all athletic facilities (including the Dome) for accessibility, and adopt of a plan to improve accessibility as necessary.
- Ensure that renovations to existing facilities and the development of new fitness centers incorporate not only overall accessibility to the facilities, but also include equipment that is useable by everyone, including individuals with disabilities, and provide trained staff who can assist individuals with disabilities as needed.
- Consider hiring a director of adaptive athletics to develop and promote competitive sports for athletes with disabilities.

### **(2) Schine Student Center**

- Prepare and implement a detailed accessibility survey to determine the specific modifications and renovations that need to be made.

### **(3) Student Health Services**

- Explore a more comprehensive long-term service that supplements Centro's door-to-door service.
- Provide a clear statement of physical and mental health services that are available on campus (and those that are not available on campus) to all students, including students with disabilities.
- Review the health needs of students and available physical and mental health services on campus in order to fill necessary gaps, providing easier access of students to community providers, and facilitating student access and use of available resources both on and off campus.

### **(4) Campus-Wide Services for Students with Disabilities**

- Expand staff and funding given to the Office of Disability Services to meet the increased demands for services as the population of students with disabilities is expected to increase.
- The needs of students with disabilities should be determined through the implementation of a survey of the students and other relevant stakeholders.

**Appendix C  
Chart of Parking Spaces**

<b>Lot</b>	<b>Spaces</b>	<b>Current Disabled</b>	<b>Total Spaces</b>
Archbold Strip	25	2	27
Booth Garage	411	10	421
Brewster/Boland Garage	229	0	229
BRL	3	1	4
Brockway	30	2	32
Day	139	5	144
S U Abroad (DIPA)	11	1	12
Dome	35	0	35
Haft	2	0	2
Harrison	64	3	67
Haven	19	1	20
Hillside	78	0	78
ILC	6	1	7
Irving Garage	397	8	405
Lawrinson Garage	161	2	163
Lehman	64	3	67
Manley	940	27	967
Marion	65	3	68
Ostrom	64	0	64
Quad 1	162	9	171
Quad 2	52	5	57
Quad 3	73	6	79
Quad 4	103	4	107
Quad 5	26	2	28
Raynor	151	0	151
R-1	8	1	9
R-2	9	1	10
R-3	11	1	12
R-4	3	1	4
R-5	5	0	5
R-6	5	0	5
R-7	10	0	10
R-8	7	2	9
Sadler	54	0	54
Shaw	49	2	51

<b>Lot</b>	<b>Spaces</b>	<b>Current Disabled</b>	<b>Total Spaces</b>
South Campus	1500	10	1510
Stage	95	4	99
University Avenue Garage	798	15	813
Walnut West	8	1	9
Washington	5	1	6
Washington Arms	18	1	19
Waverly	106	4	110
West Campus	911	0	911
Warehouse East	35	2	37
Warehouse West	59	0	59
Womens Building North	46	2	48
Womens Building South	62	2	64
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>7114</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>7259</b>

**Appendix D**  
**Proposal for the Establishment of a**  
**Cultural Center on Disability**

We propose the establishment of a Cultural Center on Disability. Fulfilling a purpose that is similar to the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the LGBT Resource Center, the Cultural Center on Disability will function as an umbrella organization under which social, cultural, and educational programming related to disability will take place.

The Center will:

1. Create a community that fosters pride in one's identity and create a culture of inclusion.
2. Build a community that values the capabilities of all people and recognizes that all individuals have the potential to excel and contribute to the academic and social environment at Syracuse University and beyond.
3. Serve as a meeting place for students, faculty, staff, and others who seek a safe environment in which all individuals are welcome, respected, and included as full and equal members within both the university and global communities.
4. Serve as a catalyst for and sponsor of a variety of essential programs inside and outside the classroom. These programs will heighten awareness, understanding, and promote dialogue and learning about disability rights as human rights and as a form of diversity.

5. Create programming that emphasizes but is not limited to advancing the civic, economic, and social participation of persons with disabilities in a global society.
6. Serve as a resource for information on readings, media, periodicals, web sites, services, advocacy groups, and other world-wide organizations that focus on disability issues, including history of disability, pedagogy, and disability culture.
7. Work collaboratively with other campus organizations and offices that celebrate difference.

The center should:

1. Develop an advisory board that will comprise a significant number of students with disabilities, as well as faculty, staff and community members. The board will elect a chair.
2. Be housed in an accessible central location on campus with necessary full-time professional staffing.