

Recommended Actions on Accessibility Task Force Recommendations

October 21, 2014

The Accessibility Task Force included three different recommendations.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION #1: Ensure there is a mechanism to continue the ongoing process of receiving complaints from faculty, staff and students. This is particularly important for faculty and staff as there does not currently exist a division like the Learning Access Program to receive their accessibility complaints.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE: The Senate Executive Committee contends that, rather than hiring an additional administrator, or constructing yet another committee, it would be better if there is an already existing institutional body which could address this. We believe that the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance meets this criteria.

The Senate Constitution charge for the Committee on Administration and Finance is as follows:

"The Committee on Administration and Finance has oversight and advisory responsibility for all matters of budget and finance and all questions of institutional priorities and resources." Given that "institutional priorities and resources" can reasonably be seen to include the kinds of issues covered by the Task Force, we contend that the Administration and Finance Committee is a good fit to meet the needs identified by the Task Force for an institutional mechanism to explore accessibility issues.

What is needed then is an explicit statement by the Senate that these issues will be a regular part of the duties of this committee. Such a statement should not be too specific, given that the standing charges for standing committees are appropriately open ended and not highly detailed. Such standing charges are general statements of principle, outlines of the areas of responsibilities for each committee. Already included in the establishment and running of the various committees is the power to form sub-committees, request information from administrators, and act as a forum for faculty and staff who are concerned about a relevant issue.

The Senate Executive Committee therefore moves the Senate to adopt the following resolution:

The Standing Committee on Administration and Finance shall interpret its standing charge to include the regular consideration of issues regarding campus accessibility.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION #2: Address the priority access gaps identified by the Task Force, such as parking, including more and closer/more strategically placed HC parking, and a

drop-off area, doors, signage, door openers, making the PAC and Experimental Theater and close-by classroom space accessible, bathrooms, and elevators.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE: From the meetings between members of the committee and the Facilities folks, a good deal of what was identified in the report is on its way to being addressed, planning to be addressed or waiting in line to be funded.

As such the Senate Executive Committee moves the Senate pass the following resolution;

The Senate commends the administration for its actions in implementing several of the specific recommendations of the Task Force on Accessibility regarding the priority access gaps, and encourages it to continue addressing these issues with all due speed.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION #3: Design and distribute an empathy and awareness poster campaign regarding campus accessibility and the type and number of obstacles campus users face.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE: If the Senate passes the first resolution then it would be appropriate for the Committee on Administration and Finance to interact with the administration to develop such a campaign and as such the Senate Executive Committee sees no need for a specific resolution to address this last recommendation.