Accessibility at Augsburg (A@A)Committee
2017 - 2018 Report

Charter

The Accessibility at Augsburg Committee exists to sustain and advance the University's commitment to accessible physical, instructional, technological and attitudinal environments for all students, staff, faculty, and guests of Augsburg University. The committee serves as a catalyst for change and continuous improvement to assure equitable and effective access. The committee seeks input, involvement and support from all members of the campus community. The committee reports directly to the President of the University and is co-chaired by the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Director, Center for Learning and Accessible Student Services (CLASS)/Disability Resources.

Goals

A. To improve physical, instructional, technological, and attitudinal accessibility.
B. To become a leader in Higher Education in accessible education.

Members

Co-chairs: Ann Garvey, Kathleen McGillivray
Scott Krajewski, Dawn Miller, Erin Voss, Sheila Fox Wassink, Christy Mattingly, Rachel Kruzel, Halle Chambers, Olivia Maccoux, Mary Stimpson, John Knowles

1. Amending the charter

A@A members discussed and decided to amend the charter to include a "commitment to accessible physical, instructional, technological and *attitudinal* environments for all students, staff, faculty, and guests of Augsburg University."   This was reported to the Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Committee (DEIUC).

2. Physical Accessibility

A. Campus accessibility Audit

Thanks to funding from the Day Student Government, a Minnesota state certified accessibility specialist completed a physical accessibility audit of the Minneapolis campus during summer 2017. Committee co-chairs met with Beth Reissenweber, Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA) and Dennis Stuckey, Director, Facilities, to

1. Review the report;
2. Get agreement that areas being renovated or upgraded would also have identified improvements addressed;
3. Highest priority/highest cost items were considered in FY19 capital budget discussions and allocations.

Beth and Dennis requested the committee rank the highest priority/highest cost items to assist in budget planning. These were:
1. Music Building restrooms: renovate so accessible and gender neutral
2. Renovate entrance ramp off of 22nd avenue, into Memorial Hall
3. Repair/replace Melby entrance ramp

B. Hagfors Center

The Hagfors Center for Science, Business and Religion (HCSBR) opened in January 2018. Shortly after it opened, students, staff and faculty reported several areas of concern. The committee re-hired the state accessibility specialist to review concerns for the new building, confirming some items were code compliant and confirming some were not.

Working with the Hagfors Project Management Team, the committee identified solutions as well as a timeline for improvements. Several items were resolved before the end of the academic year while others will be addressed in summer 2018.

This experience invited Augsburg leadership and committee members to discuss and recommend guidelines and principles for renovation and construction. Given Augsburg's commitment and reputation on accessibility, meeting code is not enough; it must meet what is called a "usability standard." Examples include:
1. Code would say an 8% slope is fine, but it can be steep for someone using a manual wheelchair. A usability standard would say a 6-7% slope.
2. Code says 32" doorways, but usability would recommend a "34-36" doorway.

A@A members will continue researching a usability standard guide.

3. Web/Technological Accessibility

Augsburg adopted Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA as the applicable standard. Joe Mann, Marketing and Communications, (MarComm), reported on the required training sessions for all web content managers, which he began in fall 2016, and has continued to provide. Joe developed a new option for departments to hand the management of their site over to MarComm so MarComm staff can ensure the sites are kept up-to date and are accessible.

With funding from Day Student Government, Augsburg purchased a subscription to SiteImprove's analytics package. Joe encountered close to 30,000 different accessibility issues on pages and has been working to train web content managers on SiteImprove, including how to set up SiteImprove accounts. Content managers will then receive reports directly on the accessibility of the sites they manage to ensure sites stay accessible.

While there is still work to be done to improve accessibility, Augsburg's SiteImprove rating is 86.7% and the industry standard for education is about 68%.

For FY19, Information Technology (IT) Director Scott Krajewski plans that the University will take on paying for SiteImprove moving forward.

4. Board of Regents Student Affairs Committee

Staff from the CLASS office and students who work with CLASS met with the Board of Regents Student Affairs Committee on January 26, 2018. Kathy McGillivray, Director, shared the mission of the department, provided information on scope of services, and reported that CLASS works with approx. 350 students, determining reasonable accommodations, and providing individualized support to students with a wide range of disabilities. The CLASS Office proctors about 1200 exams per semester, including 200 alone during finals week.

Recently, CLASS specialists have seen a steep increase in the amount of students with mental health conditions (commonly depression and anxiety). While specialists do not provide therapy, they do help students with accommodations as needed because of their mental health disability.

Students spoke to their experiences and the critical assistance they receive from CLASS, faculty, and staff.

Kathy also reported on the work of the Accessibility at Augsburg Committee.

5. Faculty and Staff Training

The Center for Learning and Accessible Student Services (CLASS)/Disability Resources staff conducted mandatory training for new faculty in Minneapolis as part of faculty orientation. In Rochester, CLASS staff provided training for faculty and staff. Additionally, CLASS staff presented two "Disability as Diversity" workshops as part of the Diversity and Inclusion certificate program. CLASS staff have worked with Education, Physician Assistant (PA), and Nursing departments to strengthen processes for ensuring students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations and support for field experiences. Also, disability specialists have made presentations on access for several departments, including Athletics and Social Work. Throughout the year, CLASS trained faculty and staff on creating accessible documents, captioning, and incorporating principles of universal design in courses.

6. Preliminary priorities for 2018-2019

The committee will continue to focus on accessibility of "physical, instructional, technological and attitudinal environments." Preliminary priorities for 2018-2019 are:

a. A "usability guide" that accompanies the building accessibility codes. There should be a commitment and schedule of consultations with those who have experience working in this field. Our recommendation would be to find a usability guide and a commitment to a process of collaboration and consultation.

b. Process for accountability for faculty compliance in ensuring all course materials are accessible, as well as learning environments, on and off-campus. This would include providing support and resources for faculty in achieving this.