

To: Walter Watkins, Walter Kanzler, Amy Ferdinand, Paul Cell, Gil Rivera  
cc: Tim Carey, Elaine Cooper, Phil Cardillo  
From: President's Commission on Affirmative Action  
Subject: Transportation, parking and accessibility issues for persons with disabilities  
Date: May 30, 2006

### **History**

Concerns related to transportation and parking for persons with disabilities were brought before the President's Commission on Affirmative Action during the 2004-2005 academic year. Investigation found parking was within legal requirements, but not completely accessible or convenient. Suggestions were forwarded to the Transportation and Parking Services group including improved communication about the University and State regulations related to parking in spaces reserved for persons with disabilities, and the location of such spaces (specific to both members of the campus community and visitors); improved transportation services for those needing access within the main campus area; and the consideration of a regular shuttle route within the main campus for persons with disabilities.

### **Academic year 2005-2006**

Response by Transportation and Parking Services to the concerns and suggestions by the PCAA included the better placement of the information specific to parking and transportation for persons with disabilities, including state and MSU regulations; the creation of a Visitors Web page that also includes details about transportation services and parking options for persons with disabilities; and a significant effort to improve response to calls for transportation within the main campus.

While the PCAA is grateful for the response by Transportation and Parking Services for their response to the concerns raised by the PCAA, there are still outstanding issues that need to be addressed:

1. The current procedure to request special shuttle transportation is handled through the Facilities Service Desk. Hours of operation are M-F, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. with no weekend hours. During off-hours the request is to be directed through the University Police department who then contacts the Shuttle Bus service. A significant amount of time can elapse before it can be arranged to provide the requested transportation. The PCAA was told there are no current plans to either make the Facilities Service Desk 24/7, or to provide dedicated shuttle bus service for persons with disabilities 24/7. We believe legal requirements [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act] require us to provide equal service/access to both able-bodied and disabled persons. So if 24/7 regularly scheduled service/access is available for able-bodied persons we may be required to provide the same for persons with disabilities. Review of the legal requirements is necessary, as well as consideration to our efforts to expand visitor participation in on-campus events, and the use of our campus facilities, such as the Conference Center.
2. Visitors to our campus are still at a disadvantage when it comes to a clear understanding of transportation and parking options and regulations. Signage about

parking options is less than optimal. The large lot west of College Hall has a small notation on the signage saying you must have an MSU hangtag or sticker to park in that lot. We can suggest that larger, clearer notice of this restriction is needed in this lot and on all surface spaces earmarked for persons with disabilities.

3. The Red Hawk Deck is the optimal location for visitor parking and does have a considerable amount of spaces for persons with disabilities. However, to access the exits, from the parking areas, requires going through very heavy doors that are very difficult to open, even for a completely able-bodied person. Only the fifth floor has an exit ramp to the north side of the deck. Paddle doors are extremely necessary on all floors, especially if this is the primary parking location for our visitors.

4. Parking for persons with disabilities near University Hall is extremely limited. The concern is our promotion of the Conference Center facilities, able to host 500 persons, and our lack of weekday, evening, and weekend campus shuttle bus transportation directly to an accessible entrance to the Conference Center, for those who park in the Red Hawk Deck. We understand that electronic access for two doors is being installed this summer. But we are still very concerned that a new building on campus was not originally built with such access.

5. While the PCAA has been focusing on the transportation and parking concerns for persons with disabilities we have also received, from our constituencies, reports of serious problems involving another accessibility issue: elevators. Regular incidents of elevators 'breaking' with people stuck inside (often with no light inside when the breakdown is caused by electrical outages), and of elevators being out-of-service have caused great concern, especially related to person with disabilities. Specifically: there is no immediate service technician on campus that can handle the quick evacuation of a trapped person. The University police do respond as quickly as possible to provide what assistance they can, but it is often extremely limited and often cannot include actually getting the person out of the elevator. Given our expansion of both the campus community population, our extended hours of campus activities and services, and our planned outreach to the general populous to participate in campus activities and use of our services (such as the Conference Center) we need 24/7 dedicated evacuation and repair service 24/7 for all our elevators.

### **Summary**

Given these concerns directly affecting transportation, parking and accessibility for persons with disabilities, and our plans for continued growth and facility expansion, more than ever the University needs a fully dedicated ADA officer who can be focused on, and extremely active, in the planning of new facilities and the renovation of existing facilities, with an understanding and sensitivity toward all aspects of accessibility. We are not simply highlighting inconveniences. These situations raise legal concerns. Also, in the spirit of Montclair State commitment to equality, these situations unfairly restrict access to members of our campus community and visitors to vital locations. Students, faculty and staff require equal access to their classrooms, living spaces and offices. Visitors

require a welcoming environment that provides equal and convenient access to our facilities.

Members of the PCAA have given considerable thought to these issues and have suggestions for possible solutions. We are eager to meet with you to discuss the issues and our thoughts. If possible we would like to meet sometime during the summer months so we can report to the full Commission in September when it reconvenes for the 2006-07 academic year.

Thank you for your assistance in addressing these concerns and the PCAA looks forward to providing support in the remediation of the situations.

Many thanks,

Cindy Meneghin  
Chair PCAA