Advisory Committee on Disability Issues
Year End Report: Spring 2004

Americans with disabilities are an integral part of the fabric of diversity, sharing a common thread with ethnic minorities and other groups in their demand for acceptance as individuals, respect for abilities, and celebration of their differences. The Advisory Committee on Disability Issues has used this past year to further articulate and clarify its many areas of concern. In order to ensure continued progress in strengthening diversity and disability awareness in our institution, the Advisory Committee on Disability Issues recommends addressing four key areas.

1. Establish a formal Disability Studies academic program
   - Promote a strong academic dialog about the tension between the traditional medical model and social and civil rights models for understanding the experience of disability in society.
   - Encourage students to engage in both intellectual and experiential learning through traditional coursework and community-based learning.
   - Provide a focus of study for students with disabilities to facilitate the development of effective advocacy skills at the individual and community level.

2. Enhance recruitment and retention of students with disabilities.
   - Develop a strong program to recruit students with disabilities from a variety of backgrounds through aggressive outreach to K-12 schools and community colleges.
   - Review current admission publications and increase the use of pictures, language, and media that actively demonstrate the participation of people with disabilities as integrated in the U.W.
   - Increase the effectiveness of Disabled Student Services in supporting students with disabilities by improving and enhancing staffing with additional funding and promoting aggressive outreach to students in all areas of student life.

3. Enhance faculty/Staff recruitment and retention
   - “Grow our own” by mentoring UW students with disabilities and encouraging them to transition into UW staff and/or faculty positions after graduation.
   - Ensure that all HR line staff understands disability issues, including their options for affirmative action in hiring and promoting employees with disabilities.
• As with students above, ensure that all UW publications and materials reflect the active participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of the UW.

• Provide additional support to Disability Services to conduct aggressive outreach to support employees and faculty with disabilities to improve retention.

4. Require that information technology at the UW be fully accessible to people with disabilities.

• Develop a campus-wide policy requiring that web pages conform to accessibility guidelines. Develop a policy for implementation and enforcement. Ensure accessibility of all institutional web pages by... policy, etc. (this would need to address the upcoming on-line job application system and the on-line direct deposit payment system

• Ensure that the planned on-line job application process and on-line direct deposit payment systems are fully accessible.

• Develop and implement a system to require procurement of accessible software, and other information technology and training purchasing agents on implementation.

During the next year, the Advisory Committee on Disability Issues will continue the work needed to address these four key areas and the thirteen sub-items.