

2007-2008 Personal Safety Committee Report

Committee Members

Kerrie Bondi, Career Counselor

Nicholas Conklin, Public Safety Aid

Scott Kenney, Assistant Chief of University Police, *co-chair*

Allison Moesel, Residence Director

David Norton, Facilities Planning and Construction

Bilgehan Onogul, G.F.R. member

Jason Park, Student Association Director of Student Affairs

Kathy Trainor, Staff Associate

Linda Ware, Associate Professor *co-chair*

The committee was charged by President Dahl to:

1. Evaluate the impact of the reconstruction of the Saratoga Commons/South Hall crosswalks on pedestrian safety.
2. Explore the issue related to campus accessibility for temporarily disabled students raised by student Catherine Urban in the spring 2006 semester.
3. Develop a comprehensive Campus Personal Safety web site, with the appropriate links to other College web sites, with information on campus safety.

Summary of Activities

Charge #1 Saratoga Commons/South Hall crosswalks

Background, the subcommittee Members: Chair, Dave Norton, Kathy Trainor (Staff Associate), Scott Kenney (Assistant Chief of Police). The committee reviewed prior conditions of the east crosswalk for a comparative understanding of the current conditions. Specifically:

- The east crosswalk was not perpendicular to the edges of road, but was instead oriented at a forty-five degree angle to the road. This necessitated that pedestrians step off the sidewalk/curbing and cross the road with their backs

- The previous eight-foot wide crosswalk was not wide enough to handle everyone crossing the road going in both directions, forcing pedestrians to again walk outside of the crosswalk area. Others opted to cross west of the crosswalk in order to access Sturges, Fraser, Blake etc.
- The west crosswalk was underutilized as pedestrians, heading to/from lower campus, would travel using the shortest route – walking down the service drive of Saratoga, crossing the road (not in a crosswalk), crossing a lawn strip and then to a sidewalk.
- The east and west crosswalks were positioned too close together causing a backup of vehicles as pedestrians walked in-between idled vehicles, which was another safety concern.

[illegible]

- The east crosswalk was widened to twenty six-feet and the crosswalk was constructed perpendicular to the edges of curbing, repositioned further west

to accommodate all pedestrian crossing points. Even though the path of travel is still not quite perpendicular across the road, the angle is reduced, and the crossing of pedestrians is contained within the crosswalk area.

- The west crosswalk was relocated further west from the original position to further accommodate the pedestrian travel to/from lower campus. An additional sidewalk was constructed to allow pedestrians access via a sidewalk instead of walking in the roadway portion of the service drive. Additionally, the relocation of the west crosswalk forged a greater separation between the crosswalks, reducing the potential of backed up vehicles in crosswalk areas.
- The west crosswalk was enhanced with additional street lighting so that the crosswalk would be well lit and highly visible at night.
- LATS feedback was positive, with some concern expressed for trimming of trees on the west side entrance to lot B to improve sight lines to Saratoga crosswalk.
- Informal student feedback obtained by Nic Conklin was neutral to positive.

No recommendations were made as the committee agreed that the improvements made addressed both safety and aesthetics.

Charge #2 Accessibility concerns on campus from Catherine Urban

Background – the subcommittee included: Linda Ware (*Chair*, SOE), Genevieve Bernier (student), Nic Conklin (Public Safety Aid), Scott Kenney (University Police), Allison Moesel (Residence Director), David Norton (Facilities Services), Jason Park (Student Association Director of Student Affairs), Kathy Trainor (Staff Associate), Catherine Urban (student). Guests: Amanda Brownsten (student), Dean Tabitha Buggie-Hunt (Office of Disability Services, hereafter, ODS), Bill McDevitt (Assistant Director, Grounds & Services). Three meetings were convened in the Spring 2008 semester. The committee reviewed substantive documentation prepared by Catherine Urban and Genevieve Bernier and those Urban previously reported to SUNY Geneseo administration 2 years ago. The following issues were presented and discussed:

- Catherine noted the lack of: available transportation (i.e., bus, gem cars); campus accessibility map online with hardcopy available upon request; a physical barrier report system; priority pathways snow removal; accessible

residence space; accessible parking (explicitly for students in the visitors loop and near the library), and a usable accessibility website with resources, etc.

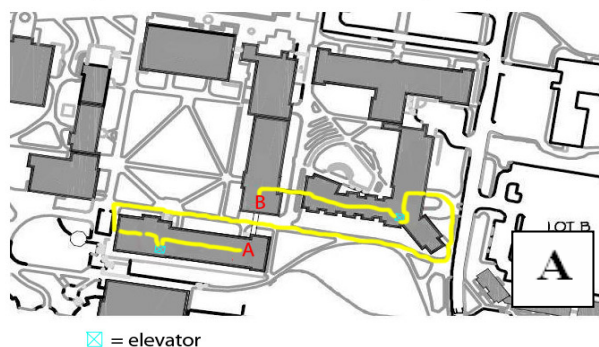
- Catherine provided an overview of area colleges she had contacted as part of her research (Albany, Binghamton, Brockport, Buffalo, Cornell, UR, etc.) the bulk of which had previously been reported to Administration. Working with Genevieve Bernier they prepared a package that included thirty-nine photographs of the man-made obstacles created on campus taken during the month of December 2007. The photographs are organized as man-made obstacles, architectural obstacles, and safety obstacles. Samples follow.



Figure 2. Man-made obstacles. A) This picture was taken next to the Knight Spot. The grate bisects the walkway and is an example of an obstacle as well as a safety concern. Wheel-chair wheels can easily become trapped in the holes. A simple solution would include grates that ran in a horizontal direction. B) This picture was taken on the west side of MacVittie Student Union. Two handicap spots are located at the bottom of the circle and require the person to travel a significantly long distance to enter the Union. Two handicap spots are also located at the top of the circle but are metered. C) This picture was taken at the side-entrance of the Integrated Science Center. A concrete block prevents the door from being opened fully and also prevents access to the push-button door.

Figure 3. Architectural barriers A) This is the only accessible route between Sturges & Frasier. The route entails a labyrinth of steps, turns, and twists. B) In this picture, with current construction underway, the ramp that connects the upper campus to the lower campus is new. However, rather than wind down the hill with a gradual slope to benefit both wheelchair users and those on crutches – the ramp has been constructed with a steep grade that necessitates users take several additional steps that lead away from MJ.

The handicap accessible route from point A (Sturges) to point B (Frasier)



- Figures 2, 3 and 4 (below) document some of the man-made obstacles unwittingly created by college Grounds & Services personnel. In the example below, the images included numerous snow banks created without seeming regard for safety & access concerns (see below), others are dangerous due to deterioration and neglect.



Figure 1: Safety concerns. A) This picture was taken in front of the MacVicar Student Union. It reveals that it is dangerous for people using the handicap parking spots to insert money into the parking meters. The snow and location of the meters present a significant safety challenge. B) The Brodie courtyard facing the Visitors Loop is another one of the many bricked surfaces and poses a significant obstacle to individuals using a mobility-device, canes or crutches. The surface is very uneven and becomes especially challenging during the winter months because it is difficult to adequately plow and to salt. C) This picture was taken next to Lot C and shows the curb cut that is traversed by staff and anyone utilizing the two handicap parking spaces. The curb cut is raised and poorly maintained with deterioration obvious.

In addition, the photographs prompted questions regarding the placement of handicap parking spaces as in the example of numerous handicap spots located in front of Kuhl Gymnasium and yet none of the doors have accessible door openers; or to the placement of too few handicap parking spaces (outside University Police Department, behind Greene, behind Sundance Books); or to those that are poorly placed as in the example of Brodie where the handicap space is the one furthest from campus; or to those that risk safe access (unpaved pathway to the Union from the handicap space, a steep incline from South lot, and the steep incline from the Health Center handicap space toward campus). In the example of the Integrated Science Center and Milne Library, the lack of designated handicap parking space was also noted. Dean Sancilio and Joe Van Remmen provided additional data to support these concerns (Appendix A).

- Related concerns included the placement of automatic door openers outside South Hall that do not lead to the elevator, the need for mats to prevent slipping on slick surfaces while attempting to stay balanced on crutches & carry books, the lack of signage pointing to accessible pathways inside buildings, and across campus. Lack of signage was also noted in the example

of the automatic doors whose mechanisms vary: some open automatically while others enable the door to be opened more easily, but with a pull. Signage would be a welcoming and useful improvement to distinguish each.

- Concerns were expressed by Urban and Bernier that repeated efforts to obtain support from ODS were met with non-response. In the example of the accessible map, basic signage, and other low-expense related items Dean Buggie Hunt reminded the committee that such issues required time to address. However, Dean Sancilio's office was reported to be responsive and willing to follow through towards resolution of identified problem issues as they arose. Specifically, concerns about available parking, the need for floor mats in designated areas, the creation of a physical barrier report, and in the example above, Dean Sancilio's office supported Catherine as she created a campus accessible map (Appendix B).

- Catherine reiterated the need to consider disability beneath the umbrella of diversity conversations currently underway on campus (i.e., FARI, campus mission statement, campus diversity commission).

We recommend the following:

- 1) Transportation service should support students to get to and from their classes, whether mobility is a permanent or temporary challenge. Suggestions discussed by the committee included use of gem cars on an as-needed basis, G.F.R support, revised schedules for LATS service, wheelchairs could be made readily available for building-based use only, all of which might be coordinated by ODS. Or through a campus-wide education initiative, college departments could be alert staff & faculty as to the availability of access maps, wheelchairs, lift keys, etc. to encourage support of students as a shared campus-wide concern.
- 2) Campus accessibility map available online and at student's request. Staff and college personnel educated about this during orientation would ensure that everyone is familiar with an approach to support all members of the Geneseo community. In the example of building evacuation, this is imperative, however, in the spirit of a shared concern for equity for all students, staff & faculty such an activity might serve both educational and community-building needs.
- 3) "Priority Pathways" program (outdoors) should not assume the charity of students, but instead, become institutionalized as a concern for the safety for all students. In the past students organized to support a disabled peer with snow removal along their personal pathway but in the absence of institutional buy-in the support dithered. Pathways (indoors) should include non-slip treatment, runners for instance in both snowy and rainy seasons (i.e., the South Hall ramp by CIT) – see below.



Figure 5. Pathways. A) This is an example of one of the ramps in South Hall that should have runners in place, but it does not. B) This is a picture of the ramp linking Newton Lecture Hall with the Integrated Science Center. This is an example of what all indoor ramps should have in place.

In both instances, these mats appeared following inquiries made by Dean Sancilio's office, but they were soon removed. Signage would also be a welcome addition to identify accessible campus routes along the "priority pathways."

- 4) A committee on disability issues should be convened to address education and solutions rather than grievances as it is currently structured through ODS. That

is, if the office that is charged to provide the support is also the one that hears grievances, oversight is compromised. Committee members suggested that the new interdisciplinary SA organization, Students Educating About Ableism (SEAA) might serve as a resource as its mission is both education and advocacy (Appendix C). However, college oversight is also recommended.

5) Residence hall accessibility is a critical issue that can be addressed by both Geneseo students and the institution. As a committee, we recommend students be educated about disability experience, access, equity and justice concerns through both Student and Campus Life and Residence Life. This could be accomplished through Orientation or general programming. When reviewing housing directly, concerns were raised regarding emergency relocation. In the past when the residence halls were near full capacity, non-disabled students living in accessible suites were asked to move out in order to accommodate students that experienced temporary physical disabilities. This assumed the cooperation of Geneseo students who may be upset by a forced move, thus creating an uncomfortable living environment. Education may help minimize the negative consequences of a forced move for all students involved. Institutionally, we recommend that when relocation must occur, students receive support from a moving team. We also recommend physically disabled students receive information regarding building evacuation to ensure their general safety and well being. We also hope when new residence halls are built, accessibility is a priority in the planning process. At present, a campus walkthrough focused on housing is needed to identify the accessibility needs. Moreover, in the absence of a clear definition of residence hall accessibility, the committee was less than certain about which residences could accommodate students with mobility impairment.

6) Reevaluation of handicap parking is suggested to ensure that the location of parking spaces is reasonable [see CU images 12/07]. Student-only spaces were suggested to dispel the concern that faculty & staff appear to have privileged access on campus.



Figure 6. Reevaluation of handicap parking. A) This picture shows the three handicap parking spaces in Lot R, all of which are full. B) This picture shows Lot L. The handicap parking spot in this lot is located in

farthest from the campus. It is also occupied. C) This picture was taken from the circle adjacent to Monroe Residence Hall. Both of the spaces designated for individuals with handicap permits are full.

7) ODS website merits updating to serve as a tool for navigating the campus and as a resource linked into several other College sites.

8) Explicit inclusion of disability concerns at the campus level merits consideration as in the example of campus-wide conversations on race. Education about the lived experience of disability would greatly facilitate the tensions reported by students when they attempt to voice their concerns, many of which are recast as complaints. While structural accessibility concerns were concrete and measurable, concerns that reflect attitudes will be more challenging to navigate in campus-wide discussions. The committee believes that through education much can be accomplished. The example below is but one of several that indicate the need for educating about disability – to equate handicapped people and freight is clearly insensitive.



Figure 7. Offensive signage. This picture was taken of the elevator at Letchworth Dining Hall. Handicapped people should not be singled out and grouped with freight.

Charge #3 Campus Personal Safety web site

Background – the subcommittee included Chair, Kerrie Bondi (Career Services), Scott Kenney (University Police), Bilgehan Onogul (GFR Member), Jason Park (Student Association Director of Student Affairs). Two sub-committee meetings were convened in Spring 2008.

- The committee reported that by the end of the semester the site will be completed. It will contain seven campus links (University Police, Environmental Health & Safety, Health & Counseling, Geneseo First Response, Disability Services, Dean of Students, and Transportation Services). It will also contain space for the names and e-mail addresses for the current committee members

and the final reports of this committee for the last 3 years.

<http://go.geneseo.edu/safety>.

- Once the website is complete we will work with CIT to transition it to a live site and will connect with appropriate offices to ask to be added as a link.

No recommendations were made by the committee.

Appendix A

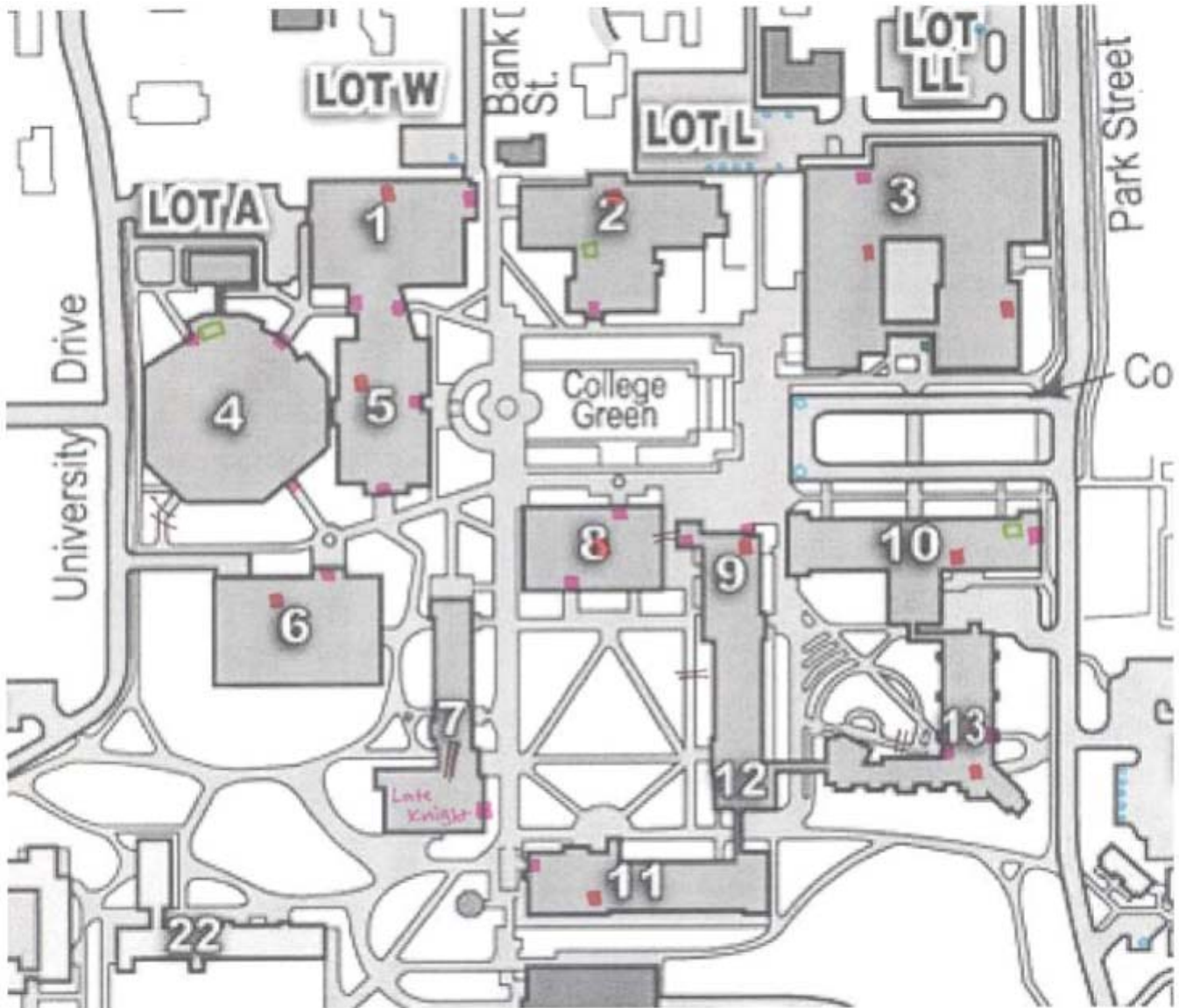
L&LLHandicap					
ID	Day	CheckDate	CheckTime	Number of Full Spaces L-LL	BLot
2	M	2/4/2008	13:00	4/8	
3	TU	2/5/2008	12:30	2/8	
4	TU	2/5/2008	15:00	4/8	
5	W	2/6/2008	09:00	4/8	4/8 B lot
6	W	2/6/2008	14:15	6/8	5/8 B lot
7	TH	2/7/2008	09:40	5/8	4/8 B Lot
8	F	2/8/2008	10:30	2/8	4/8 B Lot
9	F	2/8/2008	12:30	2/8	0/8 B Lot
10	M	2/11/2008	10:00	5/8	2/8 B Lot
11	M	2/11/2008	14:00	5/8	6/8 B Lot
12	TU	2/12/2008	08:45	5/8	2/8 B Lot
13	Tu	2/12/2008	14:30	3/8	6/8 B Lot
14	W	2/13/2008	8:45	4/8	3/8 B Lot
15	W	2/13/2008	11:45	4/8	5/8 B Lot
16	TH	2/14/2008	09:30	4/8	2/8 B Lot
17	Th	2/14/2008	14:30	4/8	1/8 B Lot
18	F	2/15/2008	09:15	5/8	1/8 B Lot

These are dates in February of 2008. I added B lot to this survey starting on the 5th of February in order to show another group of handicap spaces commonly used for the academic area.

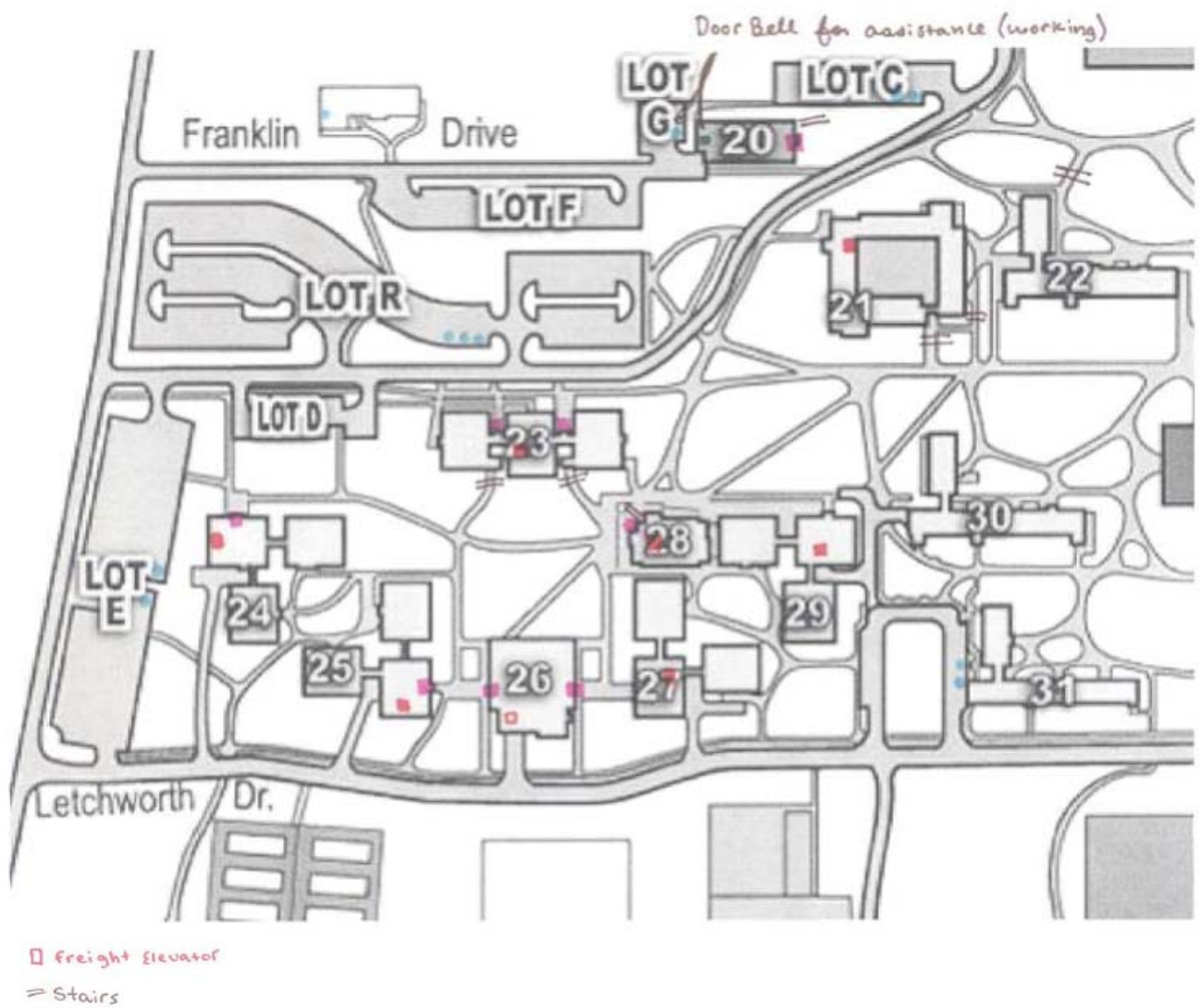
According to this snapshot, the handicap in the L-LL lot area seem to be at about 50% usage capacity while the B-lot spaces seems to be at 40% of capacity.

Appendix B

Access map prepared by Catherine Urban



- Elevator
- Lift
- Push Button Door
- Assisted Door
- handicap parking spaces
- visitor only handicap parking

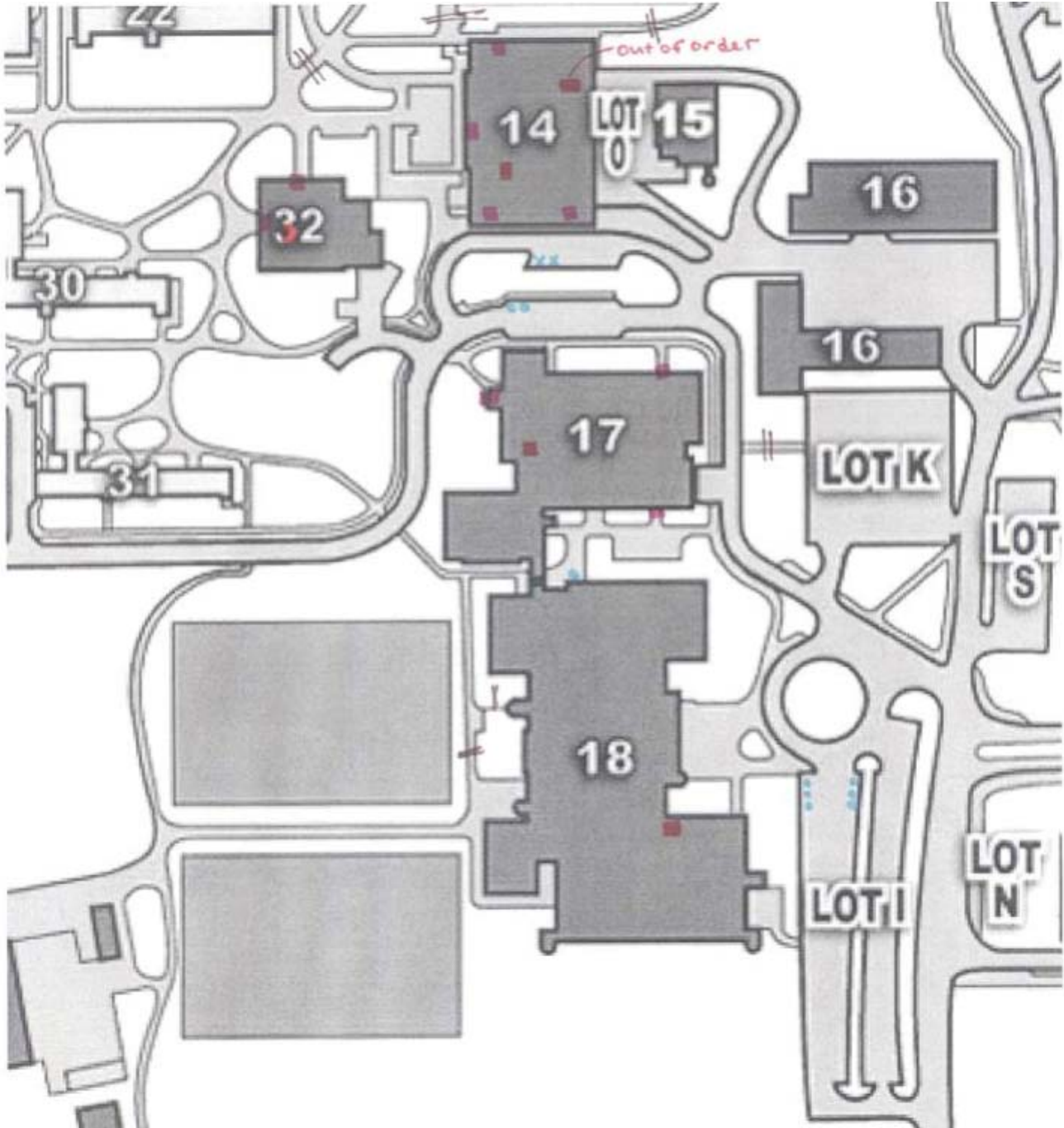


Appendix B (cont.)

Access map prepared by Catherine Urban

Appendix B (cont.)

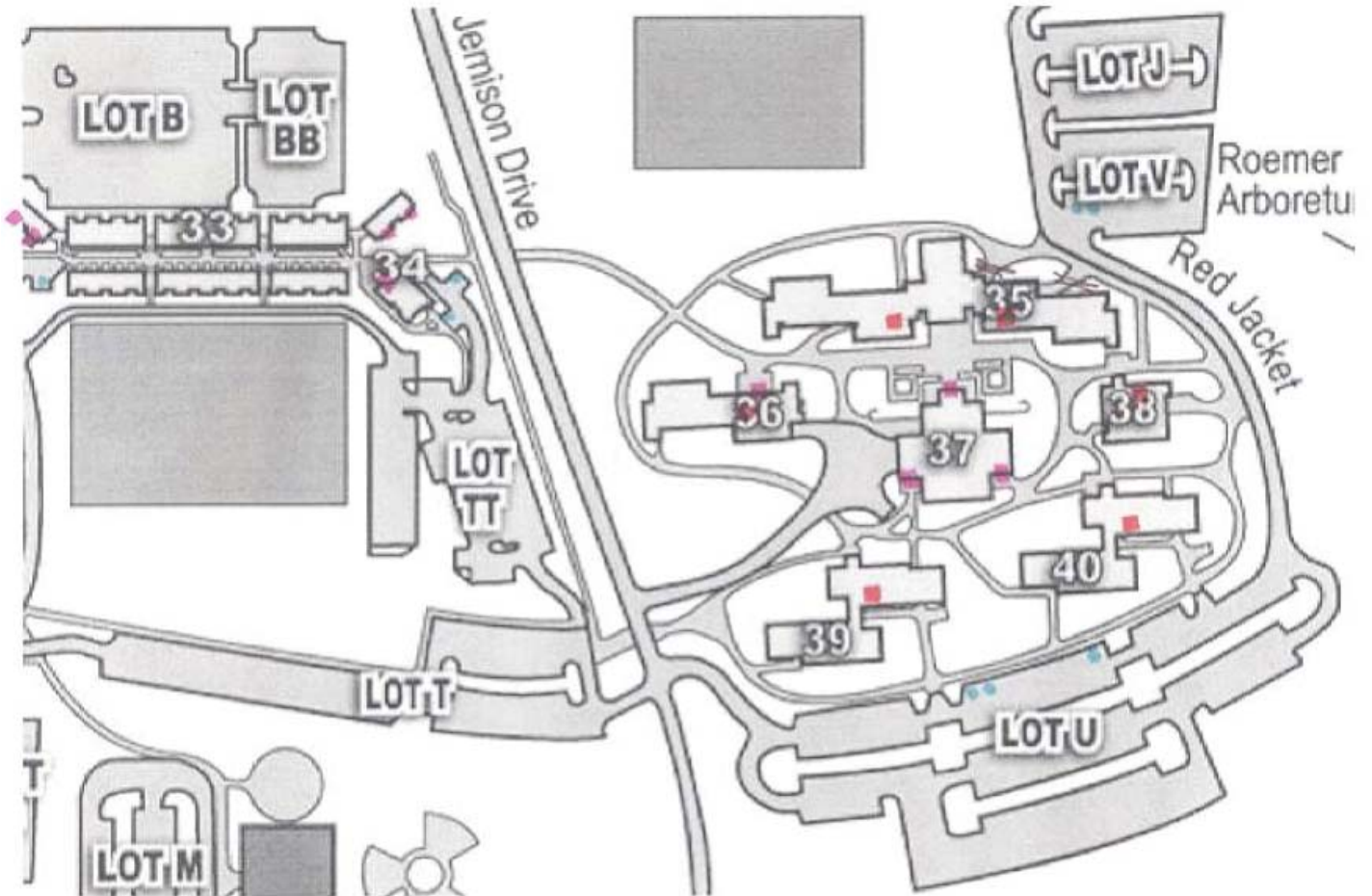
Access map prepared by Catherine Urban



X metered handicap parking

Appendix B (cont.)

Access map prepared by Catherine Urban



Appendix C

Students Educating About Ableism (SEAA)

Position Statement

Disability is more than just a physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental impairment. Disability affects more than just the person who has it. It is the right of every human being to be educated about disability and given the opportunity to discuss the sociocultural aspects associated with it¹. The SUNY Geneseo community will be enhanced by a broader conceptualization of disability that demands inclusion, equality, and social justice. Inclusion, equality, and social justice as well as accessibility, supported by the law, are just the starting points.

Mission

It is the mission of SEAA to educate the campus and community of Geneseo about disability, informed by the value and necessity of interdependency in all human endeavors. SEAA seeks to provide a forum that encourages a closer scrutiny of what can be done to change the stigma associated with disability. These opportunities will include discussions, film series, and community events pertaining to educating about ableism.

Appendix D

Report from 2007 President's Annual Safety Walk

President's Annual Safety Walk- Tuesday 7pm, September 25, 2007

Present: President Dahl, Celia Easton, Ralph Carrasquillo, Janie Lewis, Jennifer Rogalsky, Joe Van Remmen, James Stenger, Bill McDevitt, Tony Hoppa, Dave Norton

The walk proceeded from the College Green to the B-parking lot to look at the lighting and to talk about the possibility of putting a Blue light phone at the location. B-lot is one of the busiest parking lots on campus. The large fence surrounding the parking lot could give a person the perception that they have very few options to escape if a dangerous situation arose. Since most of our blue light phone emergency responses are for injuries or accidents, a blue light phone would also provide the ability for immediate emergency response if someone got hurt. It was just dusk so we proceeded on our walk and agreed to meet at the end of the walk to see if the B-lot lighting was adequate.

We then proceeded to the new cross walk that was constructed between the Saratoga Townhouses and South Hall. Dave Norton explained that the upper crosswalk was expanded to provide for the large amount of pedestrian traffic crossing at that site. The walkway was also constructed in a manner so that pedestrians would not be crossing with their backs to traffic. A new light was going up in the area soon to illuminate the area as well. The lower crosswalk was configured so that pedestrians could cross from a sidewalk to the crosswalk to another sidewalk where previously pedestrians started at the load zone driveway.

The walk continued south through the Saratoga townhouses. Bill McDevitt noted that there was much sagging and settling along the walkway leaving variations in the height of connecting sections of the sidewalk.

At the Bypass a street light was out. The group talked about potential fixes to the Bypass crosswalk area due to the heavy use of the area by vehicles and pedestrians. Two students have been hit by vehicles at this crosswalk the last few years. Possible solutions like additional flashing lights, rumble strips, flashing lights activated by pedestrians, flags that pedestrians can carry, and more education to pedestrians that they need to make sure vehicles are stopping for them.

We headed west down the hill and then through T-lot where we looked at the site for our next blue light phone which will be placed midway through the parking lot. Maintenance is hoping to have the blue light in place before the end of the semester.

The group then walked to the area between the College Union and Schrader where Dave Norton explained the possible location for a sidewalk that would be built to provide for those people going to the College Union from the south west areas of our campus. President Dahl endorsed the sidewalk as described by Mr. Norton.

We continued to the north campus and observed many improvements especially to the inner quad area between Allegheny and Wyoming. After going around the north east side of Putnam, we headed towards the construction that is connecting MJ Dining Hall to the College Union. The long stairwell leading from the north side to the academic area has been reconstructed and is a huge improvement over the previous stairwell.

Near Sturges and the Gazebo the group noted a lack of lighting in the area. Possibly a light pole or lights coming off of Sturges could better illuminate the area.

Our walk ended at the B-lot around 8:30pm, where we found the lighting provided to be sufficient. Further discussion of a blue light phone occurred. President Dahl voiced that this would seem to be a good area to provide a blue light. Bill McDevitt stated that they could possibly run electricity to a blue light phone from one of the existing lighting units.

Prominent Challenges/Possible Solutions

- Blue Light Phone installed in the rear (south end) of B-Lot
- Hazardous walkway (uneven sidewalks) between Saratoga Townhouses due to settling ground
- Possible corrective measures for the Bypass- Pedestrian flags for carrying, signs for pedestrians, pedestrian activated flashing lights, road rumble strips, closing the road, building a tunnel or a bridge, pedestrian education
- Sidewalk from Schrader to the College Union in the island area south end between the two buildings
- Need lighting in the area north of Sturges near the Gazebo possibly a light pole or lighting off Sturges building