

March 14, 2006

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SUBJECT: Response to Disability Management Work Group Report

Dear Associate Chancellor Huerta and Work Group Members:

I am pleased to respond to the Disability Management Work Group report forwarded to me by Associate Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer Jorge Huerta in his December 8, 2005 memo. Thank you most sincerely for your diligence as a member of the Work Group and for your commitment to our students, faculty, staff and campus visitors who have disabilities. Your report clearly illustrated the group's dedication over the several months of information-gathering, analysis and development of recommendations. On behalf of the university leadership, I want to express our appreciation for a job well done.

In keeping with former Chancellor Bob Dynes' charge to the Work Group to provide a set of recommendations to the appropriate Vice Chancellors, I have conferred with my leadership team regarding your report. This letter reflects the conversations that we – the Senior Vice Chancellor, the Vice Chancellors and others – have had about these important and complex issues. We reviewed the recommendations and the objectives you had sought to achieve, including raising awareness about disability issues and providing for the needs of those who have disabilities.

I'm pleased that since the formation of the Work Group several years ago we can report steady progress. But, we still have work to do. This response identifies those recommendations and objectives which will require additional study and the individuals who will coordinate that work.

BY PASSED ADMIN RECORDS

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A Coordinating Committee to Review Recommendations

Our discussions of the Work Group recommendations highlighted the vital importance of open communication among units that have primary responsibility for issues related to students, faculty, staff and campus visitors who have disabilities. Your report clearly points to the necessity of coordination across those areas that provide service to those who have disabilities. We carefully considered your recommendation for a committee to advise the Chancellor, but came away from our discussions with the shared conviction that the most effective means to address the issues is for those with direct responsibility to advise the relevant Vice Chancellors. Thus, by March 31, 2006, Senior Vice Chancellor Marsha Chandler, and Vice Chancellors Steve Relyea, John Woods, and Joseph Watson will establish and charge a Coordinating Committee that will work together on those issues that cross unit boundaries. Vice Chancellor Relyea will be the initial convener of the Coordinating Committee. With the Work Group report as its starting point and with ongoing advice from the Office of Campus Counsel, the Coordinating Committee will identify the recommendations that require cross-unit coordination. I am confident that a cross-unit Coordinating Committee with direct responsibility for the issues at hand will address the concerns of the community members who have disabilities. The Coordinating Committee will provide an annual report to the Senior Vice Chancellor and the Vice Chancellors about the issues under study and the progress being made. I pledge to disseminate information about their activities.

The Coordinating Committee will be asked to study a number of items listed in the Work Group report, including:

- Accommodation of Disabilities (Attachment 3): The Committee will study avenues to publicize existing policies and procedures. It will also ensure that our appeals procedures are communicated appropriately. In a January 18, 2006 memo to me, Vice Chancellor Dick Attiyeh noted that in 2000-2001, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research had worked with the Office of the General Counsel and the U.S. Department of Justice to adjust our procedures to meet current standards. As a result, the UCSD Policy on Students with Disabilities and Steps for Academic Accommodation (Appendix III) was revised and approved by the Academic Senate. The Appendix outlines the procedures for student requests for accommodation and the appeal procedures for students and faculty who are not satisfied. The appeals process is outlined in detail; explanations of these procedures are in the Catalog and in the graduate Student Handbook. The Coordinating Committee will review this information and consider how best to publicize the policy and procedures to the campus, as well as to recommend any appropriate revisions.
- Campus Website (Attachment 4), Accessibility of Web Pages (Attachment 5) and Education (Attachment 15): Good communication is essential to ensure that the campus community knows about services available, ADA requirements, and how to access all that UCSD has to offer. We believe there's good progress to report in the area of communication, particularly in making our campus websites more accessible. For our websites, an external firm is advising both *Tritonlink* and *Blink* about ways to increase readability. We concur that ensuring our

information is accessible by all members of the community – and those outside our campus who are interested in learning more about us – is vitally important. As we gain the advice from our consultant, the Coordinating Committee will focus on ensuring that we broadly post information regarding campus services for those who have disabilities.

- Campus Accessibility (Attachment 6): Work is underway to improve signage on campus. As the campus grows and new buildings are completed, we're particularly mindful of the need for clear signage. The Coordinating Committee will review our ongoing signage efforts. We're also making progress in an interactive map on the web by working with Google and Tufts University.
- Transitional Employment Program (Attachment 12): We have in place avenues for addressing the needs of those individuals who have temporary disabilities. The Coordinating Committee will seek best practices and review our procedures for any potential areas for improvement.
- UCSD Disability Access Policy (Attachment 13): The Coordinating Committee will be asked to review and update as needed PPM 200-9 Disability Access Policy and Guidelines.

Additional Issues Cited in the Work Group Report

A number of the recommendations fall outside the purview of the Coordinating Committee. I'll address those items below.

Disability Management Benchmarking Analysis (Attachment 2): While we understand the value of benchmarking information, we strongly believe that we can benchmark with other University of California system campuses. Those comparisons would be most appropriate because UC schools are more similar to UCSD than generic comparisons with other universities. We believe it preferable to marshal our restricted resources to further our campus initiatives.

Ergonomics Interventions (Attachment 7): We currently provide assistance to employees in establishing an ergonomic work area. That assistance, and other information about ergonomics in the workplace, may be found on Blink at <http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/ergonomics>. Although the Work Group had recommended that we establish a showroom of ergonomic furniture, we are not in a position at this time to dedicate space for a furniture showroom. We will, however, continue to provide our employees with the opportunity to learn more about ergonomics and to seek assistance for this advice.

Wheelchair Lifts (Attachment 8): We recognize the importance of addressing the questions about the availability of the wheelchair lifts. Thus, Vice Chancellor Relyea has asked Assistant Vice Chancellor Gary Matthews to look at our options in order to make the lifts more accessible.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures (Attachment 9): Vice Chancellor Relyea has tasked Philip Van Saun, Manager of Emergency Services, to work with the Police, Student Affairs and Campus Housing to review our emergency evacuation procedures to ensure that they incorporate the needs of those who have disabilities. We'll include in this study the availability of evacuation chairs.

Transportation Services (Attachment 10): The Work Group recommends a centralized approach for providing transportation services for those who have disabilities. That model has advantages and disadvantages, and thus Vice Chancellors Relyea and Watson will task an ad hoc team to consider the issues, including financial challenges, for expanded services.

Provide Faculty and Department Chairs an Advisor (Attachment 11): We have existing organizations to assist our faculty with accommodating students with disabilities, and question whether an additional advisor would make the most efficient use of our resources. In addition to the Office for Students with Disabilities, the Education Policy and Courses (CEP) Subcommittee on Appeals for Accommodation of Students with Disabilities address the issue of serving the needs of those who have disabilities. While we do not favor the addition of a faculty advisor, the Coordinating Committee will seek the advice of our colleagues in Academic Affairs to ensure that faculty understand the resources available to them to assist students who have disabilities.

Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Coordinator (Attachment 14): At this time, we do not advocate the addition of an ADA Coordinator; rather, we believe that our campus resources in the Office of Students with Disabilities and Human Resources are best able to handle ADA issues that arise. We recognize, however, that they need to have the necessary support to be successful and will ask the Coordinating Committee to keep the issue of resources in mind as the members conduct their studies and review.

Benefits Application Process (Attachment 16): We will encourage the UC Office of the President to study the issues that the Work Group has raised regarding the benefits application process, and will offer our assistance in addressing this area.

Disability Management Process Team Report (Attachment 17): I have asked the Senior Vice Chancellor and the Vice Chancellors to task the Coordinating Group with providing an annual report of activities and progress. Again, I pledge to communicate our work and the areas that require our further attention.

Each Work Group member has displayed a tremendous dedication to the task before you, and I am grateful for your time, expertise and hard work on behalf of everyone at UCSD and in the community. Thank you.

With warm regards,



Marye Anne Fox
Chancellor

cc: Senior Vice Chancellor
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