

Resolution on an Accessible and Inclusive Campus

(1) Whereas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate 61 million, or one in four adults, live with a disability;¹

(2) Whereas, disability may be visible or nonapparent, impacting mobility, physical and mental health, cognition, communication, hearing, vision, self-care, and independent living;²

(3) Whereas, disability can occur at any time to anyone in our community as a result of injury or illness;

(4) Whereas, national and campus-wide statistics reveal that a sizable number of individuals self-identify as having a disability, whether temporary or permanent;

(5) Whereas, in 2015-2016, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, 19% of undergraduates and 12% of post-baccalaureates reported having a disability;³

(6) Whereas, the percentage of faculty members with disabilities is estimated by the National Center for College Students with Disabilities to be at least four percent,⁴ but this statistic is considered low given 25% of Americans have a disability according to the CDC;

(7) Whereas, in fiscal year 2020-2021 the Employee Disability Resources Office supported 957 cases, a 77% increase from the previous year, and since July 1, 2021 it has received 376 contacts, the majority of which are accommodation requests;

(8) Whereas, 4.4% of the 2019 Academic Staff Worklife Survey respondents identified as having a disability and also reported higher instances of dissatisfaction with departmental climate and hostile and intimidating behavior;

(9) Whereas, the most recent results of a longitudinal climate study of university faculty (including clinical faculty in the School of Veterinary Medicine) developed by the Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute⁵ affirms faculty with disabilities consistently report lower satisfaction with the hiring process, department climate (e.g., interactions with others, solicitation of their opinions, value of their research, etc.), elements of the tenure/promotion processes, and experience higher incidences of sexual harassment and hostile and intimidating behavior;

¹ Disability and Health Promotion. "Disability Impacts All of Us." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved September 16, 2021: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html>

² Ibid.

³ U.S. Department of Education. "Students with disabilities." National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved September 16, 2021: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=60>

⁴ Grigely, J. (June 27, 2017). "The Neglected Demographic: Faculty Members with Disabilities." The Chronicle of Higher Education. Retrieved September 21, 2021: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-neglected-demographic-faculty-members-with-disabilities/>

⁵ Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute. "The 2019 Study of Faculty Worklife at UW-Madison: Tenured & Tenure Track Faculty Results. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Retrieved October 20, 2021: https://wiseli.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/662/2020/01/SummaryofFindings_TT_2019.pdf

(10) Whereas, the McBurney Disability Resource Center served 3,667 students or 8.1% of the university's enrollment in 2020-2021, and has seen an 88% increase in students with disabilities since 2016-2017;⁶

(11) Whereas, the largest disability types among students are: mental health, chronic health, Attention Deficit with or without Hyperactivity, and learning disabilities,⁷ and these statistics are similar to UW System institutions, which have experienced as a whole since 2016-2017, a 31% increase in students with disabilities;⁸

(12) Whereas, state and federal laws require the university to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities, including students, employees, program participants, and visitors;

(13) Whereas, accommodations ensure equal opportunity to programs, services, employment, and activities, but do not address ableism;

(14) Whereas, ableism—discrimination in favor of able-bodied people—can be intentional or unintentional;

(15) Whereas, disability comprises the largest minority group in the world;⁹

(16) Whereas, the university affirms diversity to be a source of strength and it values the contributions of each person and the profound ways their abilities enrich the university community;¹⁰

(17) Therefore, be it resolved that the UW-Madison Academic Staff Assembly supports the inclusion of disability within the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives;

(18) Therefore, be it further resolved that the UW-Madison Academic Staff Assembly supports raising awareness of the prevalence and importance of disability at the university and embracing accessibility;

⁶ Services for Students with Disabilities. "2020-2021 Annual Report." University of Wisconsin System. Retrieved September 16, 2021: [https://www.wisconsin.edu/disability-resources/download/2020.21-UWSA_DisabilityServices_AnnualReport_FINAL\(2\).pdf](https://www.wisconsin.edu/disability-resources/download/2020.21-UWSA_DisabilityServices_AnnualReport_FINAL(2).pdf)

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Enable. "Fact sheet on Persons with Disabilities." United Nations. Retrieved September 14, 2021: <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/toolaction/pwdfs.pdf>

¹⁰ Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. "Institutional Statement on Diversity." University of Wisconsin-Madison. Retrieved September 21, 2021: <https://diversity.wisc.edu/institutional-statement-on-diversity/>

(19) Therefore, be it further resolved that the UW-Madison Academic Staff Assembly, in recognition of increasing rates of accommodations needed to provide equal opportunity to the university's programs, services, employment, and activities, affirm accessibility to be a shared university commitment requiring all individuals – faculty, staff, and students – to do their part to dismantle ableism at UW-Madison; and,

(20) Therefore, be it further resolved that the UW-Madison Academic Staff Assembly recommends the university undertake a comprehensive study that goes beyond problem identification and focuses instead on problem-solving to achieve desired outcomes for the full inclusion of all people with disabilities across campus. That study should build on the campus climate survey but also gain the perspective of campus community offices, units, groups, and individuals with disabilities or disability-related missions, to collect information concerning ableism and disability access and inclusion. The study should include explicit evaluation of the physical campus infrastructure, such as parking policies, building and bathroom access, and other obstacles for people who have mobility challenges. There should be the establishment of a reasonable completion date for this study and there should be guidelines for implementation of its recommendations.