



The State University of New York
Student Assembly

Resolution 1516-122
Bauduy

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RESOLUTION 1516-122

TO: Members of the General Assembly

FROM: Michael Bauduy, Director of Advocacy, Elyse Springer, On- Campus Senator and Max Accordino, President of Brockport Advocates for individuals with Disabilities from The College at Brockport, SUNY

DATE: March 25, 2016

TITLE: Universal Accessibility Assessments

Action Requested

For Student Government Associations that are members of the State University of New York to perform accessibility assessments at their respective campuses. The SUNY Student Assembly shall encourage and aid in the facilitation of these assessments.

Resolution

We recommend that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York (SUNYSA) adopt the following resolution:

Whereas the State University of New York (herein 'SUNY') is home to students, faculty, staff and administrators that represent diverse perspectives; and

Whereas SUNY educates over 460,000 diverse students from around the world with the mission of exercising care to develop and maintain a balance of its human and physical resources that recognizes the fundamental role of its responsibilities in undergraduate education and provides a full range of graduate and professional education that reflects the opportunity for individual choice and the needs of society; and

Whereas the American Disability Act (herein 'ADA') holds college campuses accountable in terms of how accessible and universal their facilities are in order to reasonably accommodate all students; and

Whereas although the campus of a SUNY member institution can be in compliance with the ADA, students still find facilities negligible in providing universal accommodations, especially in terms of access, since the ADA does not measure compliance for a universal campus, but rather what is minimally required; and

Whereas the ADA does not require a user-perspective approach to measuring universal accessibility on college campuses, and

Whereas the campuses of SUNY member institutions tend to reinforce ableism but not incorporate universal design.

Whereas SUNY, through the implementation of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, recognizes the need for institutional review and improvement of equitable facilities and resources; and

Whereas each Student Government Association (herein 'SGA) throughout SUNY shares the responsibility of ensuring student success by representing their students and their respective campuses; therefore let it be

Resolved that SUNY SA calls on all SUNY SGA's recognize the failure of prevailing federal policy in ensuring universally accessible campuses from the user's perspective; and let it further be

Resolved that SUNY SA enforce user-perspective accessibility audits to be facilitated and/or supported by SUNY SGA's in conjunction, wherever possible, with a universal accessibility advocate or advocating group to evaluate and report on the accessibility of campus facilities and resources; and let it further be

Resolved that these reports be presented to the respective campus administration for review and consideration for necessary restructure.

Resolved That the SUNY Student Assembly forward a copy of this resolution to the presidents of SUNY SGA's, the 2016-17 SUNY Student Assembly President-Elect, SUNYSA Delegates and Representatives, and the SUNY Student Assembly Equity and Inclusion Committee Chair.

Resolved that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York shall forward copies of this Resolution to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Lt. Governor Kathleen C. Hochul, the members of the New York State Legislature, the SUNY Board of Trustees, SUNY Chancellor Zimpher, University Faculty Senate, Faculty Council of Community Colleges, SUNY Campus Presidents, SUNY student governing bodies, and all other parties deemed necessary and proper.

Background

Brockport Advocates for individuals with Disabilities (BAD) is a student organization housed under Brockport Student Government (BSG). BAD's mission is to raise awareness and to instill the knowledge needed to respect individuals with different abilities. To make those merely impossible aspects on college campuses more accessible to those who have difficulties accessing them.

BAD has fought for accessibility and inclusion since June of 2011 and since then Brockport's campus has been upgraded numerous times. The biggest upgrade that BAD fought for was creating an accessible route to the library which was made possible through advising facilities on how to make their new Liberal Arts Building accessible. Other efforts for accessibility have also been taken; BAD is currently doing a four-phase accessibility assessment: part one, physical assessment, was complete and is being built upon constantly. Part two will focus on visual and hearing impairments, part three is about intellectual disabilities and part four is focused on online and technology accessibility.

Through these assessments BAD has found many areas that are no longer Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant because infrastructure and regulations change throughout the years. On top of the non-accessible areas on the Brockport campus there are buildings that are ADA compliant but not universally accessible. An example of this is Hartwell Hall: Hartwell Hall is the face of Brockport and also the oldest building on campus. Due to its age every entrance, including the main entrance, has stairs except the three back entrances. If you were an individual that was able to use stairs you would have to go around the building to the back entrance; not only is this not convenient it is also modern day segregation. There are two areas on this campus that are on a slope of which, due to the incline of the slope, a ramp was needed, but unfortunately, this slope is occupied by stairs and twenty feet to the right is a ramp. This is another example of segregation. By creating a universal campus all individuals will feel welcome and have the same opportunities as their colleagues.

Inclusion is a major part of BAD's vision: BAD encourages inclusion by putting on events to break down barriers while educating everyone. Their biggest event to date was BAD's annual "Anything You Can Do I Can Do" wheelchair basketball game which has reached last over 1000 attendees in the past 5 years. The most recent event was the national "Spread the Word to End the Word" campaign. About 800 Brockport students pledged to end the use of the "R-word" and use "person-first" language instead.