

Library Accessibility Focus Group Summary

Seven students with disabilities met on February 5, 2008 with a facilitator and assistant to focus on the accessibility of the library and the resources it provides. Their input on accessibility to the library follows.

1. Approaches to the building are limited by snow and ice, a too steep ramp on the west side of the building, bicycles being attached to the west ramp, and lack of an elevator at street level to bypass the ramps and stairs leading up to the building. **Suggested solutions:** immediate and continuous snow removal, redo west ramp, put in street level elevator in building to bypass ramps and stairs.
2. Within the building, access is limited by “key-only access” in using the elevator to go to the basement, lack of wheelchair accessible bathrooms for both genders on all floors, height of the stacks shelving, complex call number system, too much open space around staircase between first and second floor, and large windows on upper floors. **Suggested solutions:** put a button in elevator to access basement, make all bathrooms wheelchair accessible, consult students with disabilities prior to any new building or remodeling projects.
3. The only specific barrier to electronic resources identified was e-reserve materials which could not be used by assistive technology software if quality of scanned items was less than excellent or which were “crooked” on the page. **Suggested solutions:** remove all stray marks, underlining, highlighting, and use only clean copies for scanning.
4. Studying in the library is hampered by lack of private areas where individuals can study without interruption, too much noise from cell phone conversations and ringing, and people talking in areas which should be quiet study areas. **Suggested solutions:** set aside quiet study rooms for individual use, make more quiet study areas and equip them with computer access, include some lounge areas as quiet study areas, ban cell phone use, ban conversations in study areas.
5. Helpful things the library already provides include helpful library staff, the area for Assistive Technology, workstations which permit wheelchair access (in Reference), elevator to upper floors and electric door openers, 24 hour computer lab, online access to library resources so they can work from home, and laptop check outs.

Added notes: Have more focus groups to allow/solicit input. Increase staff and space for Assistive Technology.