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LACUNY Disability Services Roundtable Meeting Minutes January 2006

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Minutes for the meeting of the Disability Services Roundtable of LACUNY of Monday, January 9, 2006

Location of Meeting: Baruch College, Room 415

Present: Mounir Khalil, Chair of the Roundtable, City College; Scott Sheidlower, Secretary of the Roundtable, York College; Rebecca Adler, CSI; Marvie Brooks, John Jay; Geraldine B. Herbert, BxCC; Songqian Lu, NYCT; Bonnie Nelson, John Jay; Elise Perram, GC; Evelyn Silverman, QC; Susan Voge, Lehman; Patricia Woodward, Hunter College. Ronald Bissesser, Baruch College.

Guest: Mr. Curtis Kendrick, University Librarian.

Guest Speakers: Dr. Christopher Rosa, CUNY Student Affairs Baruch; Sharon Lerner, GC; Pratik Patel, CUNY Assistive Technology Services; Dr. Sylvie Richards, BC.

1. Meeting called to order at 2:00 P.M.
2. "Challenges of library access encountered by students with disabilities" – Panel
 - o Panelists: Dr. Chris Rosa, CUNY Student Affairs, Mr. Pratik Patel, CUNY Assistive Technology Services, Ms. Sharon Lerner, Graduate Center;, Dr. Sylvie Richards, Brooklyn College.

Dr. Rosa, Ms. Lerner, and Mr. Patel are all members of a CUNY wide group that consults with the Chancellor about disability issues.

Dr. Rosa started the discussion and said that libraries are places of virtual and actual gathering of students so all must be able to have access to them. The ADA has implications for libraries and access. Dr. Rosa gave out a document entitled: Library Access Considerations: A User's Perspective. In a table it summarized accessibility features, what would constitute access and how this would impact patrons with disabilities.

Mr. Patel then went through a handout of eighteen PowerPoint slides about assistive technology in the library. He went over visual disabilities, hearing disabilities, motor disabilities, and cognitive disabilities and assistive technology. Students with visual disabilities use tactile methods or large print or scanners. Students with hearing disabilities use captioning or transcripts, etc. Students with motor disabilities use alternative input devices such as a head mouse or large joysticks, etc. Students with cognitive disabilities use various strategies such as visual clues. He made the point that layout of information and content of a file are different. Mr. Patel said he is always available to train our web page developers. He can be reached at 718-997-3775 or at pratik.patel@qc.cuny.edu. He stated that whenever we get new technology or software it is both CUNY's and the vendor's responsibility to make sure it is accessible. He recommended

that at least two workstations in each of our libraries have assistive technology. He made the point that it is easier to do it right the first time than to retrofit.

Mr. Patel reported on Chapter 219 of New York State Law that says that publishers of higher education material must provide electronic textbooks through the library for disabled students who purchase hard copies of said material. If students have a problem getting this electronic copy we should send them to the Office of Disabled Students. Additionally, Mr. Patel is a resource for information on Chapter 219.

Ms. Lerner discussed including assistive technology in the planning process. She observed we do not want to disadvantage students since they legally have access to everything we have. Ms. Lerner suggested that we consistently get feedback from students on how they get access. She mentioned that the Kurtzweil 3000 is a good tool to help students with cognitive disabilities. Legally, as a government agency, we have to meet a higher standard of accountability for this.

Mr. Curtis Kenderick, University Librarian, commented that CUNY activities in the area of Disability Services show that we (librarians) care about our CUNY students with disabilities.

After a break and some questions, Dr. Richards, Brooklyn College pointed out that we need to network to make things accessible. She stated that 63% of the people who declared themselves as disabled in NYS on the last census live in NYC. That comes to 1.7 million people. This large number of disabled people impacts student learning. Because we serve this 1.7 million we must keep a keen eye on various service providers on campus. Dr. Richards noted that there is a growing development in the field of multimedia as well as a growing number of students and faculty using blackboard. In multimedia we live in a "broadband world." This impacts our students. Much of this new media is not accessible. Brooklyn College has a "new media center" to work with this. With blackboard, more and more faculty want to develop their own material. We must make faculty aware that the content they develop must be accessible. The new blackboard shell is going to be accessible. Faculty must be sensitive to the fact that any document they post on blackboard must also be accessible. A good example of a non-ADA compliant web page at the university is the CUNY portal page. Every campus has a Portal Liaison. Dr. Richards asks us to bring this to their attention. We need to ask faculty which textbook are they using & does it have a CD? If it does have a CD, then is the material on the CD ADA compliant? When doing desktop publishing we need to know that Adobe Creative Suite has the ability to do Optical Character Recognition (OCR). Brooklyn College replaced FrontPage with DreamWeaver because DreamWeaver has a 508 compliance-testing tool. The latest version of REAL Producer has a captioning tool. Office 2003 is fully ADA compliant. WordPerfect is not ADA compliant. Math and science notation will be ADA compliant in blackboard. If one designs a

course to be ADA compliant then it meets the needs of various student learning styles.

CUNY is looking at offering an on-line BA through blackboard. It should be ADA compliant. We must get students to speak with their teachers and insist on ADA compliance. ADA compliance is important because it gives us the promise of a level playing field.

3. Election of Co-Chairs – Mounir Khalil and Scott Sheidlower were unanimously elected co-chairs.
4. Other Business – Dr. Rosa announced that April would be CUNY Disability Awareness Month. He said they would like to highlight “accessibility in the libraries” as the theme of this month and have our roundtable to work with them. The majority felt this was a good idea and agreed.
5. The meeting adjourned at 4:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Sheidlower,
Asst. Professor,
York College