

Elena ]  
Brenda ]  
Rachel ]  
November 3, 1999

#### Accessibility on Campus

At our meeting on November 3, 1999, Rachel brought up the issue of the accessibility of the campus here at Emory and Henry to people with disabilities. Rachel had written a personal reflection on the accessibility of the campus, and we as a group felt that it was an important issue to discuss. During our group discussion, we found that most areas of this campus are sadly lacking in the handicap accessibility department. While all of the group members already had the idea that the campus was inaccessible, we did not realize how inaccessible that it really is until we had our discussion.

The first features of campus that we looked at were the sidewalks and walkways. We decided that there are several reasons that they are not wheelchair accessible. The first reason is that there are cracks in the pavement and cement in many areas. These cracks would make it difficult to roll a wheelchair without assistance. There are also areas where cracks in the sidewalks have been patched and the cement has been left uneven. This would also hinder a wheelchair from rolling easily on the sidewalks. Another thing that makes the sidewalks inaccessible is the fact that they are not wide enough in some places to accommodate a wheelchair. Even if the sidewalks were crack free and wider, a person in a wheelchair would still not be able to navigate freely on campus due to the fact that the sidewalks turn to steps in many places. This is not to mention the fact that a person would have trouble rolling a wheelchair up steep parts of the sidewalks without assistance.

Elena brought up the fact that her aunt Jean, who has been a wheelchair user for the past four years, will not travel anywhere where she can not navigate independently. If she cannot get in and out of a building without assistance, she will not go in at all. Elena mentioned that her family had gotten irritated at her aunt before when she refused to go somewhere with family that was not accessible. Elena said that now that she thought about it, she understood her aunt's point of view. There is dignity in independence. While it would be easy to allow her son to pick her up and carry her into a building, it would make Jean feel very undignified. Able-bodied people take for granted that they can go pretty much wherever they please whenever they please. Sometimes people with disabilities do not have the luxury of independence. By refusing to accept help and only going where she can go without help, Jean is trying to hold on to her independence. The group decided that Jean would probably never want to visit the campus of Emory and Henry.

If a person with a disability chose to go to school at Emory and Henry, he or she would have a difficult time because of accessibility issues. There are no handicap accessible dorms for males that the group could think of. The only dorm for females that has an accessible room is Weaver. Brenda lived in the room last year. Brenda said that the bathroom was still not optimally designed for a wheelchair user. In addition to that, a wheelchair user would have to enter through the back of the building.

Rachel brought up the fact that the cafeteria is the building that is closest to being accessible. The lunch line is not really accessible, but VanDyke it is the only building that the group could think of on campus that has a handicap accessible bathroom. The chapel, library, and other academic buildings have no such bathrooms. A person in a

wheelchair would have to go all the way to the cafeteria to use the bathroom. In addition to the accessible bathroom problem, none of the water fountains or computer labs on campus are really accessible to a person in a wheelchair. The chapel and library both have elevators, but actually getting into the buildings would still be difficult. The chapel has a very steep wheelchair ramp with a sharp turn at the bottom. The library has heavy doors and a narrow squeeze between the book detectors at the front entrance. A person in a wheelchair could enter through the ground floor and get directly on the elevator, but that door is kept locked.

Our group decided that this campus is very inaccessible. We wondered how many people with disabilities want to go to school here, look at the campus and see how inaccessible that it is, and decide against it. The college wants to increase awareness of diversity and create a more multi-cultural and diverse campus community, but it seems like people with disabilities have been more or less left out of this plan. Our group feels that if a person with a disability chooses to attend school at Emory and Henry College, they should not have to worry about where they will use the bathroom or how they will get to class. We feel that improvements need to be made on the accessibility of this campus.

\*Typed by Elena I [redacted]

6/2/12 11:30:09

\*Original reflection written by Rachel [redacted]

Rachel S. [redacted]

Brenna [redacted]

"A Lack of Accessibility"