

An Ohlone Story

Accessible Campus

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Overview

The Fremont Campus is located on a beautiful 534-acre hillside site designed to compliment the foothill surroundings. This can make getting around campus challenging at times for our disabled students and staff. The campus buildings are arranged in clusters. In the heart or center of the campus is nine-buildings “Academic Clusters”, composed of classroom buildings dedicated to general education classrooms, administration and student services. Just down the hill, past the palm Bosque is Olive Lane, lined with beautiful olive trees. While soaking in the beauty and history of the trees, you will find another building (Hyman Hall) also dedicated for general education classes, computer skills & technology, and instructional labs (English & Math). Just outside Hyman Hall, as you continue to stroll down the olive tree lined path, you will see various sports fields, the security building (which also houses the flea market, Gallaudet Regional Resource Center and the Bond Project offices), student parking lots and the Child Development Center.

Significant to note is the major construction which is underway due to the recently Measure A Bond. The older buildings on campus are being repaired and painted and significant work is being done to remove barriers. Recently new ramps were built on two buildings and threshold removal was done and electronic doors were installed throughout the campus. The physical accessibility of the campus will be improved with these modifications, given the hilly terrain and the original construction of the buildings that were built in the mid-1960's.

Ohlone College is an outstanding institution, providing a very high quality educational experience for all students, including students with disabilities. The staff and faculty of Ohlone College exhibit enthusiasm, passion, mutual respect and willingness to explore new ideas and improve the already beautifully designed campus. The administration demonstrates a strong commitment to providing quality services and expanding awareness on issues involving all disabled groups. This commitment is reflected in the story of the relationship between Disabled Students Program and Services (DSPS), 504/ADA Coordinator, and the Ohlone College District.

Relationship to the College Values

We promote diversity and inclusiveness

Ohlone College enrolls 16,180 students per year at its Fremont Campus, Newark locations and on-line. Approximately 550 of who are students with disabilities. The two largest disabilities groups being served at Ohlone College are students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (171) and students with Learning Disabilities (134). The DSPS program is currently located in three separate locations. While the three office; Deaf services, disability services; and adaptive computer lab, are close in proximity, the program will be well served by the plan to co-locate the programs in the new student services building, scheduled to open in Fall 2009.

We promote team work and open communication.

DSPS, the 504/ADA Coordinator, and the Ohlone College District have worked diligently together to keep the channels of communication open by listening openly to students, staff, and faculty concerns about accessibility issues on both the Ohlone and Newark Campuses.

We demonstrate stewardship for our human, financial, physical and environmental resources

Setting up surveys, acting on feedback from students, faculty, staff, having site visits from the Chancellors office, and Bond Project funding has all played an important role of having accessibility issues accomplished and/or improved on campus.

Contribution to Achieving College Goals

Promote appreciation for and understanding of diverse races and culture by expanding the diversity of college personnel, international education offerings and exchange. Cross-cultural curricula and ethnical cultural events

October 16-19 2006, Ohlone College DSPS hosted its first ever Disability Awareness Week., a new annual event. Each day was filled with speakers, movies, local community agencies, Ohlone Club lunch days, and hands on experiences to get a glimpse of the day to day challenges a disabled student or staff experiences or encounters on the campus. Overall, the first annual Disability Awareness Week served its mission of educating the public and creating relationships with Ohlone College partners.

Promote and maintain an accessible, clean, safe and healthy college environment through continuous engagement of students and college personnel in campus preparedness, wellness, beautification, and environment sustainability.

The Ohlone College Interpreters and Real-Time Captioner staff has recently begun a series of training sessions provided through the American Red Cross. The goal is for our interpreting and accommodations staff to be fully trained to respond in an emergency that may affect the Ohlone Campus. Being trained in First-Aid and Disaster Preparedness will allow our interpreters and accommodation staffs to not only prepare themselves for an emergency, but to ensure that the needs of the Ohlone Deaf and Disabled community will be taken care of.

Develop and implement a District wide facilities plan which encompasses the design, construction (including furnishings & equipment), renovations and major scheduled maintenance of facilities that support programs and enhance students and employees.

The Ohlone College District and the 504/ADA Coordinator have the following projects accomplished or scheduled to be accomplished.

- Renovate restrooms on campus to meet the ADA Standards
- Have disabled parking stalls dedicated closer to buildings on campus with less of an incline.
- Fire alarms have been upgraded with stroboscopic alarms for the Deaf in most buildings.
- Ramps have been installed outside of buildings 4 & 6 along with a ramp by building 1 giving access to building 2 – 1st level. Building 8 – 1st level and building 1 lobby to upper level building 1. Building 7 has a remodeled ramp installed from lower to upper classrooms on 2nd level. Building 9, an elevator and ramp were installed to get students and staff from the lower bus stop to the upper campus.

- Public bus stop and Para-Transit drop offs are located at the upper campus key for easy access to instructional facilities.
- Wheelchair lifts have been installed in Building 1, Smith Center, and the swimming pool.

Demonstration of meeting one or more of the Accreditation Standards

Standard III.B.1.b

The institution assures that physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are constructed and maintained to assure access, safety, and security and a healthy learning and working environment.

Ohlone Fremont campus is situated on a hill and has its accessibility challenges. The campus assures that the physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are constricted and maintained to assure access, safety, and a healthy learning and working environment by utilizing facilities that are in compliance with the Federal mandated ADA seismic safety regulations and Division of the State Architect regulations.

The new student services building (although the building will have an elevator) will have access all 3 levels, accessible from the campus with out the use of an elevator.

An accessible gym, locker rooms, and restrooms have also been installed in building 9.

Expression of Accreditation Themes

Instructional Commitments

The campus design presents quite a challenge to assuring accessibility; however, administrators have developed a comprehensive plan to minimize physical barriers. Ohlone College has dedicated and caring Security and Grounds personnel who assist students with disabilities to navigate around campus when possible.

There has been a significant effort to improve parking access for students with disabilities, allowing parking in closer to proximity to college facilities. Brailed and raised letter signage has been installed throughout the campus identifying buildings, offices and room numbers. Twelve additional automatic doors with push button access have been installed. Renovation of the remaining bathrooms will be done to ensure ADA access and compliance.

The ADA clearly requires that all communication tolls be available to persons with hearing and/or communication related disabilities, must be functionally equivalent to those without hearing or communication related disabilities. The college has an agreement with Sorenson Communications to have a Video Phone Booth installed in the Cafeteria Foyer, for deaf students to use and each Deaf faculty and staff have video phone up in their offices to ensure equal communication among their hearing colleagues. Phone booths are being discussed to be set up in Hyman Hall and the New Newark Campus.

Dialogue

Ohlone College has set up a special “Student Services Building Impact Task Force” to ensure accessibility of the campus for both disabled and non-disabled students, faculty and staff (accessibility meaning not only for those who are physically disabled but also for learning and instruction campus wide for all students and faculty), while construction is underway for the new Student Services Building scheduled to be open Fall 2009.

Ohlone College currently has a unique opportunity. A new Vice President of Business Services has recently been hired (this person is also holds the 504/ADA Coordinator Position) and a new Director of DSPS will soon be hired. It is the goal of the DSPS Director to have clear and open dialogue of what is the responsibility of DSPS for campus access and what falls under the direction of the 504/ADA Coordinator. This on-going dialogue will ensure campus accessibility and safety for disabled and non-disabled students, faculty and staff.