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Midnight Magazine will be out May 12!

Here are some ways to recycle your magazine after reading!



OPINION

ADA accommodations lacking on Ohlone campus

By **INEZ BLACK**
Staff writer

Ohlone has a stellar record for providing ADA accommodations for deaf students, faculty and staff. But, has Ohlone removed physical barriers that significantly impede access for people with disabilities affecting their mobility?

As a person with disabilities impairing my mobility, in my opinion, some of the most basic physical obstacles addressed in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), still exist 19 years later – lack of adequate handicap parking with the shortest route of travel, lack of handicap accessible pathways that are adequately marked, lack of marked handicap accessible pathways within buildings and lack of accessible bathrooms.

The ADA, and its enforcing regulation, not only includes people using wheelchairs, but names people with difficulty walking or maintaining balance using crutches, canes, or walkers and with gait or orthopedic conditions affecting strength. Also, ADA compliant paths should take these disabilities into consideration in designing paths to prevent falling on bad surfaces, allow for moving slower, and providing safe resting for those fatiguing easily.

Handicapped parking lots on the Witherly Lane side of campus, Lots

U and R, are basically filled with faculty and staff around 8 a.m. – leaving only two to three spaces for students in Lot U and three to four spaces in Lot R. Not all of Parking Lot U is designated for handicapped parking.

Eighty percent of the classes on the campus are scheduled between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. and 6 and 9 p.m. In addition, two-thirds of the classes are scheduled on the Witherly Lane side of the campus – in the Smith Center, Buildings Two, Three, Four and Five, and the portable classrooms.

Seventy percent of the handicapped parking spaces are beyond Buildings Eight and Nine, next to the gymnasium, in Lots M and N – at the other end of campus. Most of the handicapped parking spaces were removed from the Witherly Lane side of campus when Lot P was built; however, when Lot P became a construction site, none of the spaces were returned.

From handicapped parking Lots M and N, students with mobility disabilities walk farther than able-bodied students to get to classes on the Witherly Lane side of campus, yet I have been repeatedly told that Ohlone is in compliance with the ADA. It is not only the number of handicapped parking spaces, but also their location that the ADA

dictates.

In 28 Code of Federal Regulation Ch. 1, it clearly states at, “4.6.2 Location... In parking facilities that do not serve a particular building, accessible parking shall be located

“ Faculty and staff get 80 percent of the ADA parking on the Witherly Lane side of the campus as they are already at work before most scheduled classes start. ”

on the shortest accessible route of travel to an accessible pedestrian entrance of the parking facility. In buildings with multiple accessible entrances with adjacent parking, accessible parking spaces shall be dispersed and located closest to the accessible entrances.”

Getting from handicapped parking Lots M and N is an exhausting nightmare for many mobility impaired students; the long path is not marked, even though it requires going through two to three buildings with dead ends due to construction, and using two-to-three elevators, as well as using paths from the parking lot with poor grading. There are no signs for directions or safety warnings.

Two years ago, when Building Seven was demolished, other students and I discussed this problem

with Anne Burdett, Director of Disabled Students Programs and Services. We offered to help with making the sign and determining where they were most helpful; she indicated that it would be

discussed with the dean and maintenance department, who make signs for Ohlone. I followed-up last spring regarding the signs, but as of today there is no directional signage from Lots

M and N around the construction to Building One and no directional signage for wheelchair accessible routes on campus.

Faculty and staff get 80 percent of the ADA parking on the Witherly Lane side of the campus as they are already at work before most scheduled classes start. When asked for his reaction, Steven Osawa, Chief of Campus Police Services, stated, “We do the best we can as far as accommodations go...I’m not going to dispute that...but wait until next fall as the dynamic may change... when construction on Building Seven is completed.”

What is more basic than being able to get in and out of a bathroom? Wheelchair users Nathan Torres, studying medicine, and Ben, an accounting major, both found that the doors required significant

strength to open due to the spring, but then closed too quickly, catching their wheelchairs. For these young strong men, getting in and out of most Ohlone bathrooms is a hassle, but do-able.

However, for many women in wheelchairs or those with diminished strength, the heavy, oversized doors, with strong springs to automatically close them, they either can’t be opened or it hits them halfway through the entrance. Sometimes people have to wait for someone to come in to let them out! With the exception of the gymnasium, there are no ADA accessible women’s bathroom doors; there are three men’s bathrooms equipped with handicap accessible pushbuttons.

Previously, Director of Facilities Lucky Lofton indicated that proposals were submitted to the state addressing the lack of ADA accessible bathrooms, and he stated that the purchase and installation of one pushbutton accessible door for a women’s bathroom would cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

However, I’ve subsequently learned that the mechanisms were purchased a few years ago for the women’s bathrooms, when numerous exterior doors and an additional men’s bathroom were made ADA accessible, but someone decided not to install them. We don’t know why.

CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

What will you do for your summer vacation?



Nick Tashjian

MUSIC

“Mostly just doing nothing.”



Adriana Castro

SPANISH/FRENCH

“Taking a road trip down south.”



Daniel Chagoya

BROADCASTING

“I’ll be looking for a job.”



Gabby Castillo

COMMUNICATIONS

“Taking classes and working my butt off.”



Kevin Feliciano

BUSINESS/ADMINISTRATION

“I am doing student government.”