

7/12/73
June 12, 1973

MEMORANDUM TO: Wayne Duke, Dean of Student Life

The Handicapped Student Association of UTA requests a position on the agenda of the next meeting to be held by the Board of Regents in Austin on July 27, 1973. The intent of this correspondence is to show our reason and purpose for requesting an agenda spot.

As you know, Mr. Sam Provence and myself have worked diligently during the past year toward a goal which would free UTA of its architectural barriers and thus facilitate access to all campus facilities by the mobility-impaired students. We feel that all mobility-impaired students who are now attending UTA and those who will be attending UTA in the future have benefited from these efforts because we have been able to communicate the real problems of these students to a concerned Administration which has listened to and comprehended the extent of the program. While there are many problems left unsolved, UTA is now better equipped to handle the numerous problems of the handicapped students than ever before. UTA could well be the best college in the North Central portion of Texas for the handicapped students. We would like to now broaden the scope of our endeavors on a state wide program.

We are not naive enough to think that UTA is the only institution of higher education which has architectural barriers. In fact, according to our information there are no colleges or universities in Texas which even come close to meeting all of the needs of the handicapped students - some are totally non-navigable and there are some people with severe handicaps who cannot attempt an upper level school because no school has the necessary facilities. We feel that much of this inadequacy in our educational system could be solved by completely converting one or two campuses over to the needs of all handicapped. It can be solved by establishing a model school designed to cover the problem of the general handicapped which all colleges and universities could follow and, to go one step further, provide for the needs of the more severely handicapped. In our opinion, UTA would make an excellent place for the model school and we would like a chance to convince the Regents of this.

The ideal school for the handicapped students is one which provides housing, attendants for severely handicapped students, an administrative post which would concern itself with coordinating a sufficient program designed to deal with arising problems, one whose landscape is adaptable to any particular mobility-impairment including those of blind students, one which has adequate parking, dining, medical, and all other necessary facilities designed to round out the normal routine of the handicapped students. Another important ingredient is a campus which is compact enough not to require prolonged journeys to and from classes.

We are talking about a campus which would meet the needs of any particular handicapped. There exists none in Texas at this time, but we feel that UTA has made such progress that it would be more adaptable than most colleges. Of course, our hope is that all institutions of higher education in Texas would follow the example set by UTA thereby making the educational system, particularly the upper level, uniform in its efforts to provide a handicapped student with a chance at a quality education. We know, however, that some facilities would be extremely expensive and would not be practical for every campus. For example, it would be feasible for every college and university in Texas to provide adequate ramps, curb cuts, elevators, restrooms, parking areas, and easy entrance to all buildings, but, as a result of the expense, it would not be feasible for every college and university to install sensor devices for the blind, housing facilities with all the necessary equipment, attendants for the more severely handicapped, etc. UTA is well suited for such an effort as much of the work is already completed and its landscape is adaptable.

If there is a need for two fully equipped campuses in Texas to handle this demand, one would necessarily have to be located in the North Central portion of Texas in order to be close to the great number of handicapped in this area of the State.

There is a real need for a model campus in Texas so that all other colleges could have an example. There is a real need, also, for a "totally equipped" campus because the number of handicapped students is on the rise and there is no reason to believe that the numbers will decrease. Indeed, a totally equipped campus will provide a few a quality education which was never before possible because of the severity of their particular handicap. I suppose we are talking about the necessity of offering these few a chance at a life which they possibly never could have had.

Again, we ask for the opportunity to speak to the Board of Regents with the hope of convincing them of the need for a model campus for others to follow and a totally equipped campus to provide a few with a quality education. We will be adequately researched and prepared for the meeting with the Regents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jim Hayes
Administrative Liaison
UTA Handicapped Student Association