

Model campus sought

A group of handicapped students here will meet with UT System regents in October or November in an effort to convert UTA into a model campus.

The Handicapped Students Association has compiled a list of proposals to present at the meeting, which will hopefully be in October, said Sam Provence, president of the group.

"I think we stand on firm ground," he said. "It's just a matter of priorities on where they spend their money."

Provence said Chancellor Charles LeMaistre has said the "idea is long overdue."

Although the model campus would not necessarily be here, Provence said the proposals are based on UTA. Plans range from a minimum of \$200,000 for various improvements up to \$2½ million for a totally equipped model campus.

The most expensive plan calls for new housing areas equipped with conveniences for handicapped students and renovation of dormitories. A half-way plan costing \$1,250,000 does not include complete housing areas, but provides for elevators at 12 locations on the campus.

The \$200,000 plan eliminates the

elevators, which have a price tag of about \$75,000 apiece.

"I feel the one they will pick is the \$1,250,000," Provence said.

Improvements call for completion of a basic five points, including a complete ramp system, special restroom facilities in each of the 17 buildings, lower water fountains and telephones, expanded parking spaces and special access doors on major buildings.

Provence said the administration has made some progress in the installation of these points, including conversion of four rooms for the handicapped in Brazos Hall, restroom facilities, some lowered water fountains, telephones and ramps. Also among strides is a brochure, available for the first time, which familiarizes the handicapped student with existing facilities.

He said \$7,000 has been budgeted this year for the installation of additional facilities for the 122 handicapped students here.

Housing, Provence feels, is the most critical area in which improvements are needed.

"That's where we're lacking the most," he said. "Up to this year, there was no housing for men students at all.

"Students who live in rural areas who can't commute to schools are hampered and if there were adequate housing facilities, these people would be encouraged to come to school."

Money for the renovation would come from the building use fee, Provence said. He believes the expense is justified.

He said the Texas Vocational Rehabilitation Commission supports 690

handicapped students through grants, including 108 at UTA. The Veterans Administration also provides financial aid for the handicapped. These students pay a building use fee as other students, Provence said, but are not able to benefit in the same way.

There is presently a school at Ada, Okla., which is considered a model campus, but Provence feels that "even if we get the bare minimum we would be better equipped."

Provence emphasized that, although the plan deals mainly with the student in a wheelchair, it is not intended to omit students with handicaps such as blindness and deafness.

Plans include Braille identification plates in hallways, warning devices on hazard areas, extensions on handrails and the elimination of lipped stairways. A dozen blind students are enrolled here.

Original requests for campus facilities called for electronic sensor-beams placed along major routes which would create a bleeping sound to aid blind students, but Provence said cost has eliminated this plan.

Although no deaf students currently attend UTA, Provence said the association plans to work on recommendations in this area. He feels deaf students would be encouraged to enroll if some facilities were provided.

One suggestion he mentioned would be to teach sign language as a foreign language.

He predicted it would be at least a year before final plans could be approved and work begun. "Everything around here is more or less at a standstill," he said, "until the proposal goes through."